

LEE, ADAMS, FRANKLIN

FRANKLIN: Let someone else in Congress propose.

JOHN: Never! (FRANKLIN *shrugs*) Who did you have in mind?

FRANKLIN: I don't know. I really haven't given it much thought.

(RICHARD HENRY LEE, a tall, loose-jointed Virginia aristocrat of forty-five, enters)

LEE: You sent for me, Benjamin?

JOHN: (Looking at LEE, then at FRANKLIN) Never!!

LEE: Halloo, Johnny.

JOHN: (Nodding) Richard.

FRANKLIN: Richard, John and I need some advice.

LEE: If it's mine t'give, it's yours, y'know that.

FRANKLIN: Thank you, Richard. As you know, the cause that we support has come to a complete standstill. Now, why do you suppose that is?

LEE: Simple! Johnny, here, is obnoxious and disliked.

FRANKLIN: Yes, that's true. What's the solution, I wonder?

LEE: (It's obvious) Get someone else in Congress to propose—

FRANKLIN: Richard, that's brilliant! Wasn't that brilliant, John?

JOHN: (Dully) Brilliant.

FRANKLIN: Yes, now the question remains "who can it be?" The man we need must belong to a delegation publicly committed to support independence. At the present time, only Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Delaware have declared our way.

LEE: And Virginia, Benjy—don't forget Virginia.

FRANKLIN: Oh, I haven't, Richard—how could I? But strictly speaking, while Virginia's views on independence are well known, your legislature in Williamsburg has never formally authorized its delegation here in Congress to support the cause. Of course, if we could think of a Virginian with enough influence to go down there and persuade the House of Burgesses—

LEE: Damn me if I haven't thought of someone!

FRANKLIN and ADAMS: (Together) Who?

LEE: Me!

FRANKLIN: Why didn't I think of that!

LEE: I'll leave tonight—why, hell, right now, if y'like! I'll stop off at Stratford just long enough to refresh the missus, and then straight to the matter. Virginia, the land that gave us our glorious Commander-in-Chief—(A short drum roll)—George Washington, will now give the continent its proposal on independence! And when Virginia proposes, the South is bound to follow, and where the South goes the Middle Colonies go! Gentlemen, a salute! To Virginia, the Mother of American Independence!

JOHN: Incredible! We're free, and he hasn't even left yet! (To