

# ADAMS, FRANKLIN, MARTHA

FRANKLIN: Look at her, John--just look at her!

JOHN: (*Hypnotized*) I am.

FRANKLIN: She's even more magnificent than I remember! Of course, we didn't see much of her front last night. (*Calling*) Good morrow, madame! (*She looks down at him blankly*)

JOHN: Good morrow!

MARTHA: Is it the habit in Philadelphia for strangers to shout at ladies from the street?

FRANKLIN: Not at all, madame, but we're not--

MARTHA: And from men of your age it is not only unseemly, it's unsightly.

JOHN: Excuse me, madame, but we met last evening.

MARTHA: I spoke to no one last evening.

FRANKLIN: Indeed you did not, madame, but nevertheless we presented ourselves. This is Mr. John Adams and I am Dr. Franklin. (*As she stares at them, dumfounded*) Inventor of the stove?

MARTHA: Oh please, I know your names very well. But you say you presented yourselves?

FRANKLIN: (*Smiling*) It's of no matter. Your thoughts were well taken elsewhere.

MARTHA: (*Turning to the room for a moment*) My husband is not yet up.

FRANKLIN: Shall we start over? Please join us, madame.

MARTHA: Yes, of course. (*She disappears from the window*)

FRANKLIN: No wonder the man couldn't write. Who could think of independence, married to her?

*(She appears, smiling)*

MARTHA: I beg you to forgive me. It is indeed an honor meeting the two greatest men in America.

FRANKLIN: *(Smiling back)* Certainly the greatest within earshot, anyway.

MARTHA: I am not an idle flatterer, Dr. Franklin. My husband admires you both greatly.

FRANKLIN: Then we are doubly flattered, for we admire very much that which your husband admires.

*(A pause as they regard each other warmly. They have hit it off)*

JOHN: *(Finally; the bull in the china shop)* Did you sleep well, madame? *(FRANKLIN nudges him with his elbow)* I mean, did you lie comfortably? Oh, damn! Y'know what I mean!

FRANKLIN: Yes, John, we do. Tell us about yourself, madame; we've had precious little information. What's your first name?

MARTHA: Martha.

FRANKLIN: Ah, Martha. He might at least have told us that. I'm afraid your husband doesn't say very much.

JOHN: He's the most silent man in Congress. I've never heard him utter three sentences together.

FRANKLIN: Not everyone's a talker, John.

MARTHA: It's true, you know. *(She turns to look at the window)* Tom is not—a talker.

JOHN: *(Speaking)* Go on, madame.

FRANKLIN: How did he win you, Martha, and how does he hold onto a bounty such as you?

MARTHA: Surely you've noticed that Tom is a man of many accomplishments: author, lawyer, farmer, architect, statesman—*(She hesitates)*—and still one more that I hesitate to mention.

JOHN: Don't hesitate, madame—don't hesitate!

FRANKLIN: Yes, what *else* can that redheaded tombstone do?

MARTHA: *(She looks at them for a moment, then leans in and sings, confidentially)*  
He plays the violin

FRANKLIN: *(Speaking)* That settles it, John, we're taking up the violin!

JOHN: *(To MARTHA)* Very well, madame, you've got us playing the violin! What happens next?

MARTHA: Next, Mr. Adams?

JOHN: Yes! What does Tom do now?

MARTHA: *(Demurely)* Why, just what you'd expect.  
*(JOHN and FRANKLIN exchange expectant looks)*

MARTHA: We dance!