

# The Demon of Unrest

The Demon of Unrest by Michael James Fannon is a dark, atmospheric novel that follows a troubled protagonist as they confront supernatural forces and inner demons. Set in a mysterious, haunting world, the story weaves together elements of horror, suspense, and psychological drama as the character grapples with unsettling events that threaten their sanity and survival. Themes of fear, guilt, and the unknown drive the narrative, creating a tense exploration of what happens when external horrors mirror personal turmoil.

## Dismay and Dishonor

In the chapter titled "Dismay and Dishonor" from "The Demon of Unrest," dated April 8, tensions between Southern commissioners and Secretary of State William Seward are palpable. Seward, writing in the third person, expresses his interpretation of recent revolutionary events, stressing that he does not see them as a legitimate revolution nor as a foundation for an independent nation. Instead, he views them as a transient partisan excitement. He declines the commissioners' request for a meeting with President Lincoln, stating that he does not have the authority to recognize them as diplomatic agents.

This rejection, albeit expected, ignites outrage among the commissioners, who respond with furious accusations, claiming Seward is detached from reality. They express their belief that Seward's refusal to acknowledge the established government is a grave insult to Southern honor. Their letter conveys a dire warning that inevitable bloodshed will be blamed on Lincoln, and they accept the challenge they believe Seward has thrown at them.

Seward's response remains aloof and dismissive, entailing a single-sentence acknowledgment of their letter's receipt while reiterating that he cannot engage with them further. Meanwhile, on the same evening, President Lincoln's messengers, Chew and Talbot, arrive in Charleston with a message for Governor Pickens regarding the resupply of Fort Sumter. The message indicates that provisions will be sent without force unless resisted. Despite this, General Beauregard flatly rejects Captain Talbot's request to proceed to the fort, emphasizing the entrenched positions of both sides.

In a swift reaction, Beauregard informs Confederate War Secretary Walker of Lincoln's intent to send supplies, but Walker immediately orders that no provisions should be allowed into Fort Sumter. Later that night, Beauregard issues a notice to Major Anderson, halting all mail between the fort and Charleston. Anderson, alarmed by this news, attempts to recover important outgoing letters, but Beauregard denies his request, highlighting the escalating stalemate. The chapter effectively showcases the growing estrangement and tensions leading up to the Civil War, underlined by Seward's cold diplomacy and the urgency displayed by military leaders on both sides.

## Change of Heart

In "Change of Heart," the events unfold on March 28, shortly before Lincoln's first state dinner. General Winfield Scott's memo deeply disturbs Lincoln as it presents a grim assessment of Fort Sumter's situation. Scott emphasizes that Anderson's position at Sumter is more untenable due to Beauregard's artillery installations, predicting that a full-scale invasion to relieve the fort would require ten months to organize, during which time Union forces would likely suffer defeat. He advises that evacuation of Fort Sumter should happen sooner rather than later as a gesture promoting peace.

However, Scott escalates his recommendation, asserting that merely abandoning Sumter wouldn't suffice to maintain allegiance from the upper South and border states. He insists that both Sumter and Fort Pickens must be evacuated to restore confidence among slaveholding states, further alarming Lincoln. The president is taken aback by Scott's political reasoning and the suggestion that such drastic actions were even on the table, leaving him in distress as he prepares for the upcoming dinner.

During the state dinner, attended by notable guests, including Mary Lincoln, the ambiance is lively yet Lincoln remains preoccupied by the contents of Scott's memo. Guests, including William Russell, observe Lincoln's storytelling as a means of managing tense situations. Russell hopes to uncover Lincoln's strategies regarding the secession crisis but leaves the event none the wiser.

Following the dinner, Lincoln privately convenes his cabinet to discuss Scott's message. The silence is palpable, reflecting the gravity of the situation until Postmaster Blair breaks it, criticizing Scott's shift from military to political concerns. Lincoln calls for a formal cabinet meeting the following day to revisit the resupply mission to Fort Sumter.

At the next meeting, the cabinet's members, equipped with new information on the pro-Union sentiment in South Carolina, mostly overturn their previous stance, now favoring resupply. Urged by Blair to act swiftly to prevent further conflict, Lincoln ultimately authorizes two expeditions to resupply both Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens. However, the decision holds the potential for disaster, as both missions rely on the same warship, the side-wheel steam frigate, Powhatan, creating a significant logistical conflict for his administration facing possible turmoil within the Union.

## Wigfall

**\*\*Wigfall, The Demon of Unrest: Chapter Summary\*\***

On Saturday, April 13, from Edmund Ruffin's perspective, the flag at Fort Sumter appeared to be missing, prompting concern among the officers at Moultrie who speculated that Major Anderson might be prepared to surrender. Brig. Gen. James Simons decided to cease fire and instructed former U.S. senator Col. Louis T. Wigfall, a boisterous and hefty Texan, to row to Sumter to ascertain the situation. Despite Wigfall's reputation for heavy drinking and passionate outbursts, he accepted the mission, eager to prove himself.

Wigfall commandeered a small, leaky boat with three enslaved oarsmen, disregarding warnings about its unsafe condition. Ignoring the risk, Wigfall insisted on proceeding to Sumter, driven by a sense of urgency for the trapped garrison. He informed Private William Gourdin Young of the Palmetto Guard that he was tasked with approaching Sumter under a flag of truce. However, he hadn't brought an actual flag, so they improvised a makeshift one from a handkerchief and Young's shirt threads, with Wigfall raising it dramatically, recalling iconic moments from history.

As they ventured further, they faced cannon fire from Fort Moultrie, which Young perceived as a warning to turn back. However, Wigfall remained steadfast in his determination to fulfill his mission. The boat, now taking on water due to increasing fire, struggled against the waves, yet they urged the oarsmen to row harder.

Upon nearing the fort, they encountered destruction: debris blocked their usual landing, and the main gate had burned away. When Wigfall and Young arrived at the fort, they found no one to greet them. Wigfall expressed a grim sense of foreboding about their surroundings, hinting at the peril of their mission. Young's anxiety about the escaping oarsmen led him to intervene forcefully to ensure their return.

Eventually, two Union officers, including Major Anderson, emerged from the ruins of Sumter. Confused by Young's presence and the boat outside, Anderson learned of Wigfall's intentions. As Young tried to safeguard the oarsmen against fleeing, he was assured by Anderson that they were safe, even amidst the chaos. This chapter encapsulates the tumultuous atmosphere and the backdrop of urgency that characterized

the early moments of conflict at Fort Sumter.

## **Seward's Trick**

In the backdrop of a looming Inauguration Day, only two days away, President-elect Abraham Lincoln found himself still finalizing his cabinet. The process had been marred by political infighting, particularly concerning the selection of key positions. William Seward had already accepted the role of Secretary of State; however, other cabinet appointments were still under heated debate. Lincoln appeared inclined to choose Salmon Chase, a fervent abolitionist, for the Secretary of the Treasury role. This prospect alarmed Seward, who not only harbored a personal dislike for Chase but also worried that Chase's vehement anti-slavery stance might provoke more states, particularly in the upper South, to secede from the Union.

Amidst these tensions, Seward felt uncertain about his standing with Lincoln. He was anxious to know if Lincoln had incorporated any of his recommendations for the inaugural address. Compounding his concerns was a damaging rumor circulating that Lincoln might discard him as Secretary of State in favor of Chase, which unsettled Seward further.

On March 2, in a surprising move, Seward withdrew his consent for the Secretary of State position. In his note to Lincoln, he stated that recent events rendered it his duty to request to step back from his previously expressed willingness. He offered no rationale for his withdrawal, leaving Lincoln and his secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, taken aback. They noted the irony of Seward's retreat given his prior involvement in cabinet formation and his revisions to Lincoln's inaugural speech.

Lincoln, being astute in interpreting human behavior, chose not to react immediately to Seward's unexpected note. He recognized the significance of the situation and subtly indicated to Nicolay that he could not allow Seward to take the initiative in this game of political maneuvers.

## **Aunt Fancy Speaks**

In December 1860, President Buchanan concentrated on his annual message amid escalating tensions over South Carolina's potential secession. His assistant, William Henry Trescot, a member of South Carolina's aristocracy, played a crucial role in providing insights into the region's grievances. Buchanan believed that South Carolina would indeed secede, fearing violent conflict regarding federal forts in Charleston Harbor. However, Trescot expressed that the state's secession would be executed peacefully, akin to a business negotiation, promising that South Carolina would send representatives to sort out the separation with Congress.

When Buchanan completed his address, he shared it with Senator Jefferson Davis, a prominent Southern figure. Davis suggested revisions, and although he believed the final draft would align with South Carolina's constitutional right to secede, Buchanan continued to make changes. He later sent a copy of the address to Governor Gist of South Carolina through Trescot, who predicted immediate secession upon reading it.

Buchanan's speech was presented to Congress on December 4, garnishing significant attention. He reflected on the paradox of widespread prosperity contrasted with societal unrest, attributing the discontent squarely to the North's antislavery agitation, which eroded Southern security. He emphasized that the solution lay in allowing the Southern states to manage their domestic affairs without Northern interference, questioning the legitimacy of secession raised by fear alone, and positing that constitutional rights didn't justify disintegration of the Union. In his view, secession equated to revolution, justifiable only under egregious federal action.

The reception of his address was notably discontented, with Jefferson Davis vowing to sever ties with Buchanan over his denial of secession's right and Abraham Lincoln expressing shock at Buchanan's blame

on the North for the crisis. Critics like William Seward and the \*New-York Times\* condemned the address, calling it incendiary and a dereliction of duty, only exacerbating the sectional conflict. Buchanan's reasoning established a complex legacy of inaction and misjudgment, encapsulating the precarious state of the Union on the brink of civil war.

## Change of Plan

On the morning of February 22 in Philadelphia, Lincoln arrived at Independence Hall for a ceremonial event, feeling rejuvenated after a good night's rest. Despite his original plan to simply raise the flag, a large crowd demanded he deliver a speech. He hesitantly obliged, speaking in a nearly inaudible tone, yet his words moved the audience profoundly.

Standing in a place that symbolized the nation's inception, Lincoln expressed the political sentiments rooted in the Declaration of Independence. He reflected on the struggle for independence, pondering the essential principles that had preserved the union. He emphasized that it wasn't merely the act of separation from Britain but the ideals of liberty encapsulated in the Declaration that offered hope and possibility for future generations. This notion received enthusiastic applause.

Lincoln's compelling assertion that liberty should extend to all individuals resonated deeply with the crowd. He posed a rhetorical question regarding the nation's viability based on these principles, asserting that he would prefer to be assassinated than to abandon them. His conviction regarding equality was a powerful moment, evoking cheers and applause from the gathered audience.

He ascended a platform to hoist the flag, an act that prompted manic cheers from the crowd, signifying unity and hope. A reporter noted that the essence of Lincoln's remarks points towards the deeper meaning of equality, emphasizing the gradual steps toward African emancipation.

In light of the events, Lincoln agreed to modify his travel plans as suggested by Pinkerton and Norman Judd. He committed to speaking in Harrisburg to the state legislature before embarking on a secret journey back to Philadelphia. From there, Lincoln planned to board a midnight train to Baltimore, understanding that the notion of sneaking into the capital could be politically risky. Nonetheless, he dismissed concerns over ridicule, determined to follow through with Judd's plan, signaling his resolve and eagerness to embrace the potential risks ahead.

## The Rubicon

In October 1859, Edmund Ruffin despaired over his unsuccessful attempts to incite disunion in Virginia, exhaustively advocating for secession and denouncing Northern "tyranny." Described as a "fiery agent of disunion," his physical appearance matched his intense persona—shoulder-length white hair and a sharp demeanor. At sixty-five, feeling ignored and regarded as a fanatic, he contemplated suicide amid personal tragedies. His life felt wearisome, and his passion for reading waned, leading him to scribble thoughts of the end in his diary.

However, on October 16, 1859, the unexpected news of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry electrified the South and reinvigorated Ruffin. The raid—a failed attack intended to incite a slave rebellion—was seen by many in the South as a serious threat, igniting calls for war. Ruffin interpreted this event as a catalyst for Southern resolve. He hoped this act would awaken the "sluggish blood of the South," believing it proved the impending danger posed by Northern abolitionists.

Following the raid, the Southern response was one of fear and aggression. Communities mobilized, militias swelled, and harsh measures were enacted against suspected abolitionists. This heightened vigilance stemmed from perceived weaknesses in managing enslaved populations, which, Ruffin noted, had begun to express signs of independence. Notably, he observed how the enslaved had begun wearing fine clothing and becoming more involved in public spaces, which incited outrage among whites in Charleston.

In political circles, fear extended to discussions on secession; Governor William Gist declared that the North had "crossed the Rubicon." The legislation reflected a protective stance, aimed at curbing outside influences and solidifying control over enslaved populations. Meanwhile, Ruffin reveled in the chaos, seeing it as an opportunity to gain recognition as a proponent for disunion.

As Brown faced execution, Ruffin planned to attend, leveraging the event to increase his profile. Observing Brown's courage at the gallows, Ruffin perceived a kindred spirit in conviction and resilience. He later sought to disseminate the seized pikes from Brown's raid to illustrate the threats posed by abolitionists. Captivated by the national turmoil, Ruffin began writing a novel, "Anticipations of the Future," aiming to galvanize Southern resistance and bolster secessionist sentiment through a narrative that portrayed slavery in a favorable light, reflecting his convictions and the yearning for Southern independence .

## **Under Fire**

In the chapter "Under Fire" from *Star of the West*, the tension surrounding the ship's approach to Fort Sumter escalates as it comes under fire from a hidden battery. Captain McGowan documents the precarious situation, noting how cannonballs ricochet around the vessel, with one narrowly missing the pilot-house and another striking the ship's hull. The *Star of the West*, being a large target, is an easy mark for the inexperience of the fifty cadets manning the cannons, who seem to fire wildly during the attack.

As the *Star of the West* attempts to signal Fort Sumter for help by raising and lowering its flag, Lieutenant Doubleday at the fort is alerted to the ship's distress. He scrambles the garrison to prepare for action, while Anderson, the fort's commander, struggles with his obligations. He contemplates firing back in response to the aggression against the U.S. flag, yet he is acutely aware of the potential ramifications of igniting a civil war.

With calls for action from his officers, including Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, Anderson is torn between loyalty to the U.S. Army and his troubled feelings regarding the conflict with the South. In the midst of this, Lieutenant Woods aboard the *Star of the West* debates the ship's retreat. As cannonballs continue to threaten the ship, he decides that retreat is necessary to avoid capture or grounding in hostile waters.

Despite the tension, the *Star of the West* manages to withdraw from the harbor, although Lieutenant Woods acknowledges the potential for disaster if they fell behind in the tide. Ultimately, he concludes that the locals were aware of their approach, undermining any chance of a surprise entry into the harbor.

The chapter paints a vivid picture of the precariousness of the situation for both the defenders of Fort Sumter and the crew aboard the *Star of the West*, highlighting the complexities of loyalty, duty, and the growing conflict that would soon engulf the nation. The looming threat of civil war hangs heavily over the actions and decisions of the protagonists as they navigate this fraught moment in American history.

## **Doubleday's Revenge**

In the chapter titled "Doubleday's Revenge," dated Saturday, April 13, the narrative centers on the harrowing events surrounding the loss of Fort Sumter's flag, a poignant symbol of national identity for Major Anderson

and his men. The Confederates' attack on the flag exemplifies their dishonor, as they claim to revere integrity but act brutally against a symbol of union. In a remarkable act of courage, Peter Hart, a New York City police officer, retrieves a spar to replace the damaged flagstaff. Despite the ongoing cannon fire, he successfully reattaches the flag to the spar, restoring it to a semblance of dignity, albeit lower than before. This act occurs amid a striking backdrop, combining black smoke, white clouds, and blue sky, which creates an oddly beautiful yet tragic visual for onlookers across Charleston's Battery.

Captain Doubleday, witnessing these events, grows frustrated and desires more tangible retaliation. He orders his gun crews to target the nearby Moultrie House, believed to house Confederate officers. The cannon fire strikes the building, driving out its occupants in panic, although miraculously, no injuries result. This moment encapsulates the chaotic atmosphere as the bombardment continues unabated, even as the U.S. ships remain impressively inactive offshore, causing perplexity and anger among the Confederates.

The situation in Sumter escalates, with mortar shells igniting fires, further complicating Anderson's plight. He makes a difficult choice to discard most of his gunpowder to prevent explosions, severely limiting Sumter's ability to defend itself. Private Thompson notes the shift in firing frequency and describes the fort transforming into a furnace of heat and chaos, with injuries resulting from the relentless barrage. A brief respite reveals a mysterious figure outside the fort, waving a sword and white flag, signaling a desire for entrance—a scene fraught with tension at a critical moment of conflict.

## **First Day**

On Tuesday, March 5, Lincoln began his tenure with a letter from William Seward, confirming his acceptance of the secretary of state position. Seward reflected on his resignation from Congress, feeling fortunate to have avoided any major fallout. He acknowledged Lincoln's ambition to form a diverse cabinet, one that would face their shared turbulent political climate together, despite many being his former rivals for the Republican nomination. Seward expressed hesitation but felt compelled by duty towards a troubled nation.

Upon Lincoln's arrival at the White House, the pressing matter at hand was a communication from Major Anderson at Fort Sumter, detailing the troop and supply needs vital for the fort's defense against potential Confederate assault. Accompanying this report was a note from outgoing War Secretary Joseph Holt. Lincoln swiftly forwarded these documents to General Winfield Scott. Scott, after reviewing the information, concluded that surrendering Fort Sumter was the only viable option, marking the hopelessness of its situation amidst dwindling resources. He even drafted a directive instructing Anderson to evacuate peacefully, should he inform the Governor of South Carolina. Nevertheless, this order was never dispatched.

On that same day, the new Republican-dominated U.S. Senate confirmed Lincoln's cabinet nominees, solidifying Seward's position. In a move to establish communication and set a collaborative tone, Lincoln reached out to Seward, requesting an immediate meeting.

This chapter encapsulates Lincoln's initial foray into leadership, highlighting his attempts to unify a fractured government while confronting urgent military challenges. It vividly illustrates the weight of responsibility on Lincoln's shoulders and the immediate obstacles he faced from the outset of his presidency. The dynamics of his cabinet, combined with the looming threat of war, set the stage for a complex journey ahead.

## **A Wife's Disappointment**

In the chapter titled "A Wife's Disappointment," set against the backdrop of rising tensions in Washington, the creation of a "Select Committee" highlights a deepening suspicion within the government regarding

potential treasonous acts. This "Committee of Five"—comprised of two Republicans, two pro-Union Democrats from the North, and one Southern Democrat—casts a wide net of inquiry, spurred on by information from Edwin M. Stanton, the new attorney general. Stanton's covert communications point to a traitor within the cabinet, specifically targeting Isaac Toucey, the Secretary of the Navy, due to the Navy's inaction as Southern forces seized the federal navy yard in Pensacola. The committee's findings expose a dire situation: twenty-eight naval ships unfit for service despite a considerable repair budget.

As political turbulence escalates with fears of a Southern coup aiming to disrupt Lincoln's inauguration, the committee pivots to investigate purported threats against the capital. Influential sources kindled rumors spurring military preparations as General Winfield Scott deployed troops to Washington, temporarily alleviating fears of insurrection.

In Congress, fierce debates unfold, amplifying divisions between "Black" Republicans and Southern Democrats. Jefferson Davis's forewarnings of war provoke a stark response from Senator Seward, who surprisingly aligns with Southern sentiments in an effort to assuage tensions. His assertion that states should dictate their own policies regarding property, including the controversial issue of slavery, disgusts many Republicans, including his own wife, who candidly critiques his readiness to amend the Constitution to protect slavery to maintain the Union.

Despite his conciliatory efforts, Seward's stance reveals an essential misunderstanding of the crisis: the South's growing resentment towards the North's condemnation of slavery. The latter perceives this moral stance as a direct attack on Southern honor and identity, igniting a simmering animosity that could lead to violence. Lincoln, too, struggles with the complexities of this conflict as he navigates a divided nation, acknowledging that the fundamental difference regarding slavery lies at the heart of the discord—a chasm far beyond the reach of political compromise.

## Strange News

In the chapter titled "Strange News," dated December 27, Edmund Ruffin's steamer approaches Fernandina, Florida, as he seeks to sway the state's legislature toward secession. His plans involve taking a train to Gainesville and then visiting the Marion County plantation of his friend, William Owens, before attending Florida's secession convention in Tallahassee on January 3.

While on the train, Ruffin receives telegrams, one of which reports that the garrison at Fort Moultrie has moved to Fort Sumter. This news shocks him, prompting him to question the veracity of the report and consider abandoning his journey to return to Charleston. However, he ultimately decides to continue, unsure if the information is credible since messages can often be unreliable. He suspects that the Southern authorities have been misled by the federal government, specifically by the President and Secretary of War.

Upon arriving at his friend Owens' plantation, located near Fort Drane, Ruffin feels out of touch with the latest developments surrounding Major Anderson's movements, as he is unable to access current news due to the remote location. Days-old newspapers do little to ease his anxiety regarding the situation in Charleston.

Simultaneously, three commissioners from South Carolina reach Washington, fully expecting to negotiate with President Buchanan as representatives of a new nation. They secure a well-appointed lodging while hoping for productive discussions. On December 27, a senator bursts in with news of Anderson's move, casting doubt among the commissioners and prompting intense speculation about military orders and intentions.

Amidst this uncertainty, Secretary of War John B. Floyd responds skeptically, outright denying the news. However, as reliable telegrams confirm Anderson's actions, Floyd is compelled to act, sending his own telegram to Anderson, expressing disbelief at the reports of the abandonment of Fort Moultrie. Anderson

quickly clarifies the situation, justifying his actions in moving to Fort Sumter to prevent potential casualties.

As news circulates and the reality of Fort Sumter's status emerges, Anderson faces the daunting task of readying the fort for impending conflict, realizing the gravity of his strategic choices in this volatile moment in American history.

## **Race Week**

In the chapter titled "Race Week" from "The Demon of Unrest," we delve into a vibrant yet tumultuous period in Charleston, timed with the social spectacle of Race Week. Governor Pickens, looking to avoid conflict with Fort Sumter, embraced the occasion as ordinary life halted—schools, courts, and many businesses closed. Witnesses noted that Charleston was abuzz with discussions about horses, as breeders and spectators flocked from around the South and even as far as New York, arriving on chartered vessels.

This week was marked by lavish dances and banquets attended by planters, who brought along their families and enslaved servants, selling or acquiring more slaves between races. The presence of slaves extended to the jockeys and trainers, reflecting the deep-rooted social hierarchy. The stakes went beyond mere racing; as articulated by a biographer of the South Carolina Jockey Club, horses represented Carolina's chivalry and honor, with successful planters equating their victories to personal valor and societal prestige.

Amidst the festivities, key figures in agriculture sought to solidify their status. James Henry Hammond, aiming for elite recognition, invested heavily in a thoroughbred named Argyle—a decision that demonstrated the horse's significance as a ticket to social standing and networking opportunities during the week's slate of events, particularly the renowned Jockey Club Ball.

The ball, a pinnacle social event, was exclusive to high-class attendees, where matchmaking was commonplace. However, some foreign observers, like Margaret Hunter Hall, criticized the attendees' appearances, finding the gentlemen lackluster and the women unattractive.

Yet, all eyes were ultimately on the Jockey Club Purse race, a main attraction of Race Week on February 6, 1861. Albine, a horse initially deemed a poor investment, triumphed against Planet under the guidance of Hercules, an enslaved expert trainer hired by Albine's owner, Jack Cantey. The race culminated in record-breaking times and celebratory gatherings. Unbeknownst to the attendees, this marked Charleston's final Race Week for almost twenty years, overshadowing the festivities with the looming uncertainties of the Civil War.

## **Trust**

In the chapter titled "Trust," the narrative unfolds during a tumultuous time in early spring of 1861, particularly focusing on the fate of Fort Sumter. Secretary of State Seward had assured Confederate commissioners that the Fort would be evacuated within five days; however, as March 20 rolled around—the supposed evacuation day—Fort Sumter remained under federal control. Meanwhile, Washington was grappling with an unexpected and brutal cold snap, deepening the sense of urgency for a resolution.

Confederate Secretary of State Toombs expressed growing concern with his telegram sent to the Washington commissioners, marking their unease. They responded, emphasizing a need for patience and faith in Seward's assurances. Despite the continuing lack of communication regarding the Fort's status, the commissioners remained hopeful, seeking updates from General Beauregard in Charleston, who confirmed that Sumter had not been evacuated and that troops were still fortifying its defenses.



The tension escalated as Justice Campbell, serving as an intermediary, met with Seward, who insisted that everything was under control but suggested Campbell return the following day for a more thorough meeting. Subsequently, Seward's optimism about the evacuation was reaffirmed. However, upon further inquiry, the commissioners discovered serious concerns regarding the status of Fort Sumter.

Captain Gustavus Fox, tasked by Lincoln to assess conditions at Fort Sumter, arrived on March 21 and sought permission from Governor Pickens for a visit to the fort. Despite delays, he finally met Major Anderson within the fort. This visit clarified the dire supply situation, with Anderson declaring that the fort could only hold out until April 15 without resupply.

Post-visit, Captain Hartstene met with Beauregard, raising alarms about the brief unmonitored time Fox spent with Anderson. Following their discussions, Anderson reported to Washington, disputing Fox's optimistic assessment of potential reinforcements and pointing out significant logistical challenges. Captain Fox, in Washington, suggested that Anderson's hesitance might stem from Southern sympathies, increasing tensions surrounding loyalty and decision-making among Union officers.

The chapter concludes with a palpable tension in the air; Fox's persuasion of Lincoln regarding the resupply mission signals growing complexities in the political and military landscape of the time as the fate of Fort Sumter hangs in the balance.

## **The Correspondent**

On April 3, William Russell of the London Times met the Southern commissioners Martin Crawford and John Forsyth, which led him to question the viability of restoring the Union. He noted in his diary their sense of entitlement, believing they were representatives of a foreign nation negotiating with "Yankeedom," expressing indignation over the government's refusal to engage them in discussions about separation-related matters. Two days later, he met with all three commissioners, including André Roman of Louisiana, as well as other secessionist figures like Colonel George E. Pickett. They dined at Gautier's, a French restaurant known for extravagant displays, including a large cake at Christmas.

During dinner, Southern figures spoke harshly against Lincoln and Northern politicians, demonstrating intense hatred towards New England. Russell observed that their ferocity seemed disproportionate, perhaps influenced by the South's societal structures like slavery. The conversation turned to their notions of honor, revealing a fierce defense of dueling and a belief that Northern men were inherently cowardly. They pointed to the 1856 caning of Charles Sumner as evidence, dismissing the complexities of the incident and blaming Sumner for not dueling.

When discussing slavery, Russell found their assertions troubling, as they posited that white men in slave states were physically superior to those in free states, weaving strange moral and physical theories that perplexed him. He concluded that Northerners underestimated their Southern brethren, noting that while Southerners frequently traveled North, Northerners avoided the South out of safety concerns.

William Seward's ignorance further troubled Russell; Seward considered Southerners outdated yet had never visited the region himself. Seward believed that secession would soon be resolved peacefully, claiming that when the Southern states realized the North's intentions were benign, they would return to the Union. This vision starkly contrasted with Russell's observations from the Southern conversations, prompting him to plan a trip to Charleston to assess the growing tensions firsthand. Despite feeling the urgency, he delayed his departure from Washington for six days.

## **Tea and Angst**

In Charleston on Saturday, April 13, anxiety hung heavy in the air, rendering even routine tasks impossible. The morning's relentless rain yielded to brilliant sunlight, illuminating the Mills House hotel while shadows danced along Meeting Street. Amidst this, cannon fire from across the bay intensified, signaling the commencement of a new battle. The Union fleet remained inactive, perceived as cowards by spectators, especially as Fort Sumter burned.

The previous night had brought relief when news broke that no Confederate troops had been harmed. Mary excitedly noted, "Nobody hurt after all," reporting an upbeat atmosphere at Mrs. Gidiere's boarding house. However, Saturday brought renewed tension as heavy firing resumed. Though enslaved Black servants served breakfast, the sounds of artillery made it impossible for the women to enjoy regular meals. "None of us go to table. But tea trays pervade the corridors," Mary observed, highlighting their nervous approach to sustenance during such instability.

Different women responded to the stress in varied ways; some retreated into solitude, while Mary and Mrs. Wigfall found solace in each other's company over tea. Many prayed fervently, articulating faith in divine favor, yet doubt lingered in private discussions comparing their plight with rural myths about divine retribution against the Yankees.

Louisa Hamilton visited and spiritedly discussed her husband's recent design of the floating battery, but Mary diverted her attention by inquiring about her new son. Louisa proudly shared that her child could imitate the booming cannon, calling it "Boom boom." Meanwhile, the demeanor of the Black servants remained strikingly unchanged despite the tumult—"sleepy and as respectful," as Mary noted. Their indifference raised queries in Mary's mind about their understanding of the chaos surrounding them.

Just then, Colonel Manning, with a red sash and sword, made his entrance, eager to share his experiences under fire with Mary. His boastful remarks about bravery embodied a sense of pride, contrasting sharply with the palpable anxiety among the women, who were nonetheless drawn into his flirtation and tales of valor. The clashing emotions of hope, anxiety, and the stark reality of war painted a vivid picture of life in Charleston during this tumultuous time.

## Query

On February 28, Major Anderson sought his officers' assessments on the required personnel and ships to reinforce Fort Sumter for submission to the War Department and President Lincoln. He instructed each officer to provide their estimates autonomously, hoping that the daunting realities of reinforcement would dissuade the government from pursuing aggressive action.

Captain Foster, the chief engineer, reported the highest estimate: landing and securing the batteries at Cummings Point and Morris Island would necessitate 3,000 regulars or 10,000 volunteers, with an additional 3,000 regulars required for Sullivan's Island. To maintain control over these positions afterward, a force of 10,000 regulars or 30,000 volunteers would be essential. The anticipated resistance would come from South Carolinians, bolstered by troops from neighboring states.

Artillery Captain Truman Seymour presented an even graver evaluation. He asserted that resupply missions via deceit were no longer feasible due to heightened vigilance, stating that open attempts would fail unless vessels were impervious to gunfire. Such efforts would draw immediate attention, and any sizable Union troop movement toward Fort Sumter would provoke a swift Confederate response, consolidating substantial local resources against an invading force. Seymour warned of the possibility of twenty thousand trained marksmen assembling to defend Charleston Harbor, which he likened to the siege of Sevastopol, predicting catastrophic losses.

Other officers contributed estimates for a necessary invading force varying between three thousand and ten thousand men, all requiring maritime protection. Quartermaster Hall suggested deploying seven warships, although he cautioned that success would hinge on improbable circumstances and a likely failure was more probable.

Anderson relayed these assessments to Washington, careful to express his concurring view that an effective attempt to reinforce the fort would need at least twenty thousand well-trained troops. This recommendation implied the need for a force larger than the entire U.S. Army at that time, demonstrating the immense challenge posed by reinforcing Fort Sumter amidst the looming conflict.

## Epigraph

The provided text contains an epigraph for the book "The Demon of Unrest". It consists of three quotes reflecting on the significance of slavery, the capacity of government, and the sacrifices of war.

The first quote is from Arthur Peronneau Hayne, who expresses the critical role of slavery in maintaining comfort and happiness within society, arguing that separation from the Union is the only way to safeguard their way of life. Hayne emphasizes that without slavery, their families would suffer, and all aspects of life, including education, would be lost.

The second quote by Abraham Lincoln discusses the implications of a minority's right to disrupt government structures at will. He suggests that failing to address this question may imply that people are incapable of self-governance, highlighting the seriousness of their political challenges during a tumultuous period.

The third quote comes from Mary Boykin Chesnut, reflecting on the heavy toll of war. It questions the value of the sacrifices made and the penalties endured, capturing a profound sense of loss and contemplation regarding the conflict's necessity and outcomes.

These reflections underscore the tensions surrounding slavery, governance, and the moral dilemmas associated with warfare, setting a somber tone for the narrative that may follow in "The Demon of Unrest".

## The Sumter Expedition

**\*\*The Sumter Expedition\*\***

On the morning of April 13, Captain Fox and his team of volunteers were preparing their captured schooner for a planned operation off the Charleston Bar. The day was bright and mostly clear, although the wind was strong, suggesting challenging conditions for their mission. As midmorning approached, an ominous black smoke began to billow from the harbor, signaling increased activity and conflict in the surrounding area.

By this time, Captain Rowan of the \*Pawnee\* expressed growing impatience, urging immediate action against their enemy forces. However, Captain Fox advised against such a reckless move. He recognized that without the support of the \*Powhatan\*, a direct assault would likely lead to disaster for their smaller contingent. The absence of the \*Powhatan\* was a critical factor in their strategic planning, as engaging the enemy without adequate backup could endanger not only their mission but also their lives.

Fox's leadership was instrumental in maintaining a focus on survival and proper tactics, despite the heightened tensions indicated by the smoke and rising gunfire in the harbor. Rather than rushing into action, he encouraged restraint and patience among his crew. The situation demanded careful assessment rather than impulsive decisions that could result from the pressure of the moment.

Overall, this early part of the day was marked by anticipation and unease. The crew was on high alert, aware of the importance of their forthcoming engagement and the significant risks involved. The decisions made in these moments could be pivotal, setting the tone for the ensuing confrontation and determining the fate of Captain Fox and his team as they navigated the complicated landscape of naval warfare and strategy in a time of unrest.

## **Confession**

The chapter titled "Confession" revolves around Major Anderson at Fort Sumter during a crucial period of communication and decision-making leading up to the outbreak of conflict. The mail delivery delays—lasting three to four days—heightened Anderson's sense of isolation, complicating his attempts to communicate effectively. Distrust in the telegraph due to potential intercepts left the mail, which both sides considered confidential, as the primary means of communication.

On April 7, Anderson received an unexpected copy of President Lincoln's orders to resupply Fort Sumter, under a plan crafted by Captain Gustavus Fox. This revelation shocked Anderson, as it contradicted his prior understanding that the fort would be evacuated. The following day, on April 8, Anderson penned a private letter to his friend, Adjutant General Thomas in Washington, suggesting that Thomas should destroy it upon reading. He cautioned that Fox's expedition would be perceived as a betrayal by the South, undermining previous assurances given to the Confederate commissioners. Anderson expressed that it was now too late for him to offer advice regarding Fox's plan, which he interpreted as potentially disastrous.

Anderson noted that he had been misled by Lincoln's aide, Ward Lamon, into believing that an evacuation would occur. Frustrated, he lamented his ignorance of Fox's expedition, stating, "I ought to have been informed that this expedition was to come." He revealed his inner sentiments, stating, "We shall strive to do our duty," while admitting, "my heart is not in the war which I see is to be thus commenced."

Ultimately, this emotionally charged letter, which displayed Anderson's conflict over the situation, never reached its intended destination. Instead, it ended up on a desk in the Charleston Hotel, highlighting a moment of personal turmoil amid impending broader conflict.

## **The True Enemy**

The chapter titled "The True Enemy" discusses the pivotal events surrounding Mississippi's secession from the Union during the early days of the Civil War. On January 9, 1861, Mississippi's secession convention unanimously favored leaving the Union, following South Carolina's lead. This decision was driven by a fervent belief in the necessity of protecting the institution of slavery, which the delegates viewed as vital to their economic interests. In their official declaration, the distinction between the North and the South was stark; they asserted that slavery was essential to global commerce and that any attempt to abolish it was viewed as an attack on civilization itself.

The declaration expressed a deep-seated fear of Lincoln and the Republican Party's intentions, anticipating a future devoid of slavery, which they felt would lead to their utter subjugation. The notion of secession was framed not as a choice, but as a desperate necessity. The delegates articulated their grievances regarding what they perceived as the Union's hostility towards slavery, characterizing it as a malevolent force intent on undermining their way of life. The emotional intensity of their statements marked the deep divisions within the country, as they believed the North had fomented animosity and insurrection against them.

President Buchanan's response to this burgeoning crisis illustrates a portrait of indecision and impotence. In his address titled "Message on Threats to the Peace and Existence of the Union," he acknowledged the

gravity of the situation yet ultimately deferred responsibility for conflict resolution to Congress. His remarks indicated a belief in federal authority to counter aggression against federal property but fell short of any concrete action, leading to significant discontent. Buchanan's speech concluded with a somber note of resignation, revealing his internal conflicts about the presidency and the gravity of the Union's disintegration, while simultaneously expressing his earnest desire for the country he served.

Overall, this chapter captures the emotional and political turmoil at a critical moment in American history, showcasing the deep divisions over the institution of slavery and the challenges faced by national leadership in navigating these tumultuous waters.

## **The Worst Fear**

**\*\*Chapter Summary: The Worst Fear\*\***

On April 13, a significant escalation in conflict was noted by Captain Foster, the chief engineer at Fort Sumter. He documented improved aim from Confederate gunners in his engineering journal, describing their increasing intensity as they targeted the fort. The Confederate forces utilized "hot shot," which resulted in injuries to four men when a shot struck a ground-level embrasure. A more severe incident occurred when an explosive shell ignited a fire in the officers' quarters, prompting urgent warnings from Foster to Anderson about the potential danger to the fort's gunpowder cache.

Contrasting the tense atmosphere at the fort, Confederate Assistant Surgeon Parker enjoyed a calm morning on Morris Island, celebrating the lively spirits of his fellow soldiers despite the ongoing battle. He expressed discontent over Fort Sumter's focus on Fort Moultrie, feeling it overlooked their own contributions. After breakfast, Parker and his comrades were stirred by loud cheers from the beach, where they witnessed Fort Sumter ablaze.

As the fire grew fiercer, mortar shells and incendiary cannonballs continued to rain down on the fort. Captain Doubleday recognized the immediate risk to the powder magazine, ordering the transfer of gunpowder barrels even as the fire spread. This hazardous task interrupted by incoming projectiles was perilous, with men struggling to protect the gunpowder from igniting. Despite their efforts, the relentless heat from the flames and explosions made the situation increasingly desperate.

Smoke choked the air as Doubleday evaluated the dire conditions inside. Many soldiers attempted to evade suffocation by lying low or escaping to open air. The intense flames and tumultuous sounds caused significant concern; as smoke billowed around the fort, Doubleday ordered a show of defiance by firing back at the jubilant Confederate forces celebrating their apparent victory.

On the city's Battery, civilians gathered to spectate the destruction of Fort Sumter, while Doubleday lamented the inaccessibility of his artillery to retaliate effectively. As the chaotic scene escalated, structures within the fort began to collapse, and the loss of defenses became evident. Over on Morris Island, Confederate soldiers remained relentless, showering the fort with cannon fire, which exacerbated the burning structure.

At precisely 12:48 PM, Confederate gunners successfully struck the flagpole of Fort Sumter, causing the flag to fall and invoking a wave of jubilant cheers from the Confederate forces, symbolizing their moment of triumph amid the chaos of warfare.

## **The Petrel's Delight**

## **\*\*The Petrel's Delight, The Demon of Unrest\*\***

In early April 1861, Charleston found itself enveloped in a mix of tension and oppressive weather as the workers at Sumter and enslaved individuals in Confederate batteries prepared for an imminent battle. The anticipated evacuation of Fort Sumter never occurred, raising the stakes for both sides. Cold temperatures and high winds plagued the region, and heavy rain throughout the weekend forced many indoors, creating an uneasy atmosphere.

Keziah Brevard, a local planter, expressed her despair about the persistent bad weather, which she believed intensified the gloomy feelings surrounding the social and political turmoil of the time. Her correspondence highlighted fears for her livestock amidst the stormy conditions, revealing the intertwining of personal concerns with the broader societal chaos.

Conversely, the resilient social life of Charleston continued, as demonstrated by Mary Chesnut, who, despite suffering from a cold, visited several prominent families. During her rounds, she noted her husband Colonel Chesnut's potential as a match for Mrs. Wigfall, reflecting the intertwining of personal aspirations and societal expectations. However, in the backdrop, the shadow of war loomed large, influencing conversations and inducing a restless spirit among the inhabitants. Mary noted her attempt to escape this unrest through literature, only to be thwarted by the heavy weight of war news infiltrating her thoughts.

Despite Mary's anxieties, others appeared unaffected by the impending conflict. One socialite displayed an indifference to the growing tensions, feeling only pity for those absent in Charleston. In stark contrast, Louis Wigfall, whom Mary dubbed the Stormy Petrel, seemingly thrived on the tension unfolding around him.

Amidst these social dynamics, General Beauregard issued a critical order shutting off supply access to Fort Sumter, attributing the decision to the delays from Washington. In parallel, President Lincoln prepared to send emissaries to inform Governor Pickens of his intentions to resupply the fort, marking a pivotal moment leading to the conflict. As the tensions escalated, the weather reflected the tumultuous landscape, contributing to the unease that permeated Charleston's society on the brink of war.

## **Sources and Acknowledgments**

In "Sources and Acknowledgments" of *\*The Demon of Unrest\**, the author discusses the creative process behind the book, emphasizing the search for a compelling narrative. He recounts how, during the onset of the COVID pandemic in early 2020, he began exploring the events that led to the Civil War, particularly at Fort Sumter. The chaotic political climate of the pandemic fueled his curiosity about the origins of the war, prompting a detour from his usual research methods, which were interrupted by limited access to archives due to safety measures.

Engaging with various online resources, he discovered *\*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies\**, which captivated him with its comprehensive collection of primary documents, allowing him to piece together a vivid account of America's struggle leading to civil conflict. His visit to Charleston post-pandemic further enriched his understanding, as he interacted directly with historical documents revealing the stark realities of slavery, including a list of enslaved individuals and advertisements for slave auctions.

Utilizing resources from the Library of Congress, he examined papers from key historical figures such as Maj. Robert Anderson and others, while also making good use of digital archives dedicated to Abraham Lincoln's works. Notably, secondary sources such as *\*Battle Cry of Freedom\** by James M. McPherson and *\*Team of Rivals\** by Doris Kearns Goodwin also played significant roles in shaping his narrative.

The author expresses gratitude toward various contributors, including his wife and editor, Amanda Cook, whose insights helped refine the book from its initial draft. He acknowledges the support from publicists and friends who facilitated his journey through the writing process, ensuring the project stayed true to its vision. Through their collaboration, the book metamorphosed into a finished product, enhanced by a thoughtful design and marketing strategy, ensuring its reach to a wider audience.

The author's reflections reveal not only his extensive research process but also the personal connections and inspirations that shaped the final work, which is peppered with anecdotes and insights from the past.

## **Dual Warning**

In the chapter titled "Dual Warning," dated February 21, significant events unfold in Washington and Philadelphia surrounding a potential assassination threat against President-elect Abraham Lincoln. General Winfield Scott, after receiving alerts about the threat from Dorothea Dix via railroad executive Samuel Felton, initiates an investigation. He enlists the help of John A. Kennedy, the head of New York City police, who has already dispatched detectives to scrutinize the situation. Scott offers Kennedy assistance from Colonel Charles P. Stone, who is newly appointed as inspector general of the District of Columbia Militia by Scott.

As the tension builds, Kennedy's detectives infiltrate Southern cities, notably Baltimore, where one detective, David S. Bookstaver, poses as a music agent and uncovers alarming chatter about plots against Lincoln. The urgency escalates as Lincoln is scheduled to arrive in Baltimore soon. General Scott discusses the conspiracy with Secretary of State William Henry Seward, prompting Seward to send an urgent message to his son, Frederick, instructing him to deliver a warning to Lincoln in person.

Frederick boards a train to Philadelphia, where he finds Lincoln staying at the Continental Hotel. Meanwhile, Lincoln's aide, Norman Judd, meets with Allan Pinkerton, who conveys severe concerns about the assassination plot and urges immediate action. Despite the warnings, Lincoln remains dignified and skeptical, opting to stick to his planned schedule and address a significant public event in Philadelphia.

Later, Frederick finally meets Lincoln, who reviews the reports of the conspiracy calmly. He questions:

1. How the intelligence was gathered.
2. The involvement of specific individuals regarding the threats.

Lincoln expresses disbelief in the plot's severity, contrasting the disparate intelligence sources. He insists on deliberation before making any decisions. Despite the gravity of the situation, Lincoln's demeanor reflects a composed leader grappling with the conflicting pressures of public duty and personal safety, promising to consider his father's advice about altering his travel plans before his audience with the people the following day .

## **A Proper Commander**

In November 1860, Colonel John L. Gardner, the commander of U.S. Army forces in Charleston, South Carolina, faced mounting anxiety as tensions escalated over the secession movement. Gardner was responsible for several key military installations, most notably Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, which had historical ties to Edgar Allan Poe. The political climate intensified concerns that local citizens might attempt to seize Fort Moultrie, which was poorly fortified and uniquely vulnerable to internal threats. The fort was designed primarily to guard against foreign naval attacks and had little defense against a potential assault from its rear, where impeding sand hills offered favorable positions for enemy sharpshooters.

Historically low troop numbers and inadequate supplies compounded Gardner's troubles. He expressed worries in correspondence regarding the civilian workers at the forts, who far outnumbered his soldiers and expressed indifference towards secession based on monetary incentives. Gardner feared the workers might turn against the fort on a bribe. He requested additional troops to help secure the posts. Meanwhile, higher Army officials recognized Gardner's incompetence and planned to replace him with Major Robert Anderson, a dedicated officer who had previously served at Fort Moultrie and demonstrated both loyalty to the Union and knowledge of local dynamics.

Upon assuming command on November 21, 1860, Anderson sought to foster a friendly atmosphere, welcoming local citizens to the fort. However, he quickly identified critical weaknesses within the fortifications and echoed Gardner's plea for reinforcements at Fort Sumter and Castle Pinckney. Anderson believed that a strong defense posture was the best deterrent to potential aggression from local secessionists.

Despite attempts to maintain a civil relationship with Charleston's citizens, disturbances deepened, exemplified by a parade of young militia members that publicized their secession agenda. In his reports, Anderson noted the ominous prelude to conflict, declaring that the long-looming storm of war was near, as preparations intensified for an inevitable confrontation over federal authority in the South .

## The Chasm

In June 1858, following James Hammond's departure from Washington, Abraham Lincoln captured attention at the Republican Illinois State Convention by securing the nomination for the U.S. Senate. Aged forty-nine, Lincoln was set to face the younger Democratic incumbent, Stephen Douglas. Their competition fostered significant interest, especially given their contrasting physical presences—Lincoln's height of six-foot-four surpassing Douglas's stature significantly.

During the convention closing, Lincoln delivered a powerful, albeit potentially politically detrimental, address positioning himself firmly against slavery. His law partner, William Herndon, acknowledged the speech's moral validity but questioned its political prudence. In this address, Lincoln criticized Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act, claiming it escalated the discord concerning slavery that the Missouri Compromise had temporarily quelled. He declared that a major crisis loomed, alluding to the biblical adage, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Lincoln argued that the government could not endure as half slave and half free.

Expressing his hopes, Lincoln articulated a desire to halt slavery's expansion rather than abolish it outright. He envisioned a future where public sentiment would lean towards its gradual extinction—however, he asserted that Douglas's legislation made this increasingly unattainable. He concluded his speech with a spirited confidence in the Republican Party's strength, fortifying belief in their eventual triumph against the proponents of slavery.

Despite ultimately losing the election, Lincoln's national profile surged, and the "house divided" phrase became a prophetic echo of the divisions to come in the nation.

In the months that followed, another prominent figure, Senator William H. Seward, spoke powerfully against slavery. In an October speech in Rochester, New York, he echoed Lincoln's warnings but went further, suggesting that the systems of slavery and free labor were fundamentally incompatible. He framed the struggle as an "irrepressible conflict," arguing that the United States would eventually become either entirely slaveholding or entirely committed to free labor. Asserting that the Democratic Party was fundamentally aligned with slaveholders, Seward emphasized the ongoing revolution against slavery in the United States. His address introduced pivotal phrases that would shape the political debate in the years ahead, solidifying the concept of an "irrepressible conflict" in the national consciousness.



## Party Malice

In Springfield, Illinois, the mood following the Election Day celebration swiftly transitioned to an unexpected tranquility. John Nicolay noted that the city had returned to its usual calm, nearly forgetting the tumultuous election, as it prepared for Lincoln's formal celebration—a “Jollification”—which was reluctantly anticipated due to Lincoln's narrow victory. Similarly, young Anna Ridgely expressed her disillusionment with Lincoln's election in her diary. Despite her father's Democratic affiliations, she feared for the nation's future, lamenting Lincoln's lack of experience and polish, and expressing concern that Southern animosity might persist under his leadership.

Henry Villard, a German émigré reporting for the *New York Herald*, shared similar apprehensions regarding Lincoln's ability to navigate the escalating chaos of the nation. Recalling a chance encounter with Lincoln during the senator's campaign, Villard noted Lincoln's self-doubt and his reflection on his political ambitions, which his wife firmly believed he would achieve. Lincoln's humorous admission of his incredulity at the idea of becoming President underscored his insecurities.

As the tensions grew, Lincoln seemed unaware of the Southern discontent but believed the majority still favored the Union. He saw himself as a moderate regarding slavery and avoided incendiary comments ahead of his inauguration. On the night of the Jollification, despite the festive atmosphere with decorated homes and fireworks, Anna noted a lack of enthusiasm and described the smallest torch-lit procession she had ever seen. The highlight was a speech by Senator Lyman Trumbull, whose remarks were subtly guided by Lincoln to assure the South of Republican intentions, even as he drafted passages that suggested Southern militias could quell potential uprisings.

While Trumbull's speech was disseminated widely, it did little to alleviate the national unease. Lincoln reiterated his decision to maintain silence in public discussions, fearing that any words he spoke would exacerbate the tension. His reflections revealed a deep understanding of the political vitriol surrounding him, which he compared to biblical reluctance for signs of divine approval. As the wait for electoral certification began, ominous sentiments circulated regarding Lincoln's safety and the dire implications his presidency might pose to the South, stoking fears of abolition and loss of control over enslaved people .

## The Real Danger

The chapter titled "The Real Danger" details the tense situation in the United States as Abraham Lincoln prepares to assume the presidency amidst rising unrest. With Anderson at Sumter, the national crisis intensifies, and Lincoln's frustration grows. This frustration stems from the political vacuum left by President Buchanan, a flood of petitions for patronage jobs, and ominous threats suggesting plots against Washington. The Springfield Republican reported a warning from radical senator Louis T. Wigfall of Texas that the capital could fall to secessionists before Lincoln's inauguration, exacerbating an already charged atmosphere.

Lincoln's looming inaugural speech weighs heavily on him, as he realizes its significance amidst the growing unrest. He expresses a desire to take the oath of office immediately, acknowledging the challenges awaiting him and lamenting that the existing administration is doing little to stabilize the situation. His friend Thurlow Weed expresses regret that Lincoln cannot assume office earlier, while Southern congressman Alexander H. Stephens urges Lincoln to take action to "save our common country."

In the midst of this turmoil, Lincoln receives positive news when William Seward accepts the position of secretary of state after some delay. Seward advises Lincoln to arrive in Washington earlier than usual to mitigate potential unrest. While Lincoln feels reassured by Commanding General Winfield Scott's promise of protection, he is more concerned about the electoral vote count set for February 13, 1861, which he

believes poses greater risks than his inauguration.

As the year ends, the atmosphere is far from optimistic. Keziah Brevard, a Charleston planter, expresses her fears about the upcoming year through a nightmare, depicting the turbulence that lay ahead. New Year's Day in Washington is subdued, with Charles Francis Adams noting the grim mood that prevails despite good weather. Despite some positive developments like the appointment of Joseph Holt as Secretary of War, there's a palpable sense of dread in the air, culminating in Texas senator Wigfall's belief that Holt's appointment signifies future conflict, underscoring the urgent and dangerous times America faces .

## **Crisis**

In the chapter titled "Crisis," set during January 1-8, Edmund Ruffin embarks on a significant journey from a plantation near Gainesville, Florida, to Tallahassee to attend the state secession convention. On his way, he learns of Major Anderson's maneuvers at Fort Sumter and the potential for conflict, stirring his belief that the war's advent could accelerate decisions within the convention. Florida remained cautious, with Ruffin insisting that immediate action was imperative, as they awaited responses from other states.

Reaching Tallahassee on January 3, Ruffin discovers a delay in the convention's start due to the late arrival of delegates, coinciding with his sixty-seventh birthday. Despite being elderly compared to the general population, Ruffin was notably vigorous. The convention eventually convened, allowing him the honor of taking a seat amongst the delegates amid significant fanfare, which he claimed he did not desire, despite his fondness for public attention.

In parallel, President Buchanan reconvened his cabinet on January 2 to address whether to fortify Major Anderson at Fort Sumter. The reading of a contentious letter from South Carolina escalated tensions and led to a majority in the cabinet supporting reinforcements, despite Interior Secretary Thompson's dissent. Buchanan conceded to the pressure to dispatch troops.

Meanwhile, the War Department faced logistical challenges on how to reinforce Anderson. General Scott reconsidered previously planned missions for troop deployment, ultimately deciding to charter the commercial vessel, "Star of the West," to undertake the mission under strict confidentiality. The vessel left New York on January 5, with plans to transport soldiers to Fort Sumter while maintaining utmost secrecy to avoid interception.

On the same day, Anderson expressed satisfaction in a letter written on New Year's Eve, indicating he felt secure in his position at Fort Sumter and that reinforcement was not urgent. This sentiment contradicted earlier pressures, prompting Buchanan to cancel the mission of "Star of the West," but notifications were delayed, leaving Anderson unaware of both the earlier mission and the subsequent cancellation orders.

During this time, Anderson received an unexpected visit from his wife, Eba, who traveled to Charleston for support. Their reunion provided temporary relief to his isolated situation at the fort and lifted the spirits of the garrison, which was busy fortifying defenses in anticipation of conflict.

## **To Dare**

In December 1860, South Carolina's political elite convened in Columbia, shrouded in fog, for a significant convention amidst rising tensions surrounding secession. The assembly comprised 169 prominent figures, including former congressmen, governors, and senators, each with substantial wealth, most owning slaves. The convention's atmosphere was charged with both excitement for disunion and anxiety, particularly regarding the potential consequences of Abraham Lincoln's election.

The choice of Columbia as the meeting location sparked debate, with some fearing it might harbor unionist sentiment. Calls to delay the convention gained traction among conservative delegates wary of hasty action. Despite initial disagreements, the convention commenced on December 17 at the First Baptist Church, electing David Flavel Jamison as president instead of the expected Robert Barnwell Rhett, indicating a divide within the secessionists.

Jamison's speech, deliberately void of mention regarding slavery's future, encouraged patience while simultaneously echoing a revolutionary spirit with his rallying cry, "To dare! and again to dare!" However, fears of a smallpox outbreak soon overran these ambitions, leading to the convention's swift relocation to Charleston, seen by some as an act of cowardice.

Arriving in Charleston, the delegates swiftly united in support of immediate secession. Later, on December 20, a secession ordinance was hastily approved, formalizing South Carolina's disunion in a matter of minutes. The ensuing ceremony resembled a celebration, drawing comparisons with the signing of the Declaration of Independence, devoid of the solemnity that haunted the original signers. Enthusiastic crowds welcomed the delegates, particularly Robert Barnwell Rhett, who basked in recognition and adulation, markedly different from the muted response of the convention's opening.

The evening marked a high within Charleston, with cannon fire and fireworks celebrating their resolute break from the Union. Yet, amidst the jubilation, figures like James L. Petigru expressed a somber acknowledgment of the day, recognizing the gravity of their decision even as they participated in the celebrations.

As South Carolina laid bare its newfound independence, the implications loomed large. Meanwhile, within Fort Moultrie, Major Anderson and his men observed the celebrations from a distance, sensing a potent shift in the political landscape signifying an impending conflict. This chapter vividly illustrates the charged atmosphere leading to secession, interweaving the personal and political stakes of the figures involved, as South Carolina took dramatic steps toward its tumultuous future.

## **Sunrise**

**\*\*Sunrise, The Demon of Unrest - Chapter Summary\*\***

On the morning of April 12, Captain Doubleday commenced his day at Fort Sumter with breakfast alongside other officers. Following a meager meal of salt pork, farina, and rice salvaged from the fort, they readied themselves for the day's imminent conflict. The officers organized the garrison into gunnery squads to ensure a sustained firing effort once fatigue set in. Doubleday led the first group to the guns facing the Iron Battery on Morris Island. He felt no remorse as he aimed the first gun against the rebellion, understanding the importance of their fight for the survival of the United States, viewing resistance against oligarchy as vital.

However, a deep regret lingered for Doubleday; they could not utilize the fort's larger and more effective parapet guns, as ordered by Major Anderson, due to the perilous exposure to Confederate artillery. At six-thirty, Major Anderson commanded the firing to commence, resulting in the first shot from Sumter hitting the Iron Battery but failing to cause damage. Despite more artillery firing from Fort Sumter, the Confederate guns retaliated quickly, showering the fort with relentless fire. Doubleday noted the destructive impact of the Confederate rounds, which not only shook the fort but threatened the crucial stores of powder within.

As the day continued with relentless firing from both sides, sections of the fort caught fire from enemy shells. The wind and rain added a sense of chaos, while the men manning the guns bravely cycled through exhaustion. Captain Seymour joined the fray with a touch of humor, inquiring about the uproar.

Meanwhile, Confederate gunners on Morris Island observed Sumter's firing. They developed techniques to dodge incoming shots while some soldiers playfully chased after rolling cannonballs, despite the risks involved. The engagement between the two forces took on an unexpected air of camaraderie, especially

amongst the Confederates, who cheered each American shot as a nod to Major Anderson's bravery. This led to a paradoxical atmosphere; although it was indeed a war, the men on both sides engaged in a spirited, albeit dangerous, display akin to a deadly sport, simultaneously fighting and engaging with a sense of festive morale amidst the turmoil .

## The Great Darkness

The chapter titled "The Great Darkness" takes place on Friday, April 12, during a significant moment in the history of Fort Sumter. At midday, Private Thompson of Fort Sumter observes a third steamship joining two others that have been present since dawn. This raises the hopes of the men stationed at the fort, as they believed these vessels were part of an expedition to relieve them. However, as time passes, the ships remain stationary, leading Thompson to anticipate that they would wait until nightfall to make their move.

Confederate lookouts confirm the presence of these ships, identifying two as warships—the \*Pawnee\* and \*Harriet Lane\*—and a third, the \*Baltic\*, which seems to carry rowboats for landing troops. As Ruffin, a Confederate officer, surveys Fort Sumter's condition, he notes some damage from artillery fire but finds no significant breaches in the fort's walls. Meanwhile, the return fire from Sumter is ineffective, with most cannonballs either missing the target or being deflected by the Confederate Iron Battery.

As night descends, anxiety grips both sides, with Confederate soldiers mocking the federal fleet's inaction. The stormy weather adds to the tension and visibility issues while the shelling continues intermittently. Ruffin, unable to sleep, ventures outside to observe the conflict as the night unfolds, and at about 12:30 a.m., he is startled awake by gunfire, prompting him to fear a landing operation by federal forces.

The narrative then describes the chaos on the beach as a small boat with two passengers lands, only to be confronted by Confederate artillery fire. Confusion reigns as the occupants, who claim to be "friends" from the Southern Confederacy, are apprehended. They turn out to be disoriented and intoxicated men who had intended to transport guardsmen. As the chapter concludes, the tension remains high with Sumter's guns silent and Confederate artillery still firing sporadically, reinforcing the ominous atmosphere as the fort's defenders wait for their relief or further conflict.

The juxtaposition of the weary soldiers at Fort Sumter and the steadfast federal ships shrouded in darkness spins a narrative of anticipation, confusion, and the looming threat of warfare .

## The Vile Wretch in Petticoats

**\*\*The Vile Wretch in Petticoats, The Demon of Unrest\*\***

In Washington, South Carolina's congress representatives found a new source of anger beyond abolitionist petitions when the \*National Era\*, an antislavery newspaper, published the serialized novel \*Uncle Tom's Cabin\* by Harriet Beecher Stowe on June 5, 1851. The portrayal of slavery in this novel incited outrage. The narrative begins in a Kentucky dining parlor, where two men, including one named Haley, a slave trader, plot to purchase a slave named Tom. The novel's portrayal of the brutal realities of slavery, including the violent behavior of Simon Legree, who beats and ultimately kills Tom, struck a nerve with many readers.

The book's completion on April 1, 1852, gained over fifty thousand eager readers, establishing Stowe as a literary sensation in the North. However, the Southern response was immediate and severe. Louisa McCord and other Southern essayists condemned it as misconstrued and fanatical. The prospect of owning or reading the book quickly became dangerous in the South, as it affronted the region's honor by attacking slavery's perceived virtues. The reaction was particularly intense because Stowe was a woman, intensifying

misogynistic attitudes among her critics.

In retaliation, Southern writers launched numerous proslavery novels, contorting themes from Stowe's work. Authors like Charles Jacobs Peterson and the writer of *\*Aunt Phillis's Cabin\** crafted narratives that blamed the effects of slavery on Northern abolitionists, rather than the institution itself. Despite the organized responses, *\*Uncle Tom's Cabin\** sold an astounding three hundred thousand copies within three months, affirming Northern perceptions of slavery as cruel.

Ultimately, the Southern perspective, entrenched in the belief that slavery fostered a benevolent society, clashed violently with Stowe's portrayal. They had no effective means to address the collective insult that *\*Uncle Tom's Cabin\** posed to the South's honor. Resentment grew, signaling a deeper conflict—one that foreshadowed the mounting pressures leading to the Civil War. It was not yet full-blown hatred, but the seeds of conflict were being sown.

## **The Sumter Expedition**

Captain Fox felt increasingly powerless as he contemplated a risky attempt to break through to Fort Sumter. He concluded that trying to fight his way in without the formidable presence of the *\*Powhatan\** and its army of soldiers would be a reckless endeavor, especially given the tumultuous seas. While he held onto hope for the *\*Powhatan's\** arrival, he sought to ensure that Major Anderson would at least receive some provisions in the interim. This necessity prompted him to rely on the quick thinking of one of his officers.

Captain Stephen C. Rowan of the *\*Pawnee\** proposed a solution by commandeering a waiting private schooner, which he presented to Captain Fox. The vessel was intended to transport essential supplies and a small contingent of men to Sumter until the larger fleet, including the *\*Powhatan\**, could arrive. Enthusiastic volunteers quickly stepped forward to crew the schooner, comprised of officers, soldiers, and sailors committed to the mission. They worked diligently to load the vessel with guns and food, with plans to navigate past the bar late at night on Saturday, April 13.

The crew felt optimistic about their venture. With a small vessel operating under the cover of darkness, they believed they had a genuine chance of reaching Sumter's wharf undetected. Even in the event that they were spotted, the combination of its limited size and the cloak of night would likely make it difficult for shore cannons to accurately target the schooner. This hopeful outlook inspired the crew as they prepared for their challenging journey ahead, fully aware of the risks yet determined to provide support to their fellow soldiers at Fort Sumter.

## **Blood Among the Tulip Trees**

In "Blood Among the Tulip Trees," the chapter unfolds the harrowing tale of Edmund Ruffin and his family's turmoil during the Civil War as Union forces forced them to abandon their Marlbourne and Beechwood plantations. With the Union soldiers made their grievances known against Ruffin for instigating secession and firing the first shot at Fort Sumter, Beechwood particularly became a point of hostility. When Ruffin and his son Edmund, Jr., returned to their plantation, they discovered a scene of devastation: feathers littered the lawn, the interior was vandalized, and personal belongings were stolen, leaving them with a haunting sense of violation.

The soldiers' disdain manifested in their graffiti, signing names and leaving obscenities on the walls, with one soldier explicitly demonstrating his contempt for Ruffin's actions. The emotional toll intensified for Ruffin on January 5, 1863, as he learned of his daughter Mildred's death, further deepening his sense of isolation and unrecognized contributions to the Confederate cause. Despite being lauded as a hero, he

reflected on how his life might have been forgotten without this notoriety.

As the war took a devastating turn, Ruffin suffered another personal blow with the death of his son Julian in battle. By this point, living in a refuge provided by his son Edmund, Jr., Ruffin was weary and burdened by age and loneliness. He expressed a longing for death, stating that he sought to end his own life, fueled by a boiling resentment against Union rule and the perceived betrayal of his fellow Virginians.

On June 18, 1865, after maintaining a diary for over seven years filled with his strident anti-Union sentiments, he prepared to take his own life. He meticulously set up his musket but faced a failed attempt at first. However, persevering, Ruffin ultimately succeeded, resulting in a tragic end to a life steeped in controversy and regret, marked by the grim aftermath described in a contemporary newspaper account .

## Preparations

On Wednesday, April 10, the primary concern for Major Anderson at Fort Sumter was food supply. He instituted half rations for the garrison, predicting they would last only two more days, until dinnertime on April 12. The men made do with rice scavenged from broken window glass left over from earlier. Assistant Surgeon Crawford documented this dire situation in his journal, noting Anderson's strict management of the limited resources. The officers became adept at salvaging crumbs from their meals, and during one meal, Major Anderson reprimanded Doubleday for leaving a piece of cracker behind. The men were reduced to having only one cracker each morning and night, supplemented by rice and coffee for supper. In a desperate act of resourcefulness, Doubleday managed to find and save a potato that had been stepped on.

That night, in anticipation of potential conflict, Anderson ordered his men to relocate their bedding from the barracks into the fort's casemates, preparing for the worst. Meanwhile, Confederate General Beauregard expressed concern about the possibility of a Union fleet arriving under the cover of darkness, as overcast skies would conceal the ships from view. The wind remained strong on the bay, but the tide was predicted to rise around eight p.m., making Charleston's harbor more navigable for the Northern ships.

To counter any incoming fleet, a detail of soldiers and enslaved individuals set about filling three outdated vessels with flammable materials. These vessels were strategically placed in a channel next to Fort Sumter, where they could obstruct and illuminate any enemy ships attempting to approach the fort. Should the Union fleet arrive, the hulks were to be ignited, providing a clear line of sight as part of the defensive strategy.

This chapter underscores the harrowing preparations and the state of desperation faced by Anderson and his men as tensions escalated on the eve of anticipated confrontation. The scarcity of resources and the looming threat of an attack characterized the tense atmosphere at Fort Sumter during this pivotal moment.

## Dedication

The provided text is a dedication page from the book "The Demon of Unrest."

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**\*\*Summary:\*\***

The dedication page succinctly acknowledges C.A.G. as the recipient of the dedication. It is presented in a formal structure, adhering to the conventions typical of literary dedications. The text is brief and straightforward, encapsulating a significant emotional aspect of connection to the named individual. This dedication serves as a tribute, setting a personal tone that highlights the author's appreciation or dedication

towards C.A.G. through this work.

**\*\*Key Points:\*\***

- The text primarily consists of a dedication formatted in a conventional manner.
- The acknowledgment is directed towards C.A.G., indicating a personal significance.
- The overall simplicity reflects a respectful homage that often accompanies literary works.

This dedication introduces the reader to a theme of personal connection that may be explored further in the chapters to come.

## **The Handsomest Man**

**\*\*Chapter Summary: The Handsomest Man\*\***

In Charleston, life continued seamlessly despite the looming civil war. The Battery's vibrant atmosphere included carriages, elegantly dressed men and women, and the occasional cannon blast signaling military preparations. Mary Chesnut, a prominent figure among the local elite, became the center of attention with her flirtation involving former Governor Manning, a wealthy man known for his handsome looks, who was also married. This playful engagement, termed a "flirtation" in Southern society, was viewed as a benign distraction from the turbulent times.

Mary and her husband journeyed to Charleston from their Mulberry plantation on March 25. The train was filled with attendees bound for the state's secession convention. Manning cleverly maneuvered to sit beside Mary on the train, pretending to be in charge of a young lady. Their interaction revealed Mary's delight in Manning's attention, which also sparked some jealousy in her husband—a dynamic she appeared to enjoy.

During their stay at the Gidiere boarding house, tensions arose at breakfast, particularly due to her uncle Judge Withers' sharp remarks about Mary's conversational style, which incorporated French phrases. This remark led to a humorous exchange involving William Henry Trescot, who noted their intent to keep their discussions hidden from enslaved staff.

Manning continued to engage Mary flirtatiously, even interrupting her during breakfast dressed in formal attire to request a photograph—an act indicative of the social rituals of the time. Mary, relishing the moment, brought her husband along on this endeavor. The day later shifted to a darker tone as Mary visited Magnolia Cemetery with friends, revealing the somber realities of death amid societal distractions.

That evening, her husband confronted Mary regarding her attention to Manning, accusing her of flirtation. Mary found the accusation amusing, dismissing it with laughter, signifying a complicated relationship dynamic where flirtation and societal expectations played a significant role amidst the backdrop of impending conflict.

## **The Silence Breaks**

In "The Silence Breaks, The Demon of Unrest," the narrative unfolds on February 11 and 12, marking the start of Lincoln's journey on the Great Western Railroad through various towns in Illinois toward his inauguration. As he traverses towns like Illiopolis, Niantic, and Danville, Lincoln takes time to stand on the rear platform, allowing the public to see him. His presence stirs significant curiosity and excitement as citizens gather in crowds anxious to catch a glimpse of the man whose election has unsettled the nation.

During brief stops, Lincoln speaks to the crowd, delivering a noteworthy message about the national importance of his travels, quoting a poet to convey hope: “Behind the cloud the sun is still shining.” After reaching the Illinois-Indiana state line, Lincoln faces the unpleasant surprise of receiving terrible yet overpriced food during his midday break.

Continuing his journey, Lincoln's train stops in Thorntown, Indiana, where he entertains the crowd with a humorous story about a man and his slow horse that illustrates getting sidetracked. His wit resonates well with the audience, and he keeps the mood light, bidding them farewell while noting that he must reach Washington on time.

Lincoln's day culminates in Indianapolis at the Bates Hotel, where he delivers a careful speech before an immense crowd. He engages directly with the pressing political tensions, questioning terms like “coercion” and “invasion” while asserting the government's rights to reclaim federal properties. Despite initial reticence, Lincoln boldly addresses the audience, addressing the roles of states and the federal government in maintaining unity.

After the speech, a surge of curious onlookers seeks to meet him, pressing against his space. Meanwhile, Lincoln anxiously awaits his son Robert, who guards a satchel containing copies of his inaugural address. When Robert returns, slightly inebriated, he reveals he left the satchel with the hotel clerk. In a humorous rush, Lincoln descends to retrieve it, sifting through baggage until he finds his own. The chapter exemplifies Lincoln's human side amidst the monumental pressures of his impending presidency, blending humor with the gravity of historical context. Now, as he embarks on his journey, he reflects on his birthday, surrounded by family and festively adorned train cars celebrating his presidency.

## **Mystic Chords**

The chapter "Mystic Chords" opens with a reflection on Washington, noting its unusual quietness and somber atmosphere on Inauguration Day, March 4. Journalist Henry Villard comments on the city's transformation into a Southern-centric locale despite the federal ban on commercial slave trading. With a significant but decreasing enslaved population, tensions were palpable, tipping the city into a state of unrest, as General Scott remarked on the fragile situation.

Lincoln, struggling with anxiety about his inaugural speech, awoke early to a dreary morning marked by threatening rain. On the day of his inauguration, he grappled with the senator's abrupt decision to reject the position of Secretary of State. His correspondence with William H. Seward sought to reverse this refusal, emphasizing the demands of public interest and his personal feelings.

The procession to the Capitol involved President Buchanan and several dignitaries moving through a city filled with onlookers. Decorative flags and a carriage procession, including representations from the states, emphasized unity despite the brewing conflict. The Capitol itself, partially completed and disorderly, symbolized the nation's instability. Buchanan, eager to abandon his presidency, soon met with Lincoln before the ceremony commenced.

In preparation, General Scott appeared to reassure Seward about troop deployments, contrasting with the reality of military presence amidst rumors of potential unrest during the ceremony. Lincoln's inauguration unfolded before a vast audience, as he donned a formal outfit distinct from his usual attire and took to the podium, where the audience greeted him warmly.

Lincoln's speech, carefully crafted, aimed to bridge divides yet ultimately evoked mixed reactions. It favored conciliation while simultaneously provoking anxiety among secessionists, leading some to interpret it as a signal of conflict. Amidst these reactions, Lincoln insisted on peace rather than threats of coercion and maintained a hopeful stance of preserving the Union without military force.



As the new First Family entered the White House, Buchanan's contrived farewell encapsulated the varying emotions surrounding this notable transition. That evening, the Lincolns attended the Inaugural Ball, which proved less lively than anticipated, leading observers to comment on the subdued nature of the celebration in contrast with expectations.

Throughout the events, themes of tension, hope, and uncertainty echoed as the nation stood on the brink of a civil schism.

## **Blood and Dishonor**

**\*\*Chapter Summary: Blood and Dishonor\*\***

On December 27, in Washington, former Assistant Secretary of State William Henry Trescot met with Senators Jefferson Davis of Mississippi and R.M.T. Hunter of Virginia to discuss urgent news. They rushed to the White House to speak with President Buchanan, who was visibly anxious. Trescot noted Buchanan's nervousness as he made a casual reference to the consul in Liverpool, prompting Davis to shift the conversation to the real concern at hand.

Davis inquired if Buchanan had heard from Charleston recently, to which Buchanan responded negatively. Davis then revealed the alarming news of Major Anderson's relocation from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, articulating the dire situation by stating that blood and dishonor surrounded the presidency. Buchanan, overwhelmed by the implications of this news, expressed his disbelief and frustration, claiming that it contradicted his orders.

Amidst this turmoil, Secretary of War Floyd, upon being summoned, denied having received any telegrams confirming Anderson's actions and was skeptical of their truth. He insisted on a cabinet meeting, which turned into a lengthy discussion spanning several days about how to address the untenable situation. During the gathering, tensions escalated when Floyd presented a statement that blamed Major Anderson for violating the government's commitments, advocating for the evacuation of Sumter to prevent civil war.

This stance was met with robust opposition from Secretary of State Jeremiah S. Black, who supported Anderson's decision. The cabinet was divided, with Floyd's suggestion of withdrawal viewed by most as surrendering to South Carolina's demands. Fearing the administration could appear weak, Attorney General Stanton criticized Floyd's approach, citing the damage to public trust and the loss of both a million dollars and a fort.

As the cabinet deliberated, Senator Robert Toombs visited Buchanan, emphasizing that the situation at Fort Sumter had implications for the entire South, awakening Buchanan to the gravity of the crisis. Pressure mounted from all sides, with Anderson's actions earning him accolades in the North, where he became a symbol of courage, contrasting sharply with the inaction of the administration. Buchanan recognized that withdrawing Anderson would likely incite public outrage, marking the beginning of a much deeper conflict.

## **Dread**

In the chapter titled "Dread," the atmosphere in Washington is tense as the city prepares for the electoral count and certification of Lincoln's election scheduled for February 13. General Scott's troops and artillery are positioned throughout the city, symbolizing the Army's determination to safeguard the electoral process against any potential disruptions. Speculation swirls around Baltimore, where it is rumored that six thousand armed men might pose a significant threat to the peace of Washington. In response to these fears, one hundred police officers from New York and Philadelphia converge upon the city, solidifying efforts to ensure

the successful conduction of the electoral count.

Washington, situated just below the Mason-Dixon Line, is close to Maryland and Virginia, both of which harbor sympathies towards the Southern cause. This situation is compounded by the daily defections from the government, which raises concerns among officials. Senator Seward expresses alarm at the situation, highlighting that nearly half of the 4,470 civil and military employees originate from states that openly support the revolutionary movement. This discontent is pervasive, affecting every department and bureau, as well as military and diplomatic missions across the globe.

Jeremiah Black, the secretary of state, communicates with President Buchanan, indicating that while no concrete evidence exists of a plot to seize Washington, the very control of the city is vital for the secessionists' objectives. Black underscores the critical importance of maintaining control over Washington, suggesting that any attempt to seize the city by secessionists would be a foolish oversight if they truly intended to achieve their goals. This sentiment encapsulates the broader atmosphere of distrust and unease pervading the capital, as politicians grapple with the reality of a nation on the brink of significant turmoil.

## **Frustration**

In this chapter titled "Frustration," set between December 20 and 24, Navy Lieutenant David Dixon Porter navigates the political tensions in Washington amidst the secession crisis. While en route downtown, he encounters the residence of Senator Jefferson Davis, where a vibrant party is underway. Although Porter is a loyal Unionist, he maintains friendships across political lines to gauge prospects for peace. His connection to the Davis family leads him to attend the gathering, where excitement over South Carolina's recent secession is palpable.

Mrs. Varina Davis, buoyant with joy, invites Porter to accompany her to the White House to share the "glorious news" with President Buchanan. However, Porter perceives her eagerness for celebration with trepidation. The two take a carriage to the White House, during which Varina proposes that Porter join a secessionist navy and mentions the potential establishment of a monarchy, prompting him to doubt the viability of such a regime. He imagines chaos and fragmentation among rebel states instead.

Upon returning to the Davis residence, Porter observes an atmosphere of drunken jubilation among Davis's supporters, contrasting markedly with the grave concerns he harbors. Davis remains composed, seemingly pleased with South Carolina's actions, leaving Porter disillusioned about the support for rebellion. He refrains from joining the group's visit to Buchanan, contemplating the awkwardness of the president engaging with those who oppose the Union.

The narrative shifts to New York, where Horace Greeley writes to President-elect Abraham Lincoln, advocating a firm stance against Southern secession, emphasizing that compromise should not come at the expense of principles. Greeley expresses alarm at the current instability, foreseeing potential conflict and safety concerns surrounding Lincoln's impending inauguration.

Amid growing tensions, Lincoln is forced to navigate political intricacies as critical discussions about the vulnerability of U.S. forts arise. General Winfield Scott warns that forts Moultrie and Sumter are inadequately defended, pressing Lincoln to prepare for possible military action. The chapter closes with Lincoln's frustration evident, fearing a surrender of the forts, which he condemns vehemently, signaling a somber yet tense atmosphere as the nation stands on the brink of conflict.

## **A Little Treason**

Edmund Ruffin was in Tallahassee observing Florida's secession convention when the news broke on January 9 that the *\*Star of the West\** attempted to reinforce Fort Sumter. This event had a significant impact on the delegates; those previously opposed to secession began to support it fervently. The following morning, the convention voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession, with a tally of 62 to 7. Ruffin eagerly telegraphed the news to Governor Pickens in Charleston and editors of the *\*Richmond Enquirer\**, expressing his discontent about the expense—six dollars and thirty cents for just six words, approximately two hundred dollars today.

Ruffin quickly received further encouraging news about Mississippi's secession and Southern states moving to occupy federal assets. He attributed this momentum to Major Anderson's continued presence at Fort Sumter and President Buchanan's inaction. Writing that if Fort Sumter had not been "treacherously garrisoned," no state would have preemptively seized a fort, he felt a sense of urgency to return to Charleston.

Ruffin departed Tallahassee at four p.m., enduring a grueling journey that involved a train to Monticello and a stagecoach ride to Quitman, Georgia. The rough, unpaved roads made the journey challenging for a sixty-seven-year-old man. After arriving at Quitman in the dark, he found the train waiting with no available seats, forcing him to stand by a fire for two hours before it departed at 3:30 a.m. The train journey to Savannah took nine and a half hours, where he received additional uplifting news about Alabama's recent vote to secede by a margin of 61 to 39.

Ruffin reached Charleston by one o'clock the next afternoon and the following day took a tour of the fortifications seized by state forces, accompanied by South Carolina Secretary of War Jamison. They were joined by engineers, volunteers, and even one hundred enslaved persons sent by their owners to assist. At Fort Moultrie, Ruffin observed activity and enthusiasm among the militia volunteers. Recognizing the optics of labor, he jokingly asked a soldier if he could take his place briefly "to commit a little treason to the northern government," before shoveling sand and filling a wheelbarrow, a symbolic act reflecting his commitment to the Southern cause.

## **Any Minute Now**

In "Any Minute Now, The Demon of Unrest," we find ourselves situated at Fort Sumter during early April. The atmosphere is fraught with tension as Major Robert Anderson anticipates an order from Washington to vacate the fort. While he is prepared to engage in battle if necessary, he has also come to the reluctant conclusion that abandoning the fort might be the best way to prevent violence. However, Anderson feels he lacks the authority to make that decision alone, fearing that a surrender could impugn his loyalty and equate him with General Twiggs, who had capitulated all federal positions in Texas.

On April 1, Anderson reports the situation at the fort to Col. Lorenzo Thomas, the new adjutant general. Mist obscures the surrounding area, reducing visibility and heightening feelings of isolation among the garrison, which Anderson describes as an "imprisonment." He updates Thomas on dwindling food supplies, stating that unless Governor Pickens allows civilian laborers to leave the fort, provisions could run out by April 8. Tensions mount as Pickens restricts the flow of food supplies, turning the atmosphere increasingly desperate.

On April 3, Captain Joseph Marts, aboard the schooner *\*Rhoda H. Shannon\**, mistakenly enters Charleston Harbor instead of the Savannah River due to poor visibility. His arrival triggers artillery fire from the nearby forts, prompting him to attempt to navigate back while under fire. Meanwhile, Captain Anderson remains restrained in his response, sending officers to seek clarification from Confederate officials instead of retaliating. This restraint, while intended to prevent conflict, begins to demoralize the fort's garrison, with some questioning Anderson's leadership.

The day's events inspire speculation among Charleston citizens, as rumors swirl about potential Northern actions and the fate of Fort Sumter. Louis Wigfall delivers a speech at the Mills House hotel, confidently declaring that war with the North is imminent. His dramatic rhetoric captures the anxiety and anticipation running through the city, especially among those like Mary Chesnut, who muses on the unsettling possibility that a naval attack could occur at any moment. The chapter closes emphasizing the prevailing unease as individuals await the inevitable clash, with tension lingering in every interaction.

## **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.

## **Pledge**

In Washington, the nation faced significant turmoil as President Buchanan's cabinet experienced turmoil. On December 8, Howell Cobb, the treasury secretary, resigned, aligning with his home state of Georgia. Shortly after, Secretary of State Lewis Cass also resigned due to frustration with Buchanan's inaction regarding South Carolina's secession efforts. Cass urged the president to take decisive action against the uprising, reminiscent of Andrew Jackson's approach during the 1832 nullification crisis. However, Buchanan preferred to maintain peace and leave the White House without conflict, leading to Cass' resignation, who remarked, "The people in the South are mad; the people in the North asleep," and noted Buchanan's fearful demeanor.

On the same day, a group of four South Carolina congressmen approached Buchanan to discuss the critical issue of the federal forts in Charleston Harbor. They reached an informal agreement that was ambiguously defined, influenced by the congressmen's hopes and Buchanan's desire to avoid confrontation. Buchanan suggested they summarize their discussions in writing for "prudential reasons." The next day, December 9,

they submitted a short statement indicating South Carolina's intention not to attack the forts before the upcoming secession convention, under the condition that no reinforcements were sent to the sites and that their military status remained unchanged.

Buchanan responded with a memo indicating that should South Carolina forces attack, it would place them "completely in the wrong," holding them responsible for the outbreak of the Civil War. He expressed strong reservations about the term "provided," concerned it could be construed as a commitment he was unwilling to make. The congressmen insisted that it was not their intention to imply an official representation of their state and acknowledged their individual authority in this matter.

Despite Buchanan's interpretation, the delegation left believing he had made a solid commitment to maintain the military status quo at Charleston Harbor, a belief that they conveyed back to authorities in South Carolina. Buchanan, however, considered this as merely "the promise of highly honorable gentlemen" to assist in the matter, calling the supposed pledge an honor-based commitment that would ultimately propel the nation closer to war.

## A Toast

### Summary of "A Toast, The Demon of Unrest"

On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln sought to raise the American flag over Fort Sumter, four years after it had fallen under Confederate fire. The ceremony was set exactly four years after the fort's evacuation by its commander, Robert Anderson, who was approached by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to oversee the flag-raising. Despite Anderson's desire for a simple commemoration of loss, Stanton orchestrated a grand public event attended by thousands, marking a climactic moment in the Civil War's aftermath.

As the nation healed from the war, with General Lee's surrender just days prior, the loss was palpable. The war claimed 750,000 lives, with South Carolina alone mourning 21,000 fatalities among its fighters. The end of slavery also dealt a significant financial blow to Southern planters, costing them significantly in human capital. On the day of the ceremony, the fort resembled a shattered monument, reduced to rubble by years of conflict.

Attendees included notable figures such as abolitionists Henry Ward Beecher and William Lloyd Garrison, who arrived via steamships to honor the occasion. The ceremony began with prayer and scripture readings, acknowledging the sacrifices on both sides. Major General Abner Doubleday, a survivor of the original garrison, was present, reminiscing about those tumultuous years.

Anderson's emotional state during the event was noted; the hardships of the past years weighed heavily on him as he prepared to raise the flag. The ceremony unfolded with much fanfare—bleachers were filled, and the flag was adorned with floral tributes before being hoisted amidst cheers and gun salutes. The moment resonated deeply, offering a sense of closure and unity—a turning of the page for a nation bruised by conflict.

That evening, in Charleston, tributes continued in a celebratory dinner. Anderson proposed a toast to Lincoln, unaware that the President was fatally wounded at Ford's Theater at that very moment. This stark coincidence haunted attendees, particularly John Nicolay, who felt a heavy sense of regret for not being in Washington to possibly avert the tragedy.

As the nation celebrated, the looming shadow of Lincoln's assassination cast a pall over the newfound peace, intertwining the themes of victory and loss against the backdrop of a fractured nation moving toward reconciliation.

## Salute

In the chapter titled "Salute," the situation at Fort Sumter is portrayed as increasingly difficult for the soldiers stationed there. Asst. Surgeon Crawford, who had previously been in good health, expresses concern about his deteriorating condition, feeling the toll of stress and fatigue. He writes to his brother, longing for a break and lamenting the state of the country, indicating a bleak outlook for the future. The pervasive fear of an impending attack weighs heavily on the troops, with Crawford noting the frantic activity of the Carolinians working on their defenses, likening them to bees.

Despite his pride in his service, Crawford conveys bitterness regarding the lack of reinforcements, criticizing the policies of President Buchanan that left them vulnerable. He believes they are being sacrificed in a political strategy to sway public opinion against those who would attack them. Yet, he acknowledges that the first shot fired at Fort Sumter will likely rally the nation to arms, signaling a significant shift in the conflict.

On February 22, Major Anderson made the notable decision to fire a salute in honor of George Washington's birthday, which marked a departure from their usual conservative approach to ammunition. The salute consisted of thirty-four shots representing each state, including those that had seceded. Crawford supervised the firing, noting the interest of spectators at the opposing Confederate forts who contemplated the meaning of such military displays.

Anderson's actions drew criticism from figures like Mary Chesnut, who viewed the salute as an affront to the newly declared Confederate States. The chapter encapsulates a moment of tension, embodying both the pride and sorrow of military duty under dire circumstances as the country sits on the brink of war. It highlights the emotional strain on the men at Fort Sumter, who grapple with their loyalty to duty amidst growing hostility and uncertainty.

## **Confusion**

In the chapter titled "Confusion," set in Charleston on April 11, Beauregard faced significant challenges as he prepared for an imminent conflict against Fort Sumter. Despite the excitement, he was unprepared for war, hindered by a shortage of gunpowder after recent vigorous displays. With only enough powder to sustain a few hours of fire, he awaited a fresh supply due that night from Augusta, Georgia, which required careful transport through an area vulnerable to enemy fire.

Beauregard's difficulties were compounded by the inexperience of his officers and troops. Many came from prestigious local families but were untrained volunteers lacking proper coordination. As more troops, expected to number around three thousand, flooded in, Beauregard communicated his hopes to the War Secretary that he would manage a satisfactory account of his forces, despite their low level of organization. Reports from Colonel Roswell Ripley highlighted the dire situation, revealing that many recruits were ill-equipped and poorly trained.

As the day progressed, desperation began to seep into the communications between Beauregard and his officers. Warnings about the possibility of Northern reinforcements reinforced the urgency; one officer, Henry J. Hartstene, urged Beauregard to make a decisive move quickly. On the ground, Major W.H.C. Whiting expressed frustration over the disarray among the troops and beseeched Beauregard for assistance.

Despite the turmoil, preparations were intensified as soldiers received orders to ready their positions at Cummings Point, where they awaited a signal to bombard Fort Sumter. The anticipation built as its most eager members, particularly Edmund Ruffin of the Palmetto Guard, prepared to fire the first shot in the confrontation, though delays led to disappointment when the expected bombardment did not commence at the initial hour.

Throughout the night, tension lingered as the gunners remained on high alert, only to learn that the attack was postponed until the following morning. Ruffin found himself ready to act, prepared for an event that had

stirred great excitement and anxiety in the community. As night fell, the sounds of drums echoed, signaling movement towards fulfillment of their intentions.

## Suspense

In the chapter titled "Montgomery and Richmond," the tension mounts in early April as Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet grow increasingly anxious about the situation. Their confidence relies solely on the assurances from their intermediary, Justice Campbell. The Confederate commissioners in Washington—who were accustomed to power and command—struggle with feelings of disrespect, particularly due to Secretary of State Seward's refusal to meet them. They anticipated being treated as representatives of a new republic, but the reality is more disheartening.

Campbell's reassurances increasingly conflict with rising rumors about impending military action against the Confederacy, including reports of ships armed with troops heading to Fort Sumter. As they grow alarmed, the commissioners communicate that President Lincoln is meeting with naval officers, which raises their concerns even further. In response, Confederate Secretary of War L. P. Walker instructs General Beauregard to maintain a state of "watchful vigilance" as if anticipating an attack.

Meanwhile, in Charleston, John Manning, an aide to Beauregard, continues to engage in a flirtation with Mary Chesnut, capturing the lighter, yet complex social dynamics amidst the brewing conflict. Mary documents moments from their encounters in her diary, notably how Manning shared his secret with his wife about their flirtation, creating an amusing twist in personal relationships during such tumultuous times.

In Richmond, the Virginia Convention holds a vote on a proposed ordinance of secession on April 4, which is soundly rejected, prompting outrage from figures like Edmund Ruffin in Charleston. He expresses his disdain for the convention's reluctance to secede, hoping that a naval attack from Lincoln would finally spur Virginia into action. Ruffin's frustrations are palpable as he wishes for circumstances that would justify secession and rid him of the burden of explaining Virginia's hesitation.

Thus, the chapter juxtaposes the growing sense of foreboding regarding military conflict with the intrigues of social interactions, underscoring the conflicting emotions experienced by individuals in positions of power and their personal lives amid uncertainty.

## The Premier's Advice

In the chapter titled "The Premier's Advice," the ongoing preparations for Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address are detailed. As Lincoln refines his speech, he seeks insights from notable figures, including Francis P. Blair, Sr., and William Seward, who embody contrasting perspectives on the nation's crisis. Blair wholeheartedly approves of Lincoln's draft, while Seward brings a more critical eye, emphasizing his own understanding of the perilous situation the nation faces.

Seward sends Lincoln an extensive critique, arguing that many in the Republican Party do not grasp the gravity of the moment. He suggests that specific phrases in Lincoln's speech could provoke the secessionists, particularly regarding federal property. He urges Lincoln to modify this rhetoric, warning that failure to avoid confrontation might lead to division and conflict, culminating in war over Washington, D.C. Rather than merely editing, Seward insists that Lincoln eliminate certain promises outright, advocating for a tone filled with warmth and reconciliation instead.

In his response, Lincoln acknowledges the merit of Seward's suggestions, accepting many of the proposed changes but retaining sections that reflect his commitment to preserving government property without

threatening force against its citizens. Additionally, Seward struggles with crafting an appropriate conclusion, and his lengthy, convoluted drafts fail to resonate as Lincoln would like. Ultimately, Lincoln proposes a more fitting ending that emphasizes unity, friendship, and a shared national past. This final version embodies the essence of Lincoln's vision, steeped in emotion and a call for healing among a divided nation.

Following this discussion, events unfold as the Peace Convention concludes, met with both skepticism and praises from various political factions. In Montgomery, a military engineer, P.G.T. Beauregard, initiates preparations for potential conflict, illustrating the growing tensions that could propel the nation into war. His secretive orders for military equipment highlight the shifting dynamics and the foreboding atmosphere in the lead-up to Lincoln's presidency .

## Four Telegrams

The chapter titled "Four Telegrams" presents a critical communication dated April 10, 1861, during the lead-up to the Civil War, involving key figures General Beauregard and L. P. Walker. The correspondence begins with a telegram from Montgomery directed to General Beauregard in Charleston, urging immediate action regarding Fort Sumter. Walker, as the Confederate Secretary of War, emphasizes the necessity of demanding the evacuation of the fort if Beauregard confirms the Washington Government's intent to supply it by force. He instructs Beauregard to respond promptly.

In response, Beauregard acknowledges the directive and states that the demand will be made at noon the following day. This trigger point is crucial, highlighting the tense atmosphere leading to conflict, as both parties are acutely aware of the looming confrontation.

Walker then sends another telegram to Beauregard, suggesting that unless there are specific, personal reasons for a noon demand, it would be more appropriate to make the request earlier. Beauregard tactfully counters, stating that the reasons for waiting until noon are indeed special.

These exchanges underscore the careful strategizing and urgency felt by Confederate leaders concerning Fort Sumter, which they view as pivotal. The tone reflects a blend of military protocol and the gravity of the moment, capturing the tension inherent in the early days of the conflict. The concise nature of the telegrams also demonstrates the direct communication style used in military correspondence, focusing on clarity and promptness in light of the critical situation. This brief chapter thus sets the stage for the dramatic events that would soon unfold around Fort Sumter, marking a significant turning point in American history.

## Crossing the Bar

**\*\*Crossing the Bar: The Demon of Unrest\*\***

On January 8, the *\*Star of the West\** was met with unexpectedly fine weather while navigating toward its destination. The officer in charge, Lieutenant Woods, unknowingly distributed guns and ammunition to the troops, oblivious to the revelation that their mission had been canceled. As the ship drew closer to Charleston at midnight, Captain John McGowan ordered all lights extinguished to avoid detection. Despite the darkness, which was further compounded by a new moon, the soldiers were allowed on deck.

As they entered the Charleston Bar, McGowan found the harbor lighthouses darkened and a crucial navigational buoy missing. He resorted to sounding—an ancient method of measuring depth by lowering a weighted line into the water—until dawn revealed a light that he deduced was from Fort Sumter. Woods later described their approach as “groping in the dark,” reflecting the uncertainty of their navigation. They proceeded cautiously, waiting for daylight before attempting to cross the bar, aware that an ebb tide was



complicating their efforts.

At daybreak, a nearby steamer, clearly on watch, prompted McGowan to keep the \*Star of the West\*'s flag visible. The steamer signaled with blue and red lights, demanding identification but when McGowan remained silent, it crossed into the harbor, firing rockets. As they neared the entrance, both Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie came into view, with Fort Sumter displaying an American flag.

The lookouts spotted a large red palmetto flag on Morris Island, indicating the presence of a hidden battery of five cannons, manned by cadets from a nearby smallpox hospital. Captain Abner Doubleday at Fort Sumter was alone that morning and was aware of the cannon's purpose to protect the shipping channel rather than attack Sumter. Despite rumors of the \*Star of the West\*'s mission, Doubleday felt it implausible that the government would send a mere transport vessel in such a situation.

However, as he scanned the horizon, he saw the steamer approaching with the United States flag aloft. Just then, a cannon fired from the battery on Morris Island, landing in the channel ahead of the ship, seemingly to deter its progress. Yet, the \*Star of the West\* continued forward, with a large United States garrison flag raised, prompting Doubleday to hurry to notify Major Anderson of the unfolding events.

## **The Scent of Rebellion**

In the chapter "The Scent of Rebellion," we follow Edmund Ruffin's fervent journey post-election, motivated by his belief that South Carolina would lead the charge for secession after Lincoln's victory in 1860. Arriving in Columbia on November 10, 1860, he found himself celebrated as a hero, a stark contrast to his experiences back in Virginia. Remarkably, students from South Carolina College even requested him to speak, although he hesitated due to fear of failure. Nevertheless, he reveled in the admiration, taking steps to draw further attention by adorning a blue cockade on his hat—an emblem associated with the secessionist movement.

The state legislature's debate culminated in a historic vote approving a measure that, while merely a preamble, edged South Carolina closer to secession, a dream Ruffin long anticipated. He expressed his exhilaration in a letter to his sons, claiming this day was the happiest of his life and a prelude to a revolution that would liberate the slave-holding states from Northern influence.

As he traveled towards Charleston, Ruffin was met with enthusiastic cheers and applause, even being the guest of honor at a pro-secession rally that featured cannon fire and celebratory music. This Southern custom of a musical serenade was reminiscent of the camaraderie and passionate spirit surrounding the pro-secession sentiment. In Charleston, Ruffin sensed a collective fervor palpably driving the secessionist movement, which was fueled by the fear of a Black Republican government. Augustus Baldwin Longstreet captured this sentiment when he wrote about the unstoppable tide towards secession in a public letter, likening it to trying to control a tornado.

Ruffin's hopes soared as he noted that secession, once a distant dream, appeared tangible. Commentary from influential figures, like journalist Horace Greeley—the "New York Tribune" editor—encouraged this optimism, as he publicly stated that if the Cotton States believed they would thrive outside the Union, they should be allowed to leave peacefully.

Energized by his experiences in South Carolina, Ruffin traveled to Georgia to further incite secessionist sentiment. However, he was disheartened by the hesitation among Georgia's leaders. Returning to Richmond, he found criticism and condemnation awaiting him, yet he remained defiant, continuing to wear his blue cockade, emblematic of his unwavering support for what he perceived as a righteous cause.

## **Suspicion**

On Tuesday, April 9, Edmund Ruffin checked out of his hotel and headed to the Charleston wharf. He carried a small carpet bag and a borrowed training musket from the Citadel Military Academy, boarding a steamer to Morris Island, where he aimed to join in its defense. Ruffin, a known secessionist, relished the attention he garnered upon his arrival. Compliments and praise from unfamiliar individuals made him feel both proud and a bit ashamed of the exaggerated recognition for what he considered a small effort.

At Morris Island, he was warmly welcomed by a rifle company captain, who rallied volunteers to cheer for him, which he modestly acknowledged. However, some soldiers privately found his enthusiasm amusing, noting that while Ruffin aimed to take an active role in duties, he managed only enough to appease his need for recognition. Despite this, he maintained an amiable presence and enjoyed the luxuries provided by Charleston's elite families, demonstrating moderation in indulgence.

Ruffin declined offers to serve at remote artillery batteries, preferring a position where he could directly engage with the battle. He opted to sleep on a pallet in a tent with fellow volunteers, enjoying restful nights attributed to the cool, breezy air. He accepted membership in the prestigious Palmetto Guard, agreeing to serve only in actual military operations and emphasizing the need for a formal agreement to bolster his status as a heroic figure.

In Montgomery, President Jefferson Davis convened his cabinet amidst growing anxieties over Fort Sumter. The fort, adorned with a U.S. flag, loomed as a threatening presence in Charleston Harbor. An impending naval expedition aimed at delivering food to the fort raised conflicted sentiments among Confederates; while benevolence appealed to their chivalric values, it risked prolonging the fort's contentious hold and possibly masking intentions for military reinforcement or even seizing Charleston.

Davis expressed skepticism towards Lincoln's notice regarding the expedition, critiquing it as lacking authenticity. During discussions centered on the fort's fate, Davis acknowledged Major Anderson's valor but concluded the fortress's presence required immediate action. The cabinet leaned toward demanding surrender from Anderson and preparing Beauregard to dismantle the fort if necessary. Amid this debate, Secretary of State Toombs cautioned against attacking the fort, predicting dire consequences and a violent civil conflict that would amplify tensions already simmering throughout the nation. Ultimately, the cabinet's discussions reached a pivotal decision.

## **Placing the Knife**

In *\*Placing the Knife\**, the chapter details Mary Chesnut's reflections in the wake of Abraham Lincoln's election, which she interpreted as a catalyst for impending war. Traveling back to South Carolina from Florida, she learned the news on a train, where it was broadly discussed that "Lincoln was elected and our fate sealed." Convinced that significant changes were on the horizon, she began documenting her thoughts in a diary, emphasizing the necessity for calm determination as the Confederacy faced dire stakes.

Mary noted her husband, U.S. Senator James Chesnut, had resigned in protest of Lincoln's election, aligning with South Carolina's secessionist movements. While she wished he had shown more ambition, she recognized her desire for action was both a burden and a curse. At thirty-seven, Mary had no children and lived on the expansive Chesnut family plantation, Mulberry. This grand estate in Camden, South Carolina, boasted a rich array of flora and thrived through the labor of hundreds of enslaved Black individuals who maintained the gardens, fields, and household.

The plantation, while beautiful and self-sufficient, also represented the stark realities of Southern life, including the moral complexities surrounding slavery. Mary herself opposed abolition but openly lamented the grievous abuses inherent in the system. She described the infamy associated with the sexual exploitation of enslaved women and girls, remarking on the moral decay it represented.

Despite the charm of Mulberry, Mary felt isolated compared to her life in Washington, D.C., where her social engagements flourished. Returning home from the capital felt like a sacrifice, and she expressed her growing frustration with the monotony of plantation life. The chapter also unfolds the political atmosphere as South Carolina experienced a surge of excitement and militance in response to secession, alongside James Hammond's resignation from the Senate as he aligned with the secessionist wave.

The political and social tensions of the time left an indelible mark on Mary, who navigated the complex dynamics of family and society while grappling with her own ambitious desires amid a swiftly changing national landscape .

## **To Sell or Collide**

In early February, South Carolina was finalizing its plans for an assault on Fort Sumter, with construction at Cummings Point nearly complete. Major Anderson reported his concerns to Adjutant Cooper, hoping that South Carolina wouldn't proceed with the long-threatened attack. Meanwhile, the Hall-Hayne mission to Washington faltered due to misunderstandings about the importance of Fort Sumter. Hayne, the South Carolina Attorney General, entered the White House with the expectation of easily negotiating the fort's surrender, intending to make a legal claim for it under eminent domain, akin to negotiating for land for a railroad.

However, U.S. War Secretary Holt swiftly dismissed Hayne's assertions, emphasizing that the President lacked the authority to sell federal property—only Congress could approve such an action. Holt also misjudged Southern sentiments, claiming the fort was simply there for national defense and that its presence posed no threat to South Carolina's honor, which angered Hayne.

Amid this tension, Governor Pickens of South Carolina expressed a militaristic approach in letters, suggesting that federal troop increases in Washington were an affront, indicating the urgency for action. He proposed that Maryland and Virginia should seize capitals and forts in a swift coup to disrupt Northern control. Pickens believed this would result in a rapid resolution and prevent a prolonged civil war.

Simultaneously, former senator James Hammond communicated with a friend, sharing his eagerness for conflict as he felt that ongoing arguments were futile. He criticized the opposing views on slavery, insisting that Southern prosperity was superior and deserved respect.

Back at Fort Sumter, Major Anderson received a heartfelt letter from his wife, Eba, who detailed a meeting with a Southern planter. She expressed her embarrassment over South Carolina's stance on the fort, asserting her disillusionment and demanding an end to the conflict, stressing that if Anderson were to abandon the fort, she would not be content—suggesting he should destroy it before leaving if necessary. This illustrates the complexities of the emotional and ideological divide in the South during this tumultuous period.

## **Conflict**

In early April, Major Anderson, known for his composure, expressed growing frustration with Washington's inaction regarding Fort Sumter. The catalyst for his discontent was learning of a telegram from Confederate Commissioner Crawford to General Beauregard, warning that President Lincoln might not order an evacuation, instead leaving the decision to Anderson, effectively letting him be "starved out." Upon receiving the news three days later, Anderson felt compelled to voice his concerns in a letter to Adjutant General Thomas, questioning whether the government would truly abandon him without guidance.

Anderson was anxious about the public perception of him unilaterally deciding to leave the fort; he found it staggering that such a critical decision would rest on his shoulders amid rising tensions and the prospect of war. He asserted in his communication that after over thirty years of service, he would not allow the narrative to depict him as having treasonously abandoned his post without proper direction. He emphasized the need for immediate answers regarding the fate of the public property under his command and where to take his forces.

While a letter from Washington was en route to provide some answers, it would not be the guidance he desired. With his warnings about impending food shortages for his troops alarming Lincoln, the President had come to believe the garrison could endure until April 15 without severe issues, only to now learn the situation was more dire.

Lincoln took charge, drafting a directive for Anderson, which was dispatched through War Secretary Cameron without explicitly mentioning Lincoln's involvement. The message conveyed a sense of urgency, indicating that Anderson's previous correspondence had caused concern. It detailed plans for a maritime expedition meant to resupply Sumter and confirmed Captain Fox as the mission's leader.

Lincoln urged Anderson to hold out until the expedition's arrival, reducing risks to a minimum, but indicated that he trusted Anderson would make prudent decisions as a soldier. Importantly, Lincoln granted Anderson the authority to surrender his command if necessary for the safety of his troops, reinforcing the weight of his responsibility during this critical juncture .

## **On the Scent**

In the chapter titled "On the Scent," dated March 3, John Delane, the editor of the \*Times\* of London, perceives that political tension in America is escalating to a point where violence might erupt. This conflict, particularly between the Southern States and the Union following Lincoln's election, could make for captivating news for his readership, particularly those in England who might take some satisfaction in America's strife.

To grasp the situation firsthand, he decides to send Sir William Howard Russell, a celebrated reporter known for his vivid accounts, particularly from the Crimean War, to observe the tumultuous events in America. Russell had initially hesitated to accept the assignment, being concerned about his wife's health and enjoying a comfortable domestic life. He had spent years covering various conflicts across the globe and was now immersed in the literary circles of London, socializing with notable figures like Thackeray and Dickens. However, upon Thackeray's insistence that he must travel to learn about the unfolding crisis, Russell concedes to the assignment.

He embarks on the steamship \*Arabia\* from Queensland, Ireland, alongside Southern passengers, including a former U.S. Legation member who joined the Confederacy and Colonel Robert S. Garnett, a Virginian officer determined to resign to fight for the South. Through these interactions, Russell gathers insight into the Southern perspective on the conflict. Garnett expresses a belief in a hierarchy supporting slavery, viewing it as a "divine institution," denouncing equality as a doctrine and expressing deep disdain for the Northern states.

During the fourteen-day voyage, Russell learns about the critical issue concerning the ownership of two federal properties: Fort Pickens and Fort Sumter. He notes in his diary that there is widespread speculation about how the U.S. Government will respond to the threats posed by the Southern states, which have vowed to resist any attempts to supply or reinforce federal garrisons. Amidst this tension, the Federal Government appears paralyzed, unable to provide leadership as its soldiers navigate the precarious situation independently.

# Ovation

## **\*\*Ovation, The Demon of Unrest - Summary\*\***

On the morning of April 18, aboard the *\*Baltic\** off Sandy Hook, New Jersey, Capt. Gustavus Fox and Major Anderson reflected on the recent events surrounding Fort Sumter. Anderson, with a sense of resignation, dictated a summary to Simon Cameron, Secretary of War, describing the dire state of the fort after a 34-hour defense. He outlined the destruction suffered, lacking provisions, and the subsequent decision to evacuate under terms offered by General Beauregard. On April 14, the evacuation was completed with colors flying and drums beating, having salvaged company and private property.

As *\*Baltic\** entered New York Harbor, cheers erupted from passing vessels, mirroring the enthusiasm seen in Charleston after the fort's surrender. President Lincoln formally expressed gratitude to Anderson's team through the War Department, followed by a personal letter aimed at showing appreciation and clearing any misunderstandings. Two months later, Lincoln would express the immense trials faced during this period in Washington.

Meanwhile, General Beauregard celebrated the success of his soldiers and proclaimed their potential for invincibility against opposing forces. Mary Chesnut captured her thoughts in her diary, emphasizing the significance of the siege.

On April 19, with Virginia having seceded, Edmund Ruffin marked the end of his self-imposed exile, declaring satisfaction as the nation moved toward war. Crowds amassed to read news of Northern troop movements and the ensuing violence in Baltimore. As Confederate forces captured strategic sites, Ruffin felt compelled to join preparations for the anticipated conflict, traveling to Richmond where he witnessed a fervent atmosphere filled with volunteers, including President Jefferson Davis and General Robert E. Lee.

War appeared imminent as Ruffin's sons enlisted, with expectations of a swift Southern victory. He was particularly proud when his son Charles sought to join the Palmetto Guard, cherishing the hopes that this decision would lead to the boy's redemption and honor. By the end of May, despite lacking military experience, Charles was in camp with the Guard near Manassas Junction, setting the stage for the conflict ahead.

## **The Old Gentlemen Pay a Call**

On February 23, the day Lincoln arrived in Washington, he invited the delegates of the Washington Peace Convention to a reception in his parlor suite at the Willard Hotel. Among these delegates was William Cabell Rives, a former congressman and senator from Virginia, who, despite owning almost one hundred slaves, was a staunch unionist. Rives, along with other delegates, attended the Peace Convention, which had become deadlocked as both sides clung to their beliefs. Fueled by frustration, Rives delivered a passionate ninety-minute speech advocating for reconciliation, condemning the secession of states. He emphasized the futility of coercing seceding states back into the Union, predicting that without immediate concessions, Virginia and other border states would follow suit. Rives recounted witnessing the horrors of civil war while serving as America's minister to France, hoping to avert a similar fate for his homeland.

At the reception, over a hundred delegates recognized Lincoln, who towered among them and displayed an unexpectedly gracious demeanor, countering their preconceived notions. Upon meeting Rives, Lincoln remarked on his stature, intending to break the ice, but quickly added compliments regarding Rives's intellect and service. Rives, feeling small in Lincoln's presence, expressed his distress over the looming crisis, insisting that everything hinged on Lincoln's actions. Lincoln, however, responded confidently, asserting that

his path was clear, highlighting the need for obeying the Constitution.

Rives later conveyed his concern that Lincoln appeared to lack a serious understanding of the urgency of the situation. Days later, the convention approved a proposed Thirteenth Amendment addressing slavery, demonstrating that the core of the issue lay in this very institution, contrary to later historical interpretations that downplayed its significance.

As Rives prepared to leave for Virginia, Lincoln requested a follow-up meeting with him and other southern delegates. The conversation grew tense as Lincoln assured them he would honor the Fugitive Slave Act but faced warnings from Rives and others about the potential dire consequences of coercion, particularly if Virginia were to secede. Lincoln promised to withdraw troops from Fort Sumter if Virginia remained in the Union, yet offered no guarantees. The meeting concluded with Lincoln questioning whether they would have spoken so freely to another president.

The Senate rejected the proposed amendment outright, but a similar proposal guaranteeing the protection of existing slavery was passed in the House and Senate. This amendment became known as the Shadow or Ghost Amendment, remaining technically unratified into the twenty-first century, despite Lincoln forwarding it for ratification by the states, adding to the complex legacy of the looming civil tensions.

## **Lincoln**

In this chapter of "Lincoln, The Demon of Unrest," events unfold around the tense situation at Fort Sumter in Charleston, raising concerns for President Abraham Lincoln. General Scott's initial suggestion that Sumter be surrendered unsettles Lincoln, prompting him to seek more detailed assessments regarding Major Anderson's capacity to hold the fort given its dwindling supplies. In his letter dated March 9, Lincoln presented three probing questions to Scott, focusing on the duration Anderson could maintain his position without reinforcements and the feasibility of supplying the fort within the remaining time.

Scott's response revealed that Anderson had provisions for approximately twenty-six days and salt meat for about forty-eight days. The general conveyed that effectively reinforcing Sumter would necessitate significant military resources, including a fleet of war vessels and around 25,000 troops; however, gathering such forces would take months, and the opportunity to support Sumter had nearly passed.

Despite the urgency of the situation, Lincoln remained entangled in office politics, as applicants for government positions surged at the White House, complicating his decision-making process. At Postmaster General Montgomery Blair's insistence, Lincoln met Gustavus Vasa Fox, a former U.S. Navy lieutenant and aspiring leader of a rescue mission for Anderson. Though Fox had little military experience, his ambition and close ties to Blair compelled Lincoln to consider his revised rescue plan seriously.

As discussions unfolded within Lincoln's cabinet regarding this plan, opinions varied greatly. Secretary of State Seward and others expressed concerns that an attempt to relieve Sumter could ignite civil war and alienate border states. Meanwhile, Blair argued for a decisive action to reinforce the fort, insisting that secessionists already perceived weakness in the North.

In the end, the cabinet's decisions leaned towards caution, with several opposing the reinforcement on various grounds. Yet Lincoln, driven by instinct and the desire to uphold the Union, felt that surrendering Sumter would be catastrophic. Despite the differing opinions, he remained intrigued by Fox's proposal, seeking more precise intelligence concerning the conditions at Fort Sumter. Lincoln directed War Secretary Cameron to gather essential information to inform his decision, resulting in the selection of Fox—who was perhaps the least objective choice—to undertake this critical task.

## **Russell, of the Times**

On March 17, during his first day in New York City, William Russell of the London Times was struck by the city's peculiarities. He described the sight of forty or fifty Irishmen in green sashes, marching to mass, contrasted by the fashionable attire of domestics and free Blacks. Despite the vibrant public life, the city bore the scars of winter—dirty snow and slush marked Broadway as people crowded the streets. Russell noted particularly the prevalence of chewing tobacco residue, a habit he found distasteful, reminiscent of Charles Dickens' descriptions from two decades earlier, which he now observed to still infect public spaces, including elegant hotels.

As an esteemed correspondent, Russell was welcomed by influential New Yorkers, leading to discussions about the secession crisis. Despite being in the North, he discovered a pro-South sentiment in the city, where commerce and credit were tightly interwoven with Southern plantations. At one dinner, a former governor declared secession a right, while others supported the South against Lincoln's government. Russell perceived the administration as adrift amid Southern leaders' decisive actions, prompting his desire to travel south to gain firsthand knowledge of the situation.

On March 25, Russell departed from New York, facing discomfort as he navigated poor city streets to board an uncomfortably crowded train. After an arduous journey, he arrived in Washington, where he was overwhelmed by the bustle of the Willard Hotel, a hub of political maneuvering. While there, he dined with Henry S. Sanford and met William Seward, Secretary of State, who dismissed the seriousness of the secession movement. Russell noted Seward's condescending view of the South's cultural and social standing, revealing a profound disconnect from the escalating tensions.

Seward's optimism seemed misplaced, as Russell recognized slavery as the core issue at hand—an enduring "curse" tying the Southern states to a former world, seemingly blind to impending conflict. This discussion highlighted the inefficacy of the Lincoln administration, as Russell gathered insights vital to understanding the nation's precarious position. The interaction gave him a clearer perspective of the challenges facing the government, paving the way for his anticipated meeting with President Lincoln.

## **Seward's Play**

**\*\*Summary of Seward's Play, The Demon of Unrest - Chapter Overview\*\***

On April 1, 1861, Justice Campbell visited the State Department to discuss Governor Pickens's telegram regarding the evacuation of Fort Sumter. Secretary Seward drafted a statement for Campbell, indicating that while President Lincoln may want to supply Fort Sumter, he would inform Governor Pickens first. This announcement startled Campbell, who questioned the implications of Seward's latter.

Contrary to Seward's optimistic assurances, concrete plans for a Sumter rescue were in the works. Seward expressed frustration, hoping to evacuate Sumter to buy time for restoring the Union while believing in the existence of pro-Union sentiments in the South. He felt that President Lincoln was overwhelmed with minor government responsibilities, hindering decisive policy formulation.

Amid this chaos, Seward seized the opportunity to assert his influence, sending Lincoln a memorandum titled "Some thoughts for the President's consideration," suggesting the evacuation of Fort Sumter while retaining Fort Pickens and even considering a war with foreign powers to divert attention from domestic strife. He urged for a more energetic administration focus, hinting that he could lead this initiative.

However, Seward misjudged Lincoln's resolve. Lincoln's response, which he never officially sent but kept for his records, reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining Fort Sumter and ignored Seward's proposal for war. While polite, Lincoln's letter subtly conveyed that he would be the one to "take the helm" during these turbulent times.

Subsequently, Justice Campbell communicated privately with Confederate President Jefferson Davis, assuring him that Fort Sumter would likely be evacuated without supplies. Campbell wrongly presumed good faith on the part of Lincoln's administration and anticipated no immediate response regarding their demand for a meeting with Lincoln.

This under-the-table communication raised eyebrows among Seward's Cabinet members, with Navy Secretary Gideon Welles remarking on the unusual exchange occurring between Seward and Justice Campbell, signaling potential treachery against the Union. Ultimately, the Confederate government later named Campbell as their assistant secretary of war, an indication of his betrayal.

## Sickened

In Charleston, on March 4, Edmund Ruffin read the inaugural address, which was delivered via telegraph to the office of the *\*Mercury\**. As the crowd gathered to follow along, Ruffin noted in his diary that the address confirmed his belief that war was imminent. He looked forward to Confederate General Beauregard taking action against Fort Sumter and anticipated that Lincoln might provoke an immediate conflict by trying to reinforce the fort. The excitement in the air was palpable, as Ruffin observed no expressions of regret or fear among the crowd, only a sense of anticipation that matters would soon come to a head.

Meanwhile, in Montgomery, James Chesnut's wife, Mary, engaged in the social activities typical of her role. Her diary reflected a critical view of her interactions, labelling several women in attendance as "fat and stupid" and expressing her dissatisfaction with the quality of dinners she attended. Mary also seemed to enjoy some flirtation from former Governor John Manning, who showed a fondness for her. She was accustomed to attention and wondered why she attracted it, noting, "I never was handsome."

Mary's call on Jefferson Davis and Varina led to an amiable encounter, with Varina welcoming her and sharing the latest news from Washington, albeit avoiding political discussions. Their conversation shifted focus to royal visits, notably that of the Prince of Wales, which added a delightful tone to their meeting.

However, on Inauguration Day, Mary witnessed a slave auction that left her deeply unsettled. Observing a mulatto woman on display at the sale, she drew a parallel between the objectification of women in marriage and the slave trade, yet the raw reality of the auction proved too distressing. Despite being a slaveholder herself, she felt her soul "sickened," grappling with the horror of the scene before her.

The following day, upon reading Lincoln's address, she contemplated its implications for peace versus war, channeling her thoughts through an 1808 ballad referencing the character Lochinvar. Mary was skeptical of Lincoln's intentions, fearing he might aim to detach the border states from the Confederacy. As the atmosphere shifted around her, among the men were growing calls for war, which left her skeptical of the looming conflict, stating, "Still I do not believe it."

## Scandal

In the politically charged years between 1857 and 1858, James Hammond, a figure marked by controversy and scandal, was unexpectedly nominated to fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat following the death of its previous occupant. Hammond's political career had been tumultuous, characterized by a significant electoral loss in 1840 and a narrow victory in 1842 for the governorship. Despite his political ambition, his reputation was tainted by a scandalous affair involving his young nieces, which had begun in 1841.

The indiscretions commenced during his relocation to Columbia, where his nieces regularly visited. Hammond engaged in sexual activities with all four girls over a two-year span, justifying his behavior in his



diary as a consequence of irresistible charm and love from the girls. He expressed a sense of victimhood, perceiving himself as deserving of praise for not going even further in these relationships. However, leading to the end of this affair was a confrontation with one of his nieces, Catherine, in 1843, which compelled him to cease his advances. A misguided communication with their father, Wade Hampton, further complicated matters, devastating Hammond's social standing.

By 1844, whispers about the affair began to permeate the political elite, growing into a campaign aimed at tarnishing Hammond's candidacy for the Senate. Despite gaining significant public support, these rumors culminated in a definitive loss, primarily orchestrated by Hampton's political machinations, resulting in Hammond's career being declared “annihilated forever.”

In the midst of personal turmoil, Hammond also engaged in a long-term illicit relationship with an enslaved woman named Sally Johnson, which became public knowledge in 1850. His wife, Catherine, eventually left him, exacerbating his domestic woes further. Despite these scandals, in 1857, politics shifted again, and he found himself elected to the Senate, albeit amid the secessionist rhetoric and growing tensions over slavery.

With his arrival in the Senate, Hammond delivered a powerful speech defending slavery and declaring “cotton is king,” which solidified his position among Southern politicians, garnering admiration in his home state. Though his ideological stance seemed to strengthen his political image initially, it foreshadowed the dire consequences of the pending Civil War, as advocates in the South erroneously believed that a cotton-fueled economy would deter Northern aggression in future conflicts.

## **To Lift a Columbiad**

In the chapter titled "To Lift a Columbiad," the focus is on the preparations and challenges faced by the soldiers at Fort Sumter under the supervision of Major Anderson. The primary goal was to position ten-inch columbiads—massive fifteen-thousand-pound guns—on the fort's highest tier for optimal effectiveness. The engineering team crafted a block-and-tackle apparatus to facilitate the lifting of these heavy weapons. Despite their efforts, lifting the first columbiad demanded significant brute strength, but the crew successfully positioned it atop the fort.

However, the installation of the second gun encountered a setback when a crucial element of the lifting mechanism failed, causing the gun to crash into the ground and partially bury itself. Thankfully, no one was injured, and the soldiers ingeniously repurposed the sunken gun as an improvised mortar capable of firing projectiles at steep angles, thus overcoming obstacles.

Undeterred, the crew repaired the lifting apparatus and proceeded with hoisting a third columbiad, which ascended without incident. Meanwhile, Captain Foster, the chief engineer, reinforced the fort's defenses by sealing the main gate and constructing a formidable six-foot-high barrier known as the “manhole,” allowing only one soldier to pass at a time. This gate led to an eight-inch howitzer pointed directly at any invader.

Foster's imaginative defenses included the strategic placement of 225 explosive shells along the parapet, primed to fall onto enemy soldiers. Additional traps like “thunder barrels” and hidden pits filled with explosives, dubbed “fougasses,” were creatively utilized to enhance the fort's strength. He even incorporated mines beneath the wharf to bolster protection.

Despite the grim preparations for warfare, life at Fort Sumter was not solely focused on combat. The soldiers engaged in leisure activities, playing games, fishing, and enjoying Sunday outings on a six-oared barge. However, their living conditions were challenging, marked by a shortage of candles and soap, forcing them to resort to innovative solutions for lighting and cleanliness as they prepared for the uncertainties of war ahead.

# Subterfuge

In "Subterfuge," Major Anderson embarks on a strategic plan to occupy Fort Sumter amid escalating tensions with South Carolina forces. Anderson, recognizing the imminent threat of an attack on Fort Sumter, instructs his officers to evacuate the families of twenty women and twenty-five children from Fort Moultrie to Fort Johnson, portraying the move as a precautionary measure. He charts three schooners under the pretext of ensuring their safety, but his intention is to mislead observers while secretly planning to fortify Sumter.

Anderson's clever ruse involves instructing Engineer Foster to disable the artillery at Fort Sumter, convincing others that preparations were in place for defense at Fort Moultrie. This tactic is designed to maintain the façade of staying put at Moultrie, even as he secretly plans for a transfer of troops. When rain delays the operation, Anderson continues to fabricate the safety of Moultrie by keeping ample supplies there while packing everything else for the supposed evacuation.

On December 26, Anderson provides instructions for a covert transfer of the garrison to Sumter, ensuring that Quartermaster Hall waits in the bay once the families are loaded, ready to set sail upon hearing cannon fire from Moultrie. When preparations are complete, two companies of soldiers, under Captain Doubleday and others, are roped into this clandestine operation.

The transfer unfolds amid tension; the garrison's rowboats navigate the channel with growing unease. Captain Doubleday's boat encounters a patrol steamer, heightening anxieties of being discovered. However, relief washes over them when the patrol steamer continues on its path, allowing their boats to reach Sumter safely.

Once there, the soldiers are met with confusion; workers within the fort are hostile, and Doubleday must quickly assert control to ensure his men establish a stronghold. As the operation's success sinks in, Anderson promptly communicates with his family and superiors, emphasizing the fort's strategic importance while remaining acutely aware of the dangers looming over Sumter. Meanwhile, Captain Foster races against time to secure remaining supplies from Moultrie as smoke signals impending conflict.

By morning, Charleston's citizens awaken to the unsettling sights of Fort Moultrie's flag absent and plumes of smoke rising, heralding the change that had transpired overnight, reflecting the fracture between Union and Confederate forces. Anderson's careful planning results in the successful transfer of his command, setting the stage for heightened unrest.

## Practice Makes Perfect

**\*\*Summary of Chapter: Practice Makes Perfect\*\***

In the chapter titled "Practice Makes Perfect," the atmosphere at Fort Sumter is dominated by the sound of cannon fire as Confederate artillery crews engage in practice sessions. This practice is vital, as the firing of heavy guns is both an art and a dangerous endeavor, requiring precision and coordination among the crew, typically consisting of seven men. The term 'gunner' commonly refers to all crew members, but specifically, it is the chief directing the action. A single cannon is referred to as a "piece," with cannoneers managing the weapon's positioning and firing.

To execute the firing accurately, the gunners employ a series of commands and actions; they first pull the cannon away from the wall, sponge out any remnants of the last shot, load the cannonball, and finally aim and fire. The potential for disaster looms with each misstep, and historical records from the Civil War reveal numerous artillery accidents, including a catastrophic incident aboard the U.S.S. \*Ticonderoga\* that resulted in severe fatalities.

On March 12, the Confederate guns at Fort Moultrie discharge hundreds of blank rounds, showcasing their growing skill in hitting a buoy with impressive accuracy. In contrast, Fort Sumter's Major Anderson grapples with limited ammunition and resource shortages, opting to repurpose flannel shirts into cartridge bags. He reports to Washington on the impossibility of displaying proficiency in artillery under such constraints.

The chapter deepens further with administrative challenges, including issues over supplies and the detention of a young Black servant, Thomas Moore Lynch. The South Carolina government claims the young man, purportedly a slave, cannot return to Fort Sumter, citing concerns over his correspondence with his mother that suggested potential insurrection. This entangles the matter in a debate over honor and duty, with Anderson expressing his disdain for the implications about Lynch's character and status. The chapter culminates in visible tensions between Union soldiers and the state authorities of South Carolina as they navigate complex social and military dynamics amidst preparations for conflict.

## **Rumor and Cannon Fire**

On April 9, Mary Chesnut, despite suffering from a bad cold, was getting ready to head back to Mulberry plantation. Initially reluctant to leave her home, a visit from her friend Robert Gourdin prompted her to change her mind. During their conversation, John Manning entered dramatically, proclaiming, "Madam your country is invaded." He claimed that six warships were lurking outside the bar, while messengers Talbot and Chew brought news of imminent war. However, this alarming announcement regarding the warships was based on a misunderstanding, mainly fueled by poor visibility due to a storm.

Mary quickly shared the news with Mr. C, who confirmed it, adding to the atmosphere of unrest. The situation was further heightened when Wigfall arrived quoting Byron's work, adding a poetic touch to the chaotic atmosphere. Mary observed the growing confusion, her heart racing, as she and Mrs. W retreated to her room, where they lamented the horrors of a potential Civil War. Their anxious discussion was cut short as cannon fire echoed in the distance, accompanied by shouts.

By 11 p.m., heavy rain fell, and the sound of six cannon blasts pierced through the town, causing fear to grip the citizens. Mary encountered Mrs. Allen Green, who appeared visibly shaken. Former governor John Means approached Mary, informing her that Governor Pickens had ordered seven cannon blasts to summon the 17th regiment, of which he was a colonel. This thunderous communication was intended to mobilize the regiment for boarding steamers that would take them to Morris Island in anticipation of a presumed Union assault.

The situation was tense, with seven cannon announcing the soldiers' resilience amidst the threats of Union ships rumored to be waiting to strike. "Of course no sleep for me last night," Mary noted, reflecting on the chaos of shouting and marching soldiers in the streets. Meanwhile, Edmund Ruffin, stationed in a tent on Morris Island, remarked on the heightened excitement among the city's inhabitants, contemplating the impending conflict that loomed over them all.

## **The Major Gets an Idea**

In the chapter titled "The Major Gets an Idea," the narrative unfolds around Capt. John G. Foster of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, responsible for bolstering defenses in Charleston Harbor during the tense days following South Carolina's secession in December 1860. Foster, a thirty-seven-year-old veteran with a distinctive appearance and a limp from past combat, had been independently working to reinforce Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie. His efforts included hiring civilian workers to dig a wet ditch around Fort Moultrie and erecting defenses to protect against potential infantry attacks. He also initiated plans to enable Major Anderson at Fort Sumter to blow up the fort if secessionist forces took over.

Foster recognized the critical need to arm his workforce, countering a request for forty muskets from the federal arsenal. This act, while logical in his view, risked escalating tensions as the arsenal's commander, Col. Benjamin Huger, had promised South Carolina's governor to withhold weapons. A telegram from War Secretary Floyd emphasized the gravity of the situation, ordering Foster to return any removed arms, which he complied with, fearing the implications of conflict.

Simultaneously, a letter from Floyd to Major Anderson cast doubt on the government's commitment to keeping the forts. Floyd, who faced accusations of corruption and betrayal, modified earlier orders indicating that defending the forts might entail a "useless sacrifice." His words suggested surrender in the face of overwhelming opposition, a stark contradiction to previous directives to defend the forts at all costs. Floyd's communication further reinforced Anderson's suspicions of treasonous intent.

Realizing that Fort Sumter was the only defensible position left, Anderson contemplated moving his troops from Moultrie to Sumter, recognizing potential backlash from South Carolina officials. Despite his plan, he chose to keep this decision private from his officers as he prepared for the imminent changes in the precarious political landscape unfolding around them.

## **Some Good Thing in the Wind**

In the chapter "Some Good Thing in the Wind," occurring between March 24-27, Lincoln sought to gauge the extent of pro-Union sentiment in South Carolina, particularly Charleston. He dispatched two emissaries, Stephen A. Hurlbut and Ward Lamon, to ascertain the local mood following Captain Fox's assessment of Fort Sumter. Hurlbut, a former resident with a dubious past, traveled under the guise of visiting family but reported back to Lincoln about the heightened war preparations in the region, including armed shipments and mortars at the rail depot.

During his brief stay, Hurlbut interacted with several prominent locals, notably Judge James Petigru, South Carolina's leading unionist, who confirmed a strong local sentiment favoring separation from the Union. Hurlbut's report highlighted that the spirit of national patriotism in the state had faded, replaced by an overwhelming allegiance to South Carolina itself. He warned Lincoln of the impending consequences if any federal action was taken in the seceded states, predicting that such moves would instigate war.

Lamon, Lincoln's other envoy, met with Governor Pickens and conveyed a message of supposed federal withdrawal from Fort Sumter, despite his lack of official authority. This meeting hinted at an effort to prevent conflict, with Lamon suggesting to Pickens that an evacuation was imminent. Lamon's conversations with Major Anderson at Fort Sumter revealed concerns about a formal military surrender, which Anderson deemed dishonorable.

The tension escalated when Beauregard sent a note to Anderson to clarify that no surrender was expected, but also referred to rumors of a potential explosion of the fort upon abandonment. This infuriated Anderson, who vehemently rejected any implication of dishonor. As this drama unfolded, General Winfield Scott in Washington reprimanded Anderson for his supposed intentions regarding the fort, further complicating motivations and expectations.

In Washington, Secretary Seward met with William Russell from the London Times, recognizing the latter's influence on public opinion as the government confronted the secession crisis. Seward's discussions hinted at an ambiguous strategy concerning Fort Sumter, ultimately reflecting the administration's hesitation while Lincoln prepared for his first official state dinner amidst growing pressures related to the brewing conflict.

## **Hot Oxygen**

On April 15, President Lincoln issued a proclamation urging the states of the Union to muster militias and supply 75,000 troops to suppress the secessionist activities in the southern states. This call aimed to reaffirm U.S. law and restore the Union's honor and integrity, emphasizing a commitment to protect existing slavery in hopes of retaining the border states. In anticipation of this new army's mission, Lincoln aimed to repossess seized federal properties while ensuring no disturbance to citizens or destruction of property.

The proclamation had an immediate, explosive impact. Northern states responded with widespread jubilation, while southern leaders reacted with anger. Governors like John Ellis of North Carolina condemned Lincoln's call for troops as a violation of peace and liberty, while Tennessee's governor pledged troops for defense against coercion. Virginia's decision to secede came just days later, after a fervent debate, symbolized by even unionist William Rives shifting his support towards secession.

Celebrations erupted in Charleston, with local leaders exulting over Virginia's decision. The scene intensified with Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee voted for secession, contrasting with the ambivalence of border states that refused to provide troops against their Southern counterparts. The landscape was divided, demanding loyalty declarations as the nation teetered on the brink of civil war.

A pivotal figure in this turmoil was Robert E. Lee, a respected U.S. Army colonel. While considering an offer from Lincoln to command Union forces, he grappled with Virginia's secession, ultimately resigning due to his allegiance to his state despite his views on slavery and secession. His resignation marked a painful personal and professional turning point.

Simultaneously, as conflict brewed across the nation, British journalist William Russell observed the South's fervor and jubilation during his travels. Arriving in Charleston following the proclamation, he witnessed celebrations filled with armed crowds and a palpable spirit of victory. Russell's observations hinted at the depth of Southern convictions, believing that the Union could never regain its former strength and unity.

Overall, this chapter paints a vivid picture of a nation in crisis, the fierce emotional divides between North and South, and the initial responses to the escalating conflict leading up to the Civil War.

## **Mary Chesnut's Diary**

In Montgomery, beginning February 23, 1861, Mary Chesnut joined her husband, James, a delegate at the Confederacy's founding convention. Their arrival was marked by a difficult journey, which left Mary feeling unwell, but her spirits lifted upon meeting James. He was immersed in his work, diligently writing away. After attending church, Mary hosted a dinner with relatives and influential visitors, including Judge Thomas Jefferson Withers and the wealthy John L. Manning, introducing a blend of social interactions that reflected the tensions and dynamics of the time.

The evening took a turn as James confronted Judge Withers about his disdain for their constituents in South Carolina, something James found unacceptable for a delegate. The resulting argument frightened Mary, reflecting the prevailing atmosphere of unrest. The following day brought further grievances from Withers regarding the perceived extravagance of Jefferson Davis's inauguration. One amusing anecdote involved a friend of the Chesnuts, Aurelia Fitzpatrick, who drew attention at Davis's inauguration by seating herself among the men and playfully poking him with her parasol.

Mary's experiences were interspersed with social gatherings and reflections on Montgomery. She noted the city's charm while privately expressing her disdain, feeling compelled to feign enjoyment. Jefferson Davis, unaware of the city's darker realities, communicated his optimism to his wife, Varina, about their new home, yet their marriage was fraught with tension. Varina was younger and felt stifled by Davis's patriarchal nature and prior attachment to his deceased first wife.

Initially, Varina attempted to appease Davis's controlling tendencies, even adopting submissive language in her letters. However, the loss of their infant son Samuel brought them closer, though the responsibilities of motherhood constrained her freedom. As Varina prepared to embrace her role as the wife of the Confederacy's president, she grappled with the conflict of her husband's reluctance for war against the harrowing reality that loomed over their lives. Davis did not view the prospect of war lightly, recognizing its inherent calamities even as the country headed toward conflict.

## **Fatal Error**

On April 5, Lincoln faced the ramifications of a critical error: assigning the same warship, the Powhatan, to two separate relief expeditions. Late at night, he welcomed Secretary of State Seward and Navy Secretary Gideon Welles, who had hurriedly come after receiving a distressing telegram from New York. Upon reading the telegram, Lincoln expressed disbelief and took full responsibility for what he deemed carelessness and heedlessness on his part. He insisted to Seward that the Powhatan must accompany the Sumter expedition, stressing that the operation's success was vital and could not be jeopardized.

Despite the urgency outlined by Lincoln, Seward maintained that it was crucial to focus on an alternative plan—the Florida expedition—believing he could negotiate a peaceful withdrawal from Fort Sumter. However, Lincoln firmly disagreed, prioritizing the defense of Sumter and demanding immediate action to secure the ship in New York for the Sumter mission.

Seward hesitated again, arguing it was too late to send a telegram, but Lincoln overruled him. Although Seward ultimately relented, he may have delayed the messaging effort, causing the telegram to reach New York only the following afternoon. By that time, the Powhatan had already been assigned to the expedition to Fort Pickens and begun its journey southward. The New York navy yard commander dispatched a fast steamer to recall the ship, but Lieutenant David Dixon Porter, Powhatan's new captain, ignored the order, citing his own direct instructions from Lincoln as superior to a cabinet secretary's command.

Porter proceeded to Fort Pickens without opposition, successfully landing troops and supplies, but lamented never having the opportunity to engage in battle, describing it as "the great disappointment of [his] life." Meanwhile, in New York, Captain Gustavus Fox organized the Fort Sumter expedition, mobilizing a fleet that included three tugs, a large transport, and warships. However, unknowingly, he was oblivious to the fact that the essential Powhatan was already en route to Florida, complicating the mission's logistics and effectiveness.

## **Resilience**

In January 1860, despite the recent raid led by Brown and the ensuing chaos, the slave trade remained robust. Prices for enslaved individuals were surging; Hector Davis, a trader from Richmond, noted the prosperity of the market, declaring it "very brisk indeed." He remarked that the price of young men had reached unprecedented heights.

Meanwhile, in Charleston, Ryan's Mart was bustling with activity, hosting numerous slave auctions throughout the month. A staggering total of 658 enslaved Black men, women, and children were put up for sale, which included vulnerable infants and toddlers. Among these was a poignant case of a three-year-old boy named Little Joe.

The market's vitality during this period starkly contrasted with the disturbing realities faced by those sold into slavery. These auctions did not just represent a financial transaction; they also signified the dismantling of families and the cruel fate of the individuals involved. The stark description of young children, like Little

Joe, highlights the inhumane aspects of the trade and the pressing social issues that surrounded it.

This atmosphere of resilience within the trade, despite the moral decay associated with slavery, underscores a significant chapter in American history. The apparent disregard for human life and the normalization of such practices illustrated the complex interplay of economic interests and human rights during this tumultuous era. The persistence of this market even in the face of upheaval speaks to the entrenched nature of slavery in Southern society.

Thus, while Brown's raid may have momentarily shook the foundations of the slave trade, it was ultimately the indomitable profits and the cultural acceptance of slavery that allowed it to endure, demonstrating both the resilience of the institution and the tragic plight of those subjected to it.

## **The Commissioners**

On March 15, 1861, two prominent figures, Justice Samuel Nelson from New York and Justice John A. Campbell from Alabama, visited Secretary of State Seward to discuss the status of the Confederate commissioners amid rising tensions. They wished to facilitate a peaceful negotiation to avert war. However, Seward, despite his political savvy, informed them he could not arrange an interview with President Lincoln due to opposition within the Cabinet. Instead, he attempted to calm both sides by suggesting that if Jefferson Davis had been aware of the situation in Washington, he would not have sent the commissioners, asserting that the evacuation of Fort Sumter was the most the administration could bear.

The mention of "evacuation" was unexpected for Campbell, who later indicated this information was vital. He sought Seward's permission to share it with the commissioners, with Seward affirming that Sumter would be evacuated within five days and ensuring the status of Fort Pickens would remain unchanged. Seward, however, was not authorized to make such assurances. Following this conversation, Campbell relayed the information to fellow commissioner Martin Crawford, who was initially skeptical.

Campbell documented his confidence in the imminent evacuation of Fort Sumter, noting that pressing for an immediate response to the commissioners' demands could lead to negative outcomes. The commissioners chose to exercise patience, believing that waiting could improve their chances for recognition by Washington. They telegraphed their Secretary of State Toombs, explaining their decision and their hope that it might lead to a more favorable response.

Simultaneously, Seward had crafted a formal memorandum to address the commissioners' demands but chose not to deliver it directly, as it would imply official recognition of the Confederacy. Instead, he stored the memo in the State Department's archive, where it would remain unaccessed for over three weeks. Seward believed that if tensions were allowed to simmer without incident, the commitment to secession would eventually diminish.

Meanwhile, at Fort Sumter, Captain Anderson requested a supply inventory; he discovered dwindling provisions, including only twenty-six barrels of salt pork and just six barrels of flour remaining. Supplies were running low as conditions within the fort deteriorated, with illness spreading among the men. Rumors about a potential surrender circulated, but Captain Foster remained doubtful and continued reinforcing the fort's defenses, while also preparing for the possibility of evacuation.

## **The Man in the Felt Hat**

In the chapter titled "The Man in the Felt Hat," the narrative unfolds the events surrounding Abraham Lincoln's secretive journey to Washington, D.C., during a time fraught with tension just prior to his

inauguration. On February 22-23, Lincoln donned a worn overcoat and a newly fashionable “kossuth” hat, which had symbolized democratic ideals and was made popular by Hungarian politician Louis Kossuth. This disguise, along with his slouched posture, helped Lincoln avoid recognition despite his height and distinctive features.

As he traveled through the night on the train, the American Telegraph Company severed telegraph lines to prevent any notification of Lincoln's passage. Lincoln, accompanied by his bodyguard Ward Lamon and detective Kate Warne, boarded a sleeping car. Interestingly, unbeknownst to them, New York City's police superintendent, John Kennedy, was also on the same train, intending to offer protection to Lincoln in Baltimore.

Upon arriving in Baltimore, Lincoln's group made careful arrangements to switch trains without drawing attention, and they departed for Washington, D.C. just after dawn on February 23. This was a calculated move, with Lincoln aiming to reach the Capitol unnoticed. However, his stealth was nearly compromised when he encountered Rep. Elihu Washburne at the train depot, who recognized him even through the disguise. Washburne had been one of the few informed about Lincoln's arrival.

Once in Washington, Lincoln checked into the Willard Hotel, a hub of activity within the city, while Seward, his future Secretary of State, arrived just after him, motivated to align himself closely with Lincoln. The relationship between Lincoln and Seward was complex, marked by Seward's desire for influence and a lingering resentment that he was no longer a presidential candidate. Seward sought to assert his presence in Lincoln's administration, engaging in various political maneuverings that occasionally irritated other cabinet members.

This chapter highlights Lincoln's blend of craftiness and the critical political environment he was stepping into. It concludes with a sense of foreboding as Texas votes for secession, bringing the total of seceded states to seven, indicating national unrest that will significantly impact Lincoln's presidency.

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## Firewood

**\*\*Summary of "Firewood, The Demon of Unrest"\*\***

In the cold days and nights at Fort Sumter, a storm loomed on the horizon. On March 26, Chief Engineer Foster reported the demolition of the last temporary building on the parade, as the fort resorted to burning lumber and one condemned gun carriage for fuel. Outsiders tended to romanticize the situation, focusing on the heroism surrounding Major Anderson and his vastly outnumbered garrison, which was often depicted as a classic David versus Goliath tale, with Anderson's forces standing firm against a much larger enemy.

However, the reality faced by Anderson's men was stark and pragmatic. Captain Doubleday, in a memorandum, stressed the importance of critical defense measures, detailing specific points on the fort's structure that required vigilance. He suggested positioning one of the fort's drums at the center of each flank to sound the alarm at the first sign of an attack, and even proposed constructing a secure privy to enhance safety.



Anderson's nephew, R.C. Anderson, found the events thrilling, sharing the excitement with his children, who referred to Major Anderson as "Uncle Robert Major." R.C. expressed a deep sense of duty and commitment to his family in his letters, stating that had he not had a family to protect, he would have joined his uncle at Fort Sumter, regardless of the perils. This sentiment underscored a poignant contrast, as Major Anderson also had family responsibilities to consider.

In a separate letter, R.C. candidly conveyed a deep fear of defeat, stating that the surrender of Fort Sumter and the raising of South Carolina's flag in place of the American flag would be a calamity too overwhelming for him to bear. Such a misfortune, he argued, would crush his spirit far more than any personal loss, including the announcement of his uncle's death, which he believed would not affect him as deeply. This exchange highlights the emotional and psychological weight carried by those associated with the fort during these tense times.

## A Rumor of Plaid

In the chapter "A Rumor of Plaid" from *The Demon of Unrest*, the secretive arrival of President-elect Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., captivates the city. A reporter from the *New-York Times* describes Lincoln's unexpected entrance, likening it to magic, noting, "the whole city has been agreeably surprised." The article on February 25 famously depicts Lincoln in a Scotch plaid cap and a long military cloak, making him unrecognizable. This imagery incites cartoonists to humorously portray Lincoln fleeing in panic, such as one that features him peering from a freight car at a hissing cat. Mary Chesnut's diary reflects this sentiment, underscoring the absurdity of Lincoln's "noble entrance."

As Lincoln's journey unfolds, columnists from both the North and South criticize him. The *Charleston Mercury* condemns him for cowardice, asserting that "everybody here is disgusted" by his clandestine arrival, while pro-slavery outlets like the *New York Herald* liken his entry to that of a "thief in the night." Many even compared Lincoln's journey to the Underground Railroad, invoking racial connotations of him as a fugitive slave.

The chapter highlights Lincoln's precarious position; at a critical juncture, his stealthy arrival does not project the commanding figure he needs to be. A diarist referred to as "Public Man" shares a sense of national failure, remarking on the shame in an elected President being "smuggled through by night." Another observer, George Templeton Strong, worries about the authenticity of the alleged assassination plot against Lincoln, noting its importance for his moral standing as President.

Despite the claims of a conspiracy surrounding his entrance, the evidence is scant. No weapons or arrests were confirmed, and figures such as Ward Lamon express skepticism about the existence of a plot. The narrative of the supposed plot continues to be contested years later, with Pinkerton ultimately seeking recognition for "saving" Lincoln while countering others' claims. Meanwhile, Lincoln's original train ride—believed to be a target—proceeded without incident, suggesting that public fears may have been exaggerated. In stark contrast, newly inaugurated Confederate President Jefferson Davis enters Montgomery, charged with a call for war, further escalating tensions between the North and South.

## Yard Sale

**\*\*Yard Sale\*\***

On February 9, 1861, to finance his trip to Washington, Lincoln sold furniture from his home in Springfield. One of the buyers was Samuel H. Melvin, a local dealer in medicinal drugs and supplies. A receipt, personally signed by Lincoln, detailed the sale which totaled \$82.25. This included:

- 6 chairs
- 1 spring mattress
- 1 wardrobe
- 1 whatnot (a cabinet with open shelves)
- 1 stand
- 9.5 yards of stair carpet
- 4 comforters

Faced with the impending move and new responsibilities, Lincoln and his family took up residence at the Chenery House hotel for their final days in Springfield. This transitional period not only marked the end of their life in their hometown but also set the stage for Lincoln's historic presidency. The sale signified a somber yet pragmatic step as the family prepared for significant changes ahead, highlighting the blending of personal sacrifice with political duty.

## **Acclaim**

The chapter titled "Acclaim" delves into the events surrounding the bombardment and fall of Fort Sumter on April 14-15, a pivotal moment in American history. The protagonist, a journalist named Russell, realizes the enormity of the situation only on that Sunday as he reflects on the preceding night spent aboard the steamer \*Georgiana\*. Restless and unable to sleep due to distractions and mosquitoes, he laments his experience and watches passengers indulge in cocktails early in the morning, noting the hospitality of Americans.

Upon arriving at Norfolk, he is greeted by jubilant voices celebrating the news of the Union's retreat from Fort Sumter. However, he also observes some individuals whose expressions contrast sharply with the prevailing cheers—indicative of deeper societal divisions. Disembarking, Russell finds Norfolk to have a decayed ambiance, contrasting with the exuberant celebrations. He describes the Atlantic Hotel as an unkempt place plagued by mosquitoes, filled with slack and careless waiters, who were slaves.

Russell is taken to a local newspaper office where he encounters the celebratory tone surrounding the Union defeat. A telegraphic bulletin exclaims that "The Yankees are whipped," yet Russell feels detached from the excitement, foreseeing the conflict ahead. Despite feeling out of place, he resolves to continue his journey southward.

As he nears Charleston, the fervor escalates, exposing visceral expressions of animosity towards the North and a fervent defense of Southern values, particularly the right to enslave. He notes the emergence of the Confederate flag, the "Stars and Bars," signifying a newly forged identity. Russell depicts scenes of exuberance and revolutionary zeal along his journey, encapsulated by the loud music and chaotic atmosphere he encounters at each stop. He reflects on the broader implications of the conflict, likening Fort Sumter to historical turning points like the Bastille. His journey culminates as he boards a train for the final, most illuminating leg toward Charleston, where he anticipates the direct ramifications of the unfolding war.

## **“Pimp!”**

On February 13, Lincoln's train, known as Lincoln's Special, arrived in Columbus, Ohio, amid considerable political tension. It was the day Congress was set to certify the electoral vote, coinciding with Virginia's decision to start its secession convention. Lincoln's entourage, including Larz Anderson, Major Anderson's brother, journeyed in a specially expanded train of three cars. Journalist Villard noted that the weather was "magnificent."

Upon arrival, Lincoln was received with artillery salutes and soldiers guiding him to the statehouse. He delivered a curious yet cautious speech, implying reassurance against the backdrop of rising tension: "I have not maintained silence from any want of real anxiety... all we want is time, patience and a reliance on that God who has never forsaken this people." This sentiment was juxtaposed with rising unrest as Southern crowds gathered in Washington, demanding entry into the Capitol during the electoral count.

General Scott, prepared for hostility, fortified the entrances and dispersed troops among the crowd to manage potential disturbances. The frustrations of those outside erupted into profanity directed at Scott, with one observer noting that verbal assaults aimed at the guards could have been lethal. Scott declared his readiness to retaliate against anyone obstructing the electoral process.

Amid concerns about the vulnerability of the electoral votes, Adams documented the importance of the day, noting the lack of a clear constitutional mechanism to deal with electoral fraud. Nonetheless, the count proceeded smoothly and concluded without incident in two hours, easing fears regarding the proceedings.

However, tranquility shattered with Vice President Breckinridge's announcement: "Abraham Lincoln... is elected president of the United States." Inside, anger flared, and hostile remarks were directed towards figures like Winfield Scott. Lincoln learned of his election via telegram while still in Columbus, prompting a mix of rejoicing and looming threats against his safety.

Reports from Pinkerton's agents heightened security concerns regarding a credible plot against Lincoln, particularly in Baltimore. As urgency escalated, Pinkerton sent warnings through one of Lincoln's friends, Norman Judd. Despite initial hesitations, the situation demanded decisive action. Ultimately, Pinkerton arranged for the adept detective Kate Warne to deliver a warning letter to Judd, thus paving the way for heightened vigilance during Lincoln's travels.

## Interesting News

In the chapter titled "Interesting News," dated March 1-3, the narrative unfolds from Fort Sumter, where Private Millens updates his father about the heightened military activity in Charleston. He observes that the surrounding fortifications are nearing completion, particularly noting the transformation of Morris Island into a formidable defensive structure made up of numerous batteries. Millens mentions a new weapon, the floating battery, believed to be near completion, describing it as both formidable and unwieldy. This battery will be positioned dangerously close to their fortifications, equipped with heavy artillery. Millens concludes by expressing uncertainty about the future, hinging on the policy choices of the soon-to-be-inaugurated president, Abraham Lincoln.

On March 1, the Confederate States officially assumed control over military operations in Charleston, appointing Beauregard as the commander. Secretary of War, Leroy P. Walker, shared with Governor Pickens that President Davis believed in the urgent need to acquire Fort Sumter, but emphasized the importance of thorough preparations to ensure a successful initial strike to prevent demoralization and backlash against the Confederacy.

Beauregard, who arrived in Charleston two days later, was met with significant enthusiasm and admiration from the locals, who showered him with gifts upon his arrival. Among his staff was Samuel Wragg Ferguson, formerly of the U.S. Army, who sought to seize the opportunities presented by secession.

The chapter also reveals the South's diplomatic desperation, as authorities in Montgomery dispatched commissioners to negotiate with the Union on behalf of the Confederacy. The first of these, Crawford, arrived in a bustling Washington, D.C., anxious for Lincoln's imminent inauguration.

Amidst this tension, Edmund Ruffin expressed his disdain for Virginia's hesitance to secede. Determined to distance himself from Lincoln's administration, he left Richmond and arrived in Charleston, where

preparations for war were evident as both white volunteers and enslaved individuals labored to strengthen defenses. As Ruffin settled into the Charleston Hotel, discussions swirled about the imminent consequences of the upcoming inauguration. The atmosphere in Charleston was charged with anticipation, illustrating the deepening divisions and the looming conflict.

## The Commissioners

In the chapter titled "The Commissioners," set between March 9 and March 13, the Confederate commissioners in Washington become aware of the potential evacuation of Fort Sumter by Lincoln's administration. Rumors of this move incited criticism from Northern critics who saw it as a betrayal of Lincoln's inaugural pledge to maintain federal properties. Despite this backlash, the commissioners felt optimistic, believing they could leverage the situation to their advantage. They conveyed to Robert Toombs, the Confederacy's secretary of state, that they sensed a prevailing rumor that the fort would be evacuated soon.

The commissioners believed that William Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state, was the key decision-maker and that his inclination towards evacuation stemmed from a desire to maintain peace. They attempted to initiate contact discreetly, requesting an informal meeting with Seward through Senator R.M.T. Hunter. Seward declined, saying any meeting required Lincoln's prior consultation, which the commissioners took as a personal slight. In response, they sent a formal note to the State Department, asserting their mission's significance and requesting an official audience.

Toombs praised their dignified refusal to be diminished, asserting they represented a powerful confederacy, not supplicants to the U.S. government. They sent an official request for a meeting on March 13, seeking recognition of the Confederacy. However, as days passed without a response, they grew frustrated. Despite recognizing this delay as potentially beneficial for their own timing and strategy, they resolved to avoid pressing their demands.

One commissioner, John Forsyth, articulated a cautious strategy in a letter to Confederate Secretary of War Walker. He believed that playing the long game and capitalizing on the rising peace sentiments in the North could eventually swing matters in their favor, even as he grasped that miscalculations on either side could lead to unforeseen conflict. Forsyth expressed concern over the lack of understanding regarding the South's disposition towards war and suggested that any hasty actions could have dire consequences. Meanwhile, Seward remained firm, recognizing that formal acknowledgment of the commissioners would disrupt the administration's stance and potentially incite war, a scenario he wished to avoid.

## The Sumter Expedition

On a Friday morning at seven a.m., the warship *\*Pawnee\** arrived near Charleston, joining the *\*Harriet Lane\** and Captain Fox's ship, the *\*Baltic\**. They were still awaiting the arrival of tugboats and the warships *\*Powhatan\** and *\*Pocahontas\**, which contained soldiers and heavy artillery. Despite the absence of these vessels, Captain Fox decided to proceed with the first phase of his mission: delivering provisions to Fort Sumter peacefully.

As *\*Baltic\** raised steam and sailed towards Charleston, accompanied by *\*Pawnee\** and *\*Harriet Lane\**, they soon detected smoke in the distance and heard the ominous sounds of cannon fire. Captain Fox noted in his writings that as they approached the bar, it became apparent that war had broken out, rendering the planned peaceful delivery moot. With the new urgency of conflict, his orders mandated that he force his way into the harbor.

Initially, Fox had intended to enter under the cover of night, bringing all his ships close to Sumter to unload men and supplies discreetly. However, with intense bombardments underway, this plan was now unfeasible. The multitude of Confederate artillery surrounding the harbor posed a significant threat, and advancing without a robust armed escort would be dangerous. Fox's ship, the \*Baltic\*, was a commandeered passenger vessel, lacking both armor and weaponry, which made the situation even more precarious. He reflected on the challenges, stating that both heavy seas and a shortage of sailors (only three hundred were available) rendered any advance from the \*Baltic\* impractical.

Thus, the ships were left waiting, grappling with the stark reality that the peaceful resolution they had sought was slipping away amidst the escalating violence around them. The chapter encapsulates the momentous decision-making faced by Captain Fox and his crew as they navigate a rapidly changing and hostile environment.

## Cataclysm

On November 6, 1860, Springfield, Illinois, came alive as cannon fire signaled Election Day. Despite tensions across the nation, the atmosphere was charged with anticipation as citizens flocked to vote. The election featured multiple candidates, with Abraham Lincoln seen as a frontrunner. The outcome was uncertain; if no majority emerged, the decision would fall to the House of Representatives. As Springfield's residents mobilized toward the polling place, the local ice cream parlor welcomed Republican women with refreshments, a nod to camaraderie amidst political rivalry.

Lincoln walked five blocks to the state capitol's campaign office, a privilege granted by the governor. He expressed introspective thoughts, equating elections to "big boils" that, although uncomfortable, ultimately benefit the nation. Meanwhile, across the nation, representatives like Charles Francis Adams acknowledged the historic peacefulness in deciding new leadership.

Lincoln's potential victory posed a cataclysmic shift. A win would displace the proslavery Democrats, establishing the Republican Party's dominance. The fragmentation within the Democratic Party allowed Lincoln's party to gain traction, while the Southern fears intensified, characterizing him as an abolitionist threatening their way of life. Southern papers even encouraged immediate secession should Lincoln win.

At 3:30 PM, Lincoln cast his vote, greeted by enthusiastic supporters and nicknamed "Old Abe" and "Honest Abe." His public engagement drew a crowd eager to witness the moment. As Lincoln proceeded to drop his ballot, he humbly snipped his name from it, showing a commitment to his principles over self-promotion.

As evening fell, telegraphs brought reports of a strong lead for Lincoln, including significant victories in Chicago and Connecticut. However, anxiety lingered until news from New York solidified his success, granting him crucial electoral votes. Celebrations erupted in Springfield, highlighting the mixed emotions of achievement and foreboding as Lincoln grasped the burdens of leadership.

Ultimately, the election saw Lincoln receiving the highest popular vote percentage of any president but still a minority overall. The South, particularly South Carolina, reacted vehemently, with resignations among federal authorities indicating a willingness to defy the democratic process. The South's despair over the election results underscored the brewing division, with Lincoln puzzled by the hostility, emphasizing his stance against interfering with slavery where it existed. He struggled to communicate his intentions, reflecting a profound misunderstanding of Southern anxieties about his presidency .

## The Awakening

James Henry Hammond, an atypical planter in the South during the 19th century, was a prominent figure influenced by his minority status at birth. Born in 1807 to a failed father, Hammond was instilled with immense ambition and a yearning for recognition. Educated at a modest preparatory school, he attended South Carolina College thanks to his father's role as a steward there. The college maintained strict rules to uphold gentlemanly behavior while fostering a fierce sensitivity to honor among its male students, which often resulted in violent confrontations.

During his time at college, Hammond reportedly had a close relationship with Thomas Jefferson Withers, which has spurred speculation about their connection. After graduating, Hammond faced disappointment in securing a respectable position, eventually becoming a teacher. However, following strategic marital choices and by aligning himself with influential political radicals like John C. Calhoun, he advanced quickly. His marriage to Catherine Fitzsimons, a wealthy heiress known for her wealth rather than beauty, catapulted him into affluence.

Hammond's estate grew to encompass extensive land and enslaved people, reflecting the Southern economy's dependence on slavery. He recognized the financial implications of enslaved labor and maintained a strategy of strict control over his workers. Despite the harsh realities of slavery, he pursued a dominant strategy, enforcing marriage and birth regulations among his enslaved population, while employing brutal punishments for disobedience.

Hammond's effective involvement in pro-slavery politics established him as a significant voice in Congress, defending slavery against growing abolitionist sentiments. His inaugural pro-slavery speech in Congress garnered national attention, framing slavery as a benevolent system. Nonetheless, he contended with personal health issues that plagued him throughout his political career.

Later, seeking greater status, he aimed for the governorship of South Carolina, constructing an opulent home in Columbia to establish his place among the planter elite. In his quest for recognition, Hammond's ambitions ultimately led him to navigate the complexities of Southern society, balancing personal prestige with the inherent challenges of his position in a deeply divided region.

## **A Confidential Visit**

In "A Confidential Visit," set during December 11-14, Major Anderson at Fort Moultrie grapples with the rising tensions in Charleston harbor amidst impending conflict. Capt. Truman Seymour, an artillery officer and seasoned veteran, delivers a memorandum to Anderson, outlining defensive strategies against anticipated attacks. He suggests that the Carolinians might employ deceptive tactics, such as setting fire to a nearby building to divert attention during an assault. Seymour emphasizes the need for preparedness, warning that every precaution must be taken to safeguard the garrison's honor.

Samuel Wylie Crawford, the fort's only doctor, shares his concern in a letter to his brother, highlighting the revolutionary sentiment in South Carolina. He foresees the state's secession and the likely demand for federal properties, including Fort Moultrie and Fort Sumter. Despite being new to Moultrie, Crawford notices the escalating hostility towards the Union and expresses the sorrow of witnessing such division. He believes the time for negotiation has ended and that war preparations are necessary against the "mad Carolinians."

On December 11, Major Anderson receives a secret visit from Assistant Adjutant General Don Carlos Buell, sent by War Secretary John B. Floyd. Buell conveys ambiguous instructions regarding the defense of the forts. While he urges Anderson to avoid provocation that might lead to conflict, he simultaneously advises that he should hold possession and defend the forts if attacked. Floyd's contradictory guidance reflects his internal conflict, acknowledging the garrison's limited capacity to protect Fort Sumter, Moultrie, and Castle Pinckney.

Anderson cautions that maintaining secrecy is increasingly difficult due to the charged atmosphere in Charleston. Even as Buell arrives, the news of the visit has already circulated, as reported by the local press. Despite these challenges, Anderson assesses the current situation as relatively calm but prepares for potential escalation, determined to handle whatever might unfold next.

## **Turmoil**

In Charleston on December 27, 1860, following Major Anderson's occupation of Fort Sumter, newly elected Governor Francis W. Pickens ordered the South Carolina militia to seize remaining federal properties in Charleston Harbor. Although the governorship was mainly ceremonial, Pickens acted against the state legislature's objections. The first target was Castle Pinckney, taken by around 150 militia members who, after scaling the fort's walls, found it nearly empty, occupied only by a lieutenant and some workmen. They raised the palmetto flag, much to the dismay of Kate Skillen, the young daughter of the ordnance sergeant, who lamented the flag's introduction.

Watching from Fort Sumter, Anderson's soldiers found amusement in the occupation of vacant forts, with Pvt. John Thompson humorously noting the militia's valor in taking an unoccupied fort. That evening, the militia also seized Fort Moultrie without resistance and captured Charleston's federal arsenal amidst rising tension. Captain Foster reported the excitement in the city, with friends suggesting he leave due to fears he would incite violence.

Meanwhile, Mary Chesnut had returned to Charleston after Christmas, meeting her husband James, a delegate to the secession convention. They stayed at a well-appointed boarding house, where news of Anderson's move to Sumter stirred fear and excitement, prompting other states to secure federal properties to hasten their secession efforts. Mary reflected on her upbringing in pro-states' rights households, expressing doubts about the capabilities of South Carolina's leadership, criticizing the aging politicians in charge.

Anderson's actions angered Carolina commissioners in Washington, who viewed his move as a betrayal and wrote to President Buchanan, insisting on the withdrawal of federal forces from the harbor, claiming it hindered negotiations. However, Buchanan, recognizing the urgency of the situation and the actions taken by state authorities, refused to withdraw the troops. The discord continued to escalate, with commissioners accusing Anderson of waging war and the state merely acting in self-defense, ultimately making civil war appear inevitable. Buchanan declined to accept their letter, solidifying the tensions between federal authorities and South Carolina .

## **A Boat in the Dark**

In the early hours of April 12, 1861, amidst a tumultuous stormy night, a boat carrying four enslaved rowers approached Fort Sumter, conveying three Confederate officers. As they rowed through choppy waters from Charleston, they reached the fort, now transformed from a relic into a formidable stronghold under Major Robert Anderson. However, the fort was significantly undermanned with only seventy-five soldiers defending against a backdrop of mounting tensions over dwindling food supplies cut off by Confederate authorities.

Major Anderson, a clean-shaven, devoted family man, faced the grim prospect of surrender. He was separated from his wife, Eliza (Eba), and their young children, living in a luxurious hotel, the Brevoort House, while he commanded Fort Sumter. Their daughters attended a boarding school to ease Eba's burdens, as she suffered from a chronic illness. Anderson, deeply religious, frequently prayed for peace and to be reunited with his family. Despite being cordial with General P.G.T. Beauregard, his former pupil and Confederate commander across the harbor, Anderson's resolve to withstand siege was tested by the dire

circumstances.

Charleston was an epicenter of the domestic slave trade, with a significant population of enslaved people, creating unease among the city's white residents. The planters of South Carolina, regarded themselves as an aristocracy steeped in notions of chivalry, illustrating their social status through lavish lifestyles and adherence to strict codes of honor. Yet the state seemed increasingly behind the times, resisting the advancement represented by the burgeoning railroad age.

As the Confederate officers conveyed their ultimatum, Anderson deliberated with his officers about the fort's defense capabilities. They agreed that they could last five days without supplies. In his message back to the Confederate leaders, Anderson affirmed an evacuation plan in three days provided no additional orders came from the government.

This agreement, however, was complicated by the arrival of Union supplies heading toward Fort Sumter, creating tension for the Confederate leaders, who feared the need to act swiftly. The night was filled with warnings of impending conflict, indicating a precarious situation that could ignite the Civil War. Mary Boykin Chesnut, observing the feverish atmosphere around her in Charleston, noted an unsettling mixture of festivities and anxiety, presaging the siege to come .

## **A Signal at Christmas**

In "A Signal at Christmas," the atmosphere in South Carolina surrounding Christmas Eve is highlighted by the state's secession convention, which issued a "Declaration" stating its rationale for leaving the Union, primarily around the issues of slavery and states' rights. Delegate Christopher G. Memminger emphasizes grievances against the Union for not honoring slaveholding rights, citing broken contracts and violations of the Constitution. This declaration notably quotes Thomas Jefferson, advocating the people's right to alter or abolish a destructive government.

Memminger points out that the free states have denounced slavery, disrupted Southern peace, and elected a president whose views threaten the institution of slavery. He adamantly asserts that South Carolina is dissolving its ties with the Union, adopting the status of a separate and independent state with the power to engage in foreign relations. On the practical front, South Carolina sends envoys to negotiate for federal property within its borders.

Amid this backdrop, Major Anderson secretly plans to move his military garrison from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, picking Christmas Day for its discretion. The holiday distracts many, allowing him to execute his plans unnoticed. On Christmas Day, the mood in plantation homes contrasts sharply: fine foods and lavish banquets are served, and special allowances are made for enslaved individuals, granting them moments of social interaction and respite from strict supervision. Some planters ignore the day altogether, while others use it as an opportunity for generosity and celebration.

Despite the festive atmosphere, tensions are palpable as concerns about slave uprisings increase during the holiday season. Stories emerge of potential insurrections, reflecting the unrest brewing beneath the surface. Letters from North Carolina ridiculing South Carolina's secession add to the mix of emotions swirling around during this pivotal time.

Parallely, Edmund Ruffin's departure to join Florida's secession plans on Christmas Eve is impeded by mishaps, delaying him and leading him back to Charleston until the following day. Even as he deals with personal tragedy—the loss of his grandson—he remains tuned into the political climate. On December 26, he hears cannon fire from Fort Moultrie, a sign of the changing tides, leaving him speculating about its significance. This chapter encapsulates a period filled with both festive distractions and looming unrest, influencing the course of historical events.



# The Correspondent

On Thursday, April 11, William Russell of the London Times dined at the modest residence of General Winfield Scott, the commander of military forces in Washington. Upon arrival, he was greeted by soldiers on horseback patrolling the street. Inside, he joined a gathering that included notable figures like William Seward and Attorney General Bates, as well as Major George W. Cullum, a stern Army engineer known for his past construction of fortifications, including Fort Sumter.

The dinner was remarkable, described as "a most excellent dinner" with fine wines from various regions. Just as the meal progressed, an orderly delivered a dispatch from President Lincoln. Scott read it but had to apologize for his rudeness, handing it over to Seward, whose reaction indicated its significance. An air of agitation surrounded Seward as he read it, then passed it to Bates, who also demonstrated surprise.

To allow them to discuss the contents privately, Russell stepped outside into the garden with Major Cullum, where he noted the unusual security measures around General Scott. After some time, they returned inside to learn the dispatch's critical message: the South Carolina batteries were ordered to fire on Fort Sumter if Major Anderson did not surrender.

Dinner concluded, and Seward escorted Russell back to the Willard Hotel, driving through the unexpectedly empty streets of Pennsylvania Avenue. The threat of a potential attack from Virginia loomed large, as rumors hinted about a force gathering for a daring mission that included the potential kidnapping of Lincoln and his cabinet. Seward admitted that Washington was "almost defenseless," but claimed both the North and South were unprepared for aggressive military action.

Russell planned to leave for Charleston the following day, heading first to Baltimore. Setting out amidst a heavy rainstorm, he arrived two hours later to find the streets flooded. At Eutaw House, his hotel, an employee confirmed that the bombardment of Fort Sumter had begun. However, Russell remained skeptical of such claims, as he had encountered many false reports in recent days. When he visited the hotel bar, it buzzed with speculation about Sumter, placing Russell in an unfamiliar position—he was just as uninformed as the patrons asking him for his opinions.

## Bloody Sunday

On Sunday, April 14, the day designated for the evacuation of Fort Sumter, the atmosphere was warm and sunny. Black smoke ascended from the fort as Edmund Ruffin and the Palmetto Guard boarded a steamer, joining a crowd of spectators excited for the departure of Major Anderson and his garrison. Though anticipated to occur by 9 a.m., the evacuation faced several delays that stretched into the afternoon. Major Anderson boarded the Catawba to begin the transfer process to the Isabel, which would subsequently take the men to the waiting Baltic. When questioned about a cannon salute to mark the occasion, Anderson revealed his emotional strain, stating, "No, it is one hundred, and those are scarcely enough," before succumbing to tears.

As they waited, Ruffin recorded shared stories of their experiences during the siege, noting that the fort had survived without significant damage despite the cannon fire's intensity. It was nearly three o'clock when the first of the anticipated hundred cannon reports echoed, marking the end of Anderson's time at Sumter. Amidst the smoke, a sense of calm enveloped the area.

During preparations at 2 p.m., Captain Doubleday mustered the men. They lined up, while the guns that Anderson had previously ordered to remain silent were prepared to fire in salute as the fort's flag was lowered. Tragically, as the salute commenced, a misfire occurred, resulting in the immediate death of a

soldier named Private Daniel Hough. The chaotic moment necessitated a pause in the salute, allowing time for Hough's burial, an event characterized by solemn respect from both Confederate and Union soldiers.

With somber ceremonies concluding, the salute resumed, albeit reduced to fifty rounds. By 4 p.m., Anderson led his men out amidst the music of "Yankee Doodle" and subsequently transferred to the Isabel. As night fell, the men remained in the harbor, witnessing celebratory fireworks from Charleston, where a jubilant crowd reveled in the day's events.

While some perceived the day's occurrences as a potential groundwork for peace, prominent figures within the Confederate leadership viewed it as a significant moment of Southern resilience, having seized a powerful fort from the Union without casualties amidst the bombardment. The irony lay in the fact that an intense display of cannon fire, with thousands of shells exchanged, had resulted in no deaths, yet it would herald a war that claimed more American lives than any previous conflict.

## **The Time Will Come**

The chapter titled "The Time Will Come" begins with Orville Browning's letter to Abraham Lincoln regarding his inaugural address. Browning, reflecting on Lincoln's speech, voices concern over a passage he finds excessively aggressive, specifically Lincoln's assertion to reclaim public properties and duties, which he fears may antagonize secessionists. Browning emphasizes that the administration should present secessionists as the aggressors in any potential conflict, urging Lincoln to revise his language to avoid inciting irritation from border states. He also prophetically suggests Lincoln will eventually need to proclaim freedom for slaves in the South, a theme that would resonate later in Lincoln's presidency.

Lincoln took Browning's advice to heart, editing his address and noting on his letter's back page that "Americans, all, we are not enemies, but friends," signaling his desire for national unity despite the existing tensions.

As Lincoln journeys towards his inauguration, he encounters enthusiastic crowds at each stop, witnessing the influx of office seekers hoping for positions in his new administration. The narrative highlights Lincoln's travels, where he is greeted by citizens and notable figures like journalist Horace Greeley. An amusing moment occurs when a boy implies that a man giving Lincoln an apple is campaigning for a patronage position.

In Albany, Lincoln witnesses a performance by John Wilkes Booth, an actor whose dramatic fall on stage sparks considerable media attention. Upon reaching New York City on February 19, Lincoln makes a striking entrance that captures the attention of poet Walt Whitman, who vividly describes Lincoln's demeanor and appearance upon disembarking from carriages.

Meanwhile, Kate Warne, a detective, notes Lincoln's pale and fatigued appearance and meets with an aide to share concerns about threats against Lincoln, which are dismissed as just another false alarm. During his time in New York, Lincoln meets showman P. T. Barnum, who promotes Lincoln's departure as a spectacle at his museum, although Lincoln does not attend.

After a night enjoying Verdi's opera, he continues to Philadelphia on February 21, engaging with an expectant crowd and addressing the secession crisis directly. He expresses the need for a firm stance against secessionist actions, prompting a spirited approval from the audience. Upon his arrival in Philadelphia, he faces a massive crowd amid wintry conditions, prompting him to deliver an impromptu, significant speech that sets the tone for the escalating national crisis .

## **The Landscape of Fear**

In "The Landscape of Fear," set in 1860, Ruffin is disheartened by Lincoln's nomination as the Republican candidate, perceiving him as too moderate to incite the necessary outrage for Southern secession. Ruffin had anticipated a nomination for Seward, whom he believed would incite the South more effectively. Traveling through Virginia en route to meet his daughter Mildred, Ruffin is engulfed by a pervasive fear of slave insurrections, fueled by recent events like John Brown's raid and ominous rumors about poisoning and uprisings spreading through the South.

As Ruffin navigates this anxious landscape, troubling incidents, such as the murder of Congressman Keitt's brother by enslaved individuals, heighten Southern fear and paranoia about Lincoln's potential leadership. These anxieties are compounded by natural disasters, like a severe drought affecting crops and threatening food supply, which deepen Southern distress as the impending election draws nearer.

Upon reaching White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, Ruffin finds a bustling resort, historically frequented by Southern elites seeking social engagement and refreshment. However, he is disillusioned by the atmosphere and the indifference of fellow guests to his fervent advocacy for secession. Notably, he learns that his daughter will not join him as planned, prompting a change in his journey.

Traveling to Frankfort, Kentucky, Ruffin encounters staunch Union sentiments, even among his son-in-law, creating a tense environment for political discussions. His efforts to promote secession through letters to Southern newspapers yield little interest, and the release of his own book, "Anticipations of the Future," is met with silence.

As Election Day looms, Ruffin grows increasingly convinced that Lincoln's presidency would herald a dire fate for slavery and the South's prosperity. Beset by a sense of impending doom, worry about the nation's future amplifies his isolation as a pro-secessionist amidst a climate fraught with tension and division. The chapter conveys the palpable fear among Southern leaders, the social climate of the time, and Ruffin's unwavering commitment to his cause, even in the face of overwhelming opposition.

## **Relief**

The chapter titled "Relief" unfolds in the wake of Inauguration Day, a day previously fraught with tension and anxiety. Now that March 4 has passed without incident, a sense of relief permeates the atmosphere. Correspondence between Frances and William Seward reveals both personal and political concerns. Frances writes from freezing Auburn, New York, addressing the health of a family friend, Ethan Warden, whose illness she attributes to anxiety over the inauguration. Despite the grim circumstances, she expresses hope for William, acknowledging the difficult challenges he faces in his new role.

William's response highlights the immediate pressures of his office in Washington. He details long hours spent managing a flood of office seekers seeking patronage appointments, with his son Frederick assisting him. Despite having Frederick on his team, William grapples with the enormity of the national crisis, viewing himself as a pivotal figure in the new government. He reveals his physical and mental strain, mentioning a recent breakdown and the need for medical care. The risks posed by Fort Sumter loom large in his letters, indicating an impending confrontation that could test the nation's resolve.

Amidst political turmoil, Frances expresses alarm at William's condition and promptly offers to travel to Washington. In her anxious communications, she implores Frederick to keep her informed about any developments regarding her husband's health. Meanwhile, in Charleston, Edmund Ruffin's experience recounts a mix of anticipation and boredom as he waits for war to break out. He visits Confederate-held Fort Moultrie, noting the military preparations but growing increasingly impatient for action. A wave of rumors about Lincoln's orders for fort surrender fuels his desire for conflict, as he perceives the unfolding situation as critical for rallying support for the Confederacy.

Ruffin's interactions in Charleston reflect a blend of hope and curiosity regarding the unfolding war dynamics. He navigates a landscape filled with tension yet marked by moments of social engagement, further emphasizing the peculiar calm before the storm of war. The chapter ends with Ruffin's determination to invigorate enthusiasm for secession, highlighting the prevailing uncertainties of the time.

## The Flirtation

On March 30, James Chesnut embarked on a journey with fellow men to explore the forts in Charleston Harbor, while Mary chose to stay back, concerned about the strong wind and dust on the islands. She received a bouquet of roses from friends upon returning to her rooms, anticipating a peaceful Saturday, which was soon interrupted by a loud knock at her door. When she opened it, she found John Manning, who had mistakenly knocked on the wrong door. He invited her to join their gathering at Quinby's, a popular photography studio, where everyone was eager to have their portraits taken.

Mary obliged and spent the day touring the city with Manning in an open carriage, accompanying him on various social calls. In her diary, she initially referred to him as "my handsome ex-governor," but later revised it to "the." Meanwhile, James returned from his excursion in a foul mood, accusing Mary of staying home to flirt with Manning. Mary, feeling exasperated, went to bed distressed over the accusation.

Later that evening, General Beauregard visited their home, but Mary chose not to greet him, noting in her diary that he was being celebrated as a hero despite having only held positions as a captain. The following day, March 31, did not seem to alleviate James's bad mood. They had multiple friends over for tea, including relatives and acquaintances, some of whom carried their own tumultuous backgrounds. Notably, John Manning took the initiative to speak with Mary privately, which only fueled James's displeasure.

In the background of these social events, Governor Pickens, at the Charleston Hotel, expressed his impatience regarding the situation at Fort Sumter. He had received assurances from Lincoln's emissary, Ward Lamon, about the fort's imminent evacuation, but nothing had transpired. On the same Saturday, Pickens communicated these details to Confederate commissioners in Washington, igniting further discussions about the fort's status. However, Secretary Seward found himself caught between conflicting messages, as he had informed the commissioners of an impending surrender while the cabinet favored a different approach, leaving the situation in a precarious state as he promised to update them on April 1.

## Storm

On April 8, Captain Fox prepared to launch his fleet with pride, having transitioned from a Navy man to leading a significant military expedition to Charleston, confident that the presence of the **Powhatan** meant victory. The tug **Uncle Ben** departed New York that evening, followed by Fox aboard the **Baltic** the next morning, expecting a successful rendezvous with his fleet off Charleston two days later.

However, as the **Baltic** navigated out of New York Harbor, it faced a fierce Atlantic gale that disrupted Fox's plans. The storm scattered his vessels: the **Uncle Ben** took refuge in Wilmington, while the **Yankee** was blown past Charleston to Savannah. The **Freeborn** skipped the expedition altogether due to its risks, as its owners chose to keep it in New York. Unaware of these setbacks, Fox remained optimistic, believing the mission was proceeding as intended but likely delayed by the tempest. He anticipated meeting the rest of the fleet, particularly the **Powhatan**, equipped with troops and artillery, at Charleston Harbor.

Meanwhile, on the same day, Major Anderson and his men at Fort Sumter were alarmed by an explosion near Fort Moultrie, which revealed a new Confederate battery equipped with four substantial guns. This discovery

deeply unsettled Anderson and prompted a reevaluation of their defensive strategies. The new battery increased the Confederate gun positions around the harbor to nineteen, which worried the Union forces significantly. Anderson recognized the threat posed by the battery, dictating that their defenses, particularly the parapet, would be off-limits to keep his men safer, though this decision limited their firepower.

In Washington, Confederate commissioners expressed their rising concerns about misleading assurances from Secretary Seward. On April 8, one commissioner received a cryptic message urging continued faith regarding Sumter, which only heightened their anxiety. Frustrated with the perceived indecision of Lincoln's administration, they tasked their secretary, James Pickett, with demanding a formal meeting with Lincoln, but he only received an outdated memorandum from Seward, exacerbating their frustrations .

## **Activity and Determination**

In the chapter titled "Activity and Determination," set on March 5, the atmosphere surrounding Fort Sumter reflects an increasing urgency and preparation amidst the escalating tensions of the Civil War. The men stationed at Fort Sumter, unable to access Lincoln's inaugural address for two days, observe a notable uptick in activity at the surrounding batteries in Charleston Harbor. This heightened activity is attributed to both the president's speech and the arrival of General Beauregard, who is tasked with organizing defenses.

Captain Foster, monitoring the situation from Fort Sumter, sees three steamers delivering troops and supplies to the Iron Battery at Cummings Point on March 4. On the following night, he notes the landing of a large force alongside the arrival of nine new cannon and portable "hot shot" furnaces, which are designed to heat cannonballs. The sheer number of soldiers suggests a shortage of shelter, with many gathered around bivouac fires, evidencing their discomfort as the weather abruptly turns cold. Foster expresses sympathy for their plight, as conditions become harsh.

Both Foster and Major Anderson perceive a change in the determination and urgency at the Carolina batteries, now under the capable command of Beauregard, whom Anderson knows personally as a former student. The mutual respect between the two men is evident, reflected in Anderson's report to Adjutant Cooper about the "activity and determination" in the area.

Despite these concerns, Foster harbors a small sense of relief upon determining that a much-feared "floating battery" may not be as threatening as believed, due to its draft and instability when loaded. He conveys this assessment back to Washington, expressing confidence that the floating battery will not pose significant challenges.

On the Confederate side, General Beauregard expresses the urgency of gathering enough artillery and powder for a potential siege while preparing his troops, which he feels are not yet fully organized. Beauregard believes if Sumter were well-defended, it could withstand continuous attacks. He stresses the importance of time to ready his forces. The local planters, driven by a sense of duty, offer their enslaved workers to assist in fortifying the defenses, mitigating some immediate challenges. However, there remains a precarious tension that risks igniting conflict at any moment given the inexperience of the forces involved.

## **Departure**

On February 11, 1861, the day of departure had finally arrived for Abraham Lincoln. He woke early and left his hotel at seven-thirty on a gloomy morning, characterized by a wet chill that enveloped Springfield. After boarding a carriage, he was taken to the Great Western Railroad depot - a modest one-story structure. A crowd had gathered, estimates varying wildly from a few hundred to over a thousand onlookers. Notable figures, including sculptor Thomas D. Jones, described Lincoln's calm demeanor as he greeted friends and

neighbors, with tearful farewells shared in a quiet atmosphere.

Lincoln soon boarded a specially appointed train for this first leg of his journey. Named "L. M. Wiley," the locomotive was built by Hinkley Locomotive Works in Boston. As Lincoln prepared for departure, he was joined by his eldest son, Robert, and several others, while Mrs. Lincoln and their younger sons planned to join him later in Indianapolis. In the growing rain, Mrs. Lincoln was brought closer to the platform by sculptor Jones to hear her husband's final remarks.

The train was ready to depart, steam pouring from the engine as Lincoln prepared to speak. Although there are various accounts of his words, Lincoln spoke from a place of deep emotion, expressing gratitude for his years in Springfield and sadness over the departure. He reflected on the sacred ties of family and community, mentioning the death of his second son, Edward. Stating that he owed all that he was to his friends in Springfield, he acknowledged the monumental task ahead, likening it to the challenges faced by George Washington and urging that they seek divine guidance together.

Witnesses noted the rain fell heavily as Lincoln, visibly emotional, spoke his goodbye, urging the crowd to pray for him as he departed. With heartfelt finality, he bid them farewell, leaving everyone in a somber mood as the train began its journey. It was a pivotal moment, marking not only Lincoln's departure from Springfield but also the beginning of a significant chapter in American history, as he headed toward Washington and his upcoming presidential inauguration .

## **A Ball at Sunrise**

**\*\*Summary of "A Ball at Sunrise"\*\***

On the morning of March 8, Confederate artillery stationed at Fort Moultrie and Cummings Point initiated fire, seemingly as a practice drill. Initially, the first three shots fired were blank, followed by additional blank discharges until an unexpected real shot soared through the air, landing dangerously close to Fort Sumter. This cannonball struck the water about thirty yards from the fort, ricocheting and damaging Sumter's wharf, which led to a swift response from the fort's guards.

As the shot alarmed a German-born soldier, he promptly closed the main gate, triggering an alert at the fort. The long roll sounded, prompting gunnery teams to rush to their posts, readying themselves for battle as Assistant Surgeon Crawford noted in his journal. Major Anderson and other officers were positioned on the parapet, observing the confusion among the Confederate gunners, who appeared more frightened than the Sumter forces. Confederate soldiers, clad in their uniforms, fled in panic from their own batteries, leaving behind only the horses as they tried to escape the forthcoming return fire.

Recognizing that the cannonball incident seemed accidental, Anderson chose to refrain from retaliatory fire, and laughter replaced tension within the fort's ranks. The feeling was lighthearted enough that breakfast was prioritized over conflict. However, Anderson desired an apology for the incident; no immediate response was forthcoming until a Confederate boat arrived later that morning, bearing an officer with a white flag.

This emissary, Major Peter F. Stevens, admitted the firing was accidental and attributed the mishap to a loading error during drills. Despite the tensions, the discussion remained civil, with Anderson expressing a desire to avoid escalation while Captain Doubleday and others within Sumter were keen to engage in battle. As Stevens departed, he expressed hope that the incident would remain a singular occurrence, to which Anderson subtly confirmed that the shot had not struck the fort, although later reflections by Crawford revealed that it nearly could have.

## **Map**

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## **A Solemn Council**

In the chapter "A Solemn Council," dated February 4, Lincoln's preparations for his journey to Washington coincide with significant political activity regarding secession in Virginia. A recent election showed that the majority of Virginia's delegates favored staying in the Union, bolstered by the guidance of Lincoln's designee, Seward, who believed further concessions would be necessary to maintain this support. This optimistic sentiment was affirmed by the results from Tennessee, where voters declined to hold a secession convention.

Amidst this, a "Peace Convention" gathered in Washington in an attempt to address the secession crisis, met at the Willard Hotel despite the tense atmosphere of the city, reminiscent of impending war. Apprehensions about potential conflict were underlined by Edwin Stanton's fears that the city might soon fall to Southern forces. To demonstrate resilience, authorities had an American flag raised at the partially constructed Washington Monument, a symbol of divided tones reflecting national discord.

As discussions at the Peace Convention progressed, seceded states convened in Montgomery to establish the Confederate States of America, led by president Howell Cobb. Montgomery, though small, became the capital, and was known for its central role in the domestic slave trade. The city featured an array of businesses and services, including peculiar advertisements and entertaining tidbits, reflecting life in Confederate Alabama.

On February 9, delegates chose Jefferson Davis as president of the new Confederacy, a role he initially hesitated to accept, feeling uncertain about leading in such tumultuous times. Varina Davis, his wife, harbored concerns about his political capabilities. Meanwhile, Lincoln was preparing his own journey to Washington, remaining silent but focused on the upcoming challenges.

In the days of his journey, Davis delivered numerous speeches advocating for Southern independence and asserting a break from the Union, declaring an end to the possibility of compromise. His words reflected the urgent call for commitment to the secession movement and foreshadowed the deepening divide leading to war .

## **Of Spiders and Entrails**

In Montgomery, Mary Chesnut immersed herself in the social scene, hosting delegates and their families at her boarding house. On the evening of March 11, she noted a gathering of "judges, governors, senators, generals, congressmen" in her drawing room, where lively stories and gossip circulated. One anecdote shared by her uncle, Judge Withers, was particularly striking: a married couple's quarrel on a bridge escalated to a dramatic point where the man offered to drown himself if his wife didn't take the baby, to which she coldly responded that she wanted none of his lineage left.

As the evening wore on, Mary's husband, James, grew impatient with the lengthy storytelling and retreated upstairs. Despite his frustration, Mary engaged in discussions with a group of women about divorce laws, revealing their deep understanding of the topic. One particular woman, Mrs. Lafayette Borland, abruptly silenced herself when the conversation shifted to the consequences of leaving one's spouse, a reflection of her own past actions.

Mary reflected on the dynamics within her marriage, noting a comment from a Georgia man who suggested James was secretive. This prompted James to inquire whether he was indeed perceived this way. Mary candidly admitted that she remained largely oblivious to his thoughts and feelings, expressing the renewed sense of distance in their relationship, which she likened to an "Iron Wall."

In a moment of introspection, Mary considered her dedication to journaling. She expressed concern that chronicling her thoughts had become time-consuming, drawing a metaphor comparing her writing to a spider weaving webs from its entrails. This idea was inspired by a line from John Dryden's play, \*Marriage à la Mode\*, where he pondered the silent intimacy and isolation of souls, suggesting a complex interplay between connectivity and distance in human relationships.

## **Dark Magic (A Note to Readers)**

In "Dark Magic," Erik Larson reflects on the eerie parallels between historical events surrounding the American Civil War and contemporary political tensions, particularly following the Capitol attack on January 6, 2021. Larson, engrossed in research about Fort Sumter and the impending Civil War, experienced a disquieting convergence of past and present; both eras were marked by iconic moments of national unrest tied to electoral processes and presidential transitions.

The visceral emotions he felt while watching the chaos unfold—anxiety, anger, astonishment—echoed the sentiments prevalent in 1860-1861 among many Americans who could sense the nation teetering on the brink of chaos. This acknowledgment propels Larson to delve into the suspenseful narrative of a fragmented nation inching toward its greatest tragedy, driven by hubris, deceit, a craving for notoriety, and the complexities of human emotions.

Central to this inquiry is a perplexing question: How did South Carolina, seemingly an inconsequential state in economic decline, transform into the epicenter of this national crisis? Equally perplexing is the "malignant magic" that led Americans, both north and south of the Mason-Dixon Line, to entertain the thought of waging an all-out war against each other, culminating in the tragic loss of 750,000 lives.

Larson emphasizes that his work is deeply rooted in factual recounting; all quotations stem from credible historical documents, while behavioral descriptions are derived from eyewitness accounts. He has refined certain historical spellings and punctuation to align with modern standards while preserving the essence of original statements—Lincoln's delightful misspellings included.

With an invitation to readers to immerse themselves in this tumultuous time, Larson aims to evoke the emotions of passion, heroism, heartbreak, and even humor, akin to living in that pivotal moment unknowing of its dire outcomes. The narrative suggests a heightened sense of dread is necessary, particularly in the context of today's worrisome political landscape, where whispers of secession and civil war resurface among some segments of the population. Thus, the book serves as both a historical examination and a cautionary tale relevant to modern America.

## **Peculiar Circumstances**

**\*\*Chapter Summary: Peculiar Circumstances\*\***

On Saturday, April 13, Private Young of Fort Sumter observed a sudden lull in firing from Confederate batteries around one o'clock, leading to unease among the oarsmen who wished to leave, fearing for Young's safety. Meanwhile, Louis T. Wigfall arrived at the fort to negotiate its surrender, despite having no official orders to do so. He offered Anderson any terms that might be desired, to which Anderson responded by



agreeing to the terms previously proposed by General Beauregard. The conditions included evacuating the fort and saluting the flag, after which Anderson ordered the American flag to be lowered in favor of a white flag.

Wigfall rushed back to tell the oarsmen that the fort was surrendered, ushering them toward Morris Island with excitement. Some oarsmen expressed their relief and apprehension, revealing a mix of bravado and vulnerability. As they reached the island, Wigfall was welcomed by enthusiastic Confederate soldiers who cheered his supposed victory.

However, shortly after, another boat arrived carrying officers from Charleston unaware of Wigfall's negotiation and conveying a message from Beauregard asking if Anderson needed assistance. Upon learning of Wigfall's unauthorized actions, Anderson was outraged at the deception, feeling humiliated. He documented the terms proposed by Wigfall but threatened to raise the American flag again out of anger. The Confederate officers persuaded him to hold off on doing so until they could consult Beauregard, leading Anderson to reluctantly keep the white flag up.

On Morris Island, Wigfall was ordered to report back to Beauregard in Charleston, taking Private Young with him on a sturdier boat. They passed Fort Sumter, where they showed respect by dipping the Palmetto flag. Upon arriving in Charleston, Wigfall was celebrated, while Young felt disheveled and out of place amidst the festive crowd, mistaken for someone of higher rank due to the formal attire of the other officers.

Later, four Confederate officers came to finalize the surrender terms with Anderson. He granted one last request for a hundred-gun salute as a tribute to his bravery. The evacuation was set for April 14, marking a significant moment in the unfolding conflict, while the Palmetto Guard prepared to honorably occupy Fort Sumter.

## **Dorothea's Warning**

On a Saturday in January 1861, Dorothea Dix arrived at the Philadelphia office of Samuel M. Felton, Sr., the president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, to share a troubling discovery made during her travels in the South. Although her mission was to advocate for humane asylums, she brought news concerning political turbulence rather than mental health issues. Felton, who knew Dix well, had long respected her dedication and offered her a rail pass for her travels. Now at fifty-eight, she presented an image of austere determination, with a tall and thin frame, dressed in dark silk, and braided hair.

Dix expressed uncertainty about whether to recount what she had learned due to the sensitive nature of the information. Having mingled with various Southern society members, she had secured confidences that revealed intense fears regarding President-elect Lincoln and the growing secessionist sentiment. Her deep voice and solemn demeanor lent gravity to her account, in which she detailed a conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln and seize control of Washington, D.C. Felton listened intently as she narrated how conspirators had studied the railroad connections and planned to interrupt critical lines, essential for Lincoln's journey.

Alarmed by her revelations, Felton took swift action, realizing the imminent threat as Lincoln's inauguration approached. He dispatched an associate to inform General Winfield Scott in Washington, recognizing the urgent necessity to protect the President-elect. In addition, Felton reached out to Allan Pinkerton of Pinkerton's National Detective Agency, appealing for heightened security measures for both Lincoln and the railroad infrastructure.

Pinkerton promptly traveled to Philadelphia, where he began orchestrating a surveillance plan to track the conspirators. On February 1, he and a cadre of agents, including Kate Warne, the agency's lead female detective, headed to Baltimore, tasked with safeguarding Lincoln's transit. The city's heating political climate rendered it especially perilous, as the chief of police was a known secessionist.

While in Baltimore, Pinkerton established a base of operations and instructed his operatives to infiltrate local groups. Warne, posing as a secessionist fervent, mingled within high society, while another operative infiltrated a militia, uncovering its true motives aimed against Northern leadership. Reports indicated a serious plot against Lincoln's life, with promises of assassination lined with strict secrecy and escape plans to the South post-murder. Pinkerton knew the stakes were high, as rumors of violence buzzed around an imminent transfer of the President between stations in a hostile environment .

## Forbearance

In the chapter titled "Forbearance," dated January 9–12, Major Anderson and his men at Fort Sumter witness the departure of the ship, the \*Star of the West\*, after it is fired upon by Fort Moultrie. Despite the provocation, Anderson orders his gunners not to retaliate, which frustrates Captain Doubleday, who believes firing back was their duty to defend the American flag. Doubleday recalls that such inaction may have endangered their position and was shocking to Southern forces.

Anderson convenes his officers to discuss whether to use Fort Sumter's artillery to block the harbor. While some, including Doubleday, advocate for immediate bombardment, Lieutenant Meade cautions against escalating the conflict, emphasizing the need for defensive conduct to avoid civil war. Ultimately, Anderson decides against firing and instead sends a protest letter to Governor Pickens, wishing to understand the motivations behind the attack on the \*Star of the West\*.

Quartermaster Hall delivers the protest in Charleston, where his reception is icy due to rumors of impending violence. Anderson's letter asserts that firing upon an unarmed vessel was unjustified and seeks clarity on whether this was authorized by the governor. Pickens responds defensively, justifying the act on the basis of South Carolina's changed political relationship with the United States, which Anderson still chooses to ignore in favor of maintaining his defensive posture.

Following further exchanges, Anderson decides to send Lieutenant Talbot north for consultation with the War Department, as tensions mount. A second communication arrives from Pickens demanding the fort's surrender, which Anderson refuses, advocating instead for diplomatic resolution.

In preparation for another round of discussions with the governor, he proposes sending his aide, Lieutenant Hall, along with South Carolina's attorney general, Isaac W. Hayne, to speak directly to President Buchanan. This decision leads to more unease among the officers at Sumter, particularly for Captain Doubleday, who foresees dire consequences of delay, as South Carolina strengthens its military capabilities while the fort remains underprepared. The chapter captures a moment filled with tension, decisions cloaked in restraint, and an impending sense of conflict looming over Fort Sumter.

## Lethal Secrets

**\*\*Chapter Summary: Lethal Secrets\*\***

In January, Lieutenant Talbot returned from Washington, bringing news and a letter from Secretary of War Joseph Holt, who had just been confirmed in office. The situation surrounding Fort Sumter was tense, with local civilians expressing their anger toward Captain Doubleday, known for his abolitionist views. Doubleday learned he was viewed as a target, reputedly warned of plans to harm him should he venture into Charleston. Despite Major Anderson hoping for clear directives on how to handle the mounting tensions, Holt's letter provided little guidance, merely conveying that the War Department was pleased with Anderson's conduct.

As threats surrounding the fort escalated, South Carolina forces, bolstered by over a thousand enslaved individuals, worked diligently to fortify the area with supplies seized from other forts. Doubleday observed the construction of the “Iron Battery” at Morris Island, which posed a significant threat to Sumter. As time passed, South Carolina received additional, powerful artillery that further jeopardized Anderson's position.

High winds and rain disrupted operations at the fort, leading Anderson to implement strategic defenses, including the removal of flagstone pavement to mitigate damage from potential artillery. Amidst these preparations, a surprising act of conciliation emerged from Governor Pickens, who sent provisions to the fort, leading to an amusing scene where the meat was returned while vegetables were hidden away by the soldiers. Anderson, maintaining his stern stance, rejected the provisions to uphold their dignity, even as they faced the reality of dwindling supplies.

In a broader context, the political landscape in Washington was tumultuous. Buchanan’s administration was experiencing instability, marked by the resignation of his treasury secretary just weeks into office. As tensions mounted, secession discussions intensified across the South. Edmund Ruffin, returning to Virginia, grew increasingly frustrated with the state’s indecision regarding secession. However, news of Louisiana’s secession filled him with hope as he envisioned a strong confederacy forming among the Southern states.

Throughout this period of high tension, families at Sumter faced their own crises. As the storm persisted, arrangements were made for evacuating families to safety in Charleston. This event left the fort quieter but also allowed a sense of relief regarding their safety. The chapter captures the escalating conflict and emotional strain surrounding Fort Sumter, blending military, social, and political narratives as tensions teetered on the brink of war.

## **The Unfairness of It All**

In the chapter titled "The Unfairness of It All," the narrative focuses on James Buchanan's sentiments surrounding Lincoln's election and the turmoil facing his presidency. Buchanan, who became president in 1857, yearned for unity and peace, expressing frustration that he might not be able to complete his term without unrest. He had hoped to restore harmony among the states during his presidency but was confronted with escalating tensions, particularly regarding the debate over slavery in Kansas. This crisis of whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free or slave state overshadowed his moderate view that such issues were of little consequence, leaving it to the Supreme Court for resolution.

The chapter highlights Buchanan's connection to the infamous Dred Scott decision delivered by Chief Justice Roger B. Taney just two days after his inauguration. Taney's ruling not only declared that Blacks could not be citizens but also affirmed that Congress had no authority to restrict slavery in the territories. While Buchanan publicly supported the court's ruling, he had clandestinely influenced its deliberations and was aware of its implications prior to his inauguration. He considered slavery a “moral evil,” yet he did not oppose its existence in the South and instead blamed abolitionists for inflaming tensions.

As his presidency drew to a close, Buchanan faced the daunting task of writing his final annual message to Congress. He recognized this address, set to be delivered on December 3, as a pivotal moment that could shape his legacy. He hoped for a peaceful transition before Lincoln assumed the presidency, fearing for the nation's stability amidst rising tensions. The chapter concludes with Buchanan preparing to articulate his vision of leadership during a critical time, as the countdown to inauguration day began and the specter of civil upheaval loomed over the nation.

## **Smoke and Cheers**

The chapter titled "Smoke and Cheers" from "The Demon of Unrest" begins at Fort Sumter, where the atmosphere is one of gloom and tension. Captain Doubleday describes the fort—its dark, damp, and unfinished structure—with only fifteen guns mounted out of a planned one hundred and twenty. Despite its formidable design as a coastal fortress meant to protect against invasions, it remains incomplete, with debris cluttering the interior, making communication within the fort challenging.

The officers, however, anticipate greater comfort once their quarters are completed, featuring airy rooms with high ceilings, a water closet, and fireplaces, albeit with some potentially hazardous locations due to their proximity to gunpowder magazines. Most of the fort's artillery consists of thirty-two-pound cannons, with the heaviest being ten-inch "columbiads," which weigh around fifteen thousand pounds—significant firepower for the time.

The tension escalates when Major Anderson, the commanding officer, assembles all troops to raise the flag at the newly occupied Fort Sumter on December 27. A prayer is offered for peace and national unity, followed by the flag being hoisted amidst cheers from the garrison, prompting disbelief and fear among the Carolinians—that what they tried to prevent had happened.

Governor Francis Pickens of South Carolina feels betrayed by President Buchanan, believing he had been promised no reinforcement at Sumter. In a fit of anger, he sends officers to confront Anderson, who defends his actions by asserting his right to relocate for safety, given the threats from local southern troops.

Despite the tense dialogue, Anderson remains composed and explains that the move was made without malice, purely to prevent bloodshed, while expressing sympathy towards the South. His firm refusal to return to Fort Moultrie results in the southern officers leaving, though they are impressed by his demeanor. In the aftermath, secessionist workers at Sumter request to leave, leading to many departing the fort, demonstrating the uncertainty and looming conflict surrounding the fortified position .

## **The Angel of Death**

**\*\*Summary of "The Angel of Death, The Demon of Unrest" Chapter\*\***

On April 12, 1861, Captain Gustavus Fox aboard the \*Baltic\* arrived at his fleet's rendezvous point off Charleston in treacherous weather. He was expecting to see lights from the other ships, especially the \*Powhatan\*, but it was still too dark, and there was no sign of them. During his search, the \*Baltic\* was nearly grounded on Rattlesnake Shoal but managed to break free. Only one ship, the \*Harriet Lane\*, was present, and it faced crew dissent after being given sealed orders to assume a naval role, prompting a confrontation with its captain, John Faunce, who demanded obedience. Eventually, the crew complied, and the ship continued toward Charleston.

Meanwhile, at Fort Sumter, Captain Doubleday prepared for a looming confrontation after receiving an ultimatum from Confederate officers. He chose not to fire until dawn due to the lack of visibility. In Charleston, anticipation built as spectators gathered to witness the imminent bombardment, with a heavy silence permeating the crowd, described by Captain Ferguson as feeling like the "Angel of Death" was present.

At 4 AM, a "long roll" signal prompted the Confederate troops on Morris Island to awaken and prepare for battle. As rain fell, they awaited the firing signal, which was delayed until 4:30 AM. The first shell fired illuminated the dark sky, leading Ruffin to fire back at Fort Sumter, which still remained silent despite continuous bombardment.

Despite the Confederate guns raining shells on Fort Sumter from multiple directions, the fort did not return fire for two hours, causing concern among the attackers. Captain Doubleday, initially awoken by assaults on the fort's structure, eventually rose from his quarters to face the ongoing barrage. Bombardment continued relentlessly, with Confederate mortars launching shells that landed heavily within the fort, creating chaos amidst the steadfast yet unresponsive defense of Sumter.

At Mrs. Gidiere's boarding house, Mary Chesnut, along with other boarders, watched the unfolding events from a rooftop, invoking mixed reactions of fear and fervor in the air, culminating in a moment where she almost caught fire but was swiftly helped.

The stage was set for a historic confrontation, defined by tension, anticipation, and the desperate cries of those on both sides of the conflict.

## **Contents**

Please provide the specific chapter you would like me to summarize.

## **One Very Dark Night**

On February 22, Lincoln made a stop in Leaman Place, Pennsylvania, en route to Harrisburg, where a large crowd awaited him. Despite being too hoarse to speak, he humorously introduced his wife, triggering laughter from the audience. This last public appearance prior to Lincoln's secretive journey toward Washington heightened anxieties about his safety, especially regarding potential danger in Baltimore, which Secretary Hay ominously hinted at. The atmosphere was heavy with tension as people worried about the inauguration just days away.

In Washington, General Scott's soldiers, numbering nearly seven hundred, occupied the streets, armed and ready, which created an atmosphere of impending danger. While some questioned the necessity of troop deployments, President Buchanan insisted on maintaining them for protection, fearing he might regret inaction should anything happen.

As that Friday night unfolded, a significant incident took place involving Charles H. Van Wyck, a Republican congressman from New York, known for his staunch anti-slavery stance. He had already drawn the ire of Southern constituents due to a previous speech where he labeled them as cowards — a claim that triggered numerous death threats. Armed for protection, Van Wyck continued to speak out against slavery on the day Lincoln traveled to Harrisburg.

Later that night, as Van Wyck walked through a dark neighborhood near the Capitol, he was attacked by three men, one of whom stabbed him with a bowie knife. Fortunately, his heavy overcoat and a folded copy of the Congressional Globe absorbed the blow, preventing it from being fatal. In a surprising turn of events, Van Wyck fought back, managing to shoot one assailant and knock down another before being struck unconscious.

Despite the brutality of the attack, Van Wyck survived, and its political implications stirred questions over the growing violence against Republicans. The New-York Times characterized the incident as a harbinger of ominous developments facing those in the political arena, especially regarding free speech and safety for outspoken figures in a nation teetering toward conflict.

## **Ominous Doings**

## **\*\*Chapter Summary: "Ominous Doings"\*\***

From December 28 to 31, South Carolina exhibited ominous signs of preparing for war as tensions escalated around Fort Sumter. Governor Pickens emphasized the need for local planters to construct gun batteries along the Santee River and Winyah Bay, evoking a sense of patriotism reminiscent of their forefathers from the Revolutionary War. On December 28, he imposed a prohibition on all arms shipments to Fort Sumter, while allowing mail delivery, stating that the ban aimed to prevent violence. Despite his intentions, Major Anderson observed the construction of new military outposts by South Carolina forces as preparations for a looming conflict.

In a letter dated January 1, Anderson expressed confusion regarding Pickens's aggressive stance, recalling his control over Charleston's supply routes, which could severely impact the state's access to resources. He inferred that he could close the harbor and impede communication, although he maintained that such measures would only be employed defensively.

Anderson took some pride in the support he received from military officials who considered his transfer to Fort Sumter a wise strategic move, complimenting him for taking necessary actions to safeguard his command. Despite prior disapproval from former war secretary Floyd regarding his decision, Anderson's approach was well-regarded by many in the U.S. Army, including the esteemed General Winfield Scott, who had been incapacitated for several days by illness.

On December 30, General Scott composed a secret message to President Buchanan, suggesting reinforcement for Anderson's garrison at Fort Sumter with 250 recruits, additional weapons, and supplies. He requested discretion in these operations without referring to the War Department. Scott's vision included dispatching the U.S.S. Brooklyn, a formidable steam warship, to demonstrate American military strength.

As New Year's Eve approached, Scott instructed the commander of Fort Monroe to prepare the Brooklyn and equip it with troops and munitions while maintaining utmost secrecy about their movements. Meanwhile, the garrison at Fort Sumter awaited any sign of hope from the North, longing to see reinforcement amidst the growing trepidation surrounding their situation .