

# JOHN & ABIGAIL

JOHN: Good God, what's happened to me? John Adams, the great John Adams, Wise Man of the East—what have I come to? My law practice down the pipe, my farm mortgaged to the hilt—at a stage in life when other men prosper I'm reduced to living in Philadelphia.

(ABIGAIL *appears, as before*)

JOHN: Oh, Abigail, what am I going to do?

ABIGAIL: Do, John?

JOHN: I need your help.

ABIGAIL: You don't usually ask my advice.

JOHN: Yes—well, there doesn't appear to be anyone else right now.

ABIGAIL: (*Sighing*) Very well, John, what is it?

JOHN: The entire South has walked out of this Congress, George Washington is on the verge of total annihilation, the precious cause for which I've labored these several years has come to nothing, and it seems—(*A pause*)—it seems I am obnoxious and disliked.

ABIGAIL: Nonsense, John.

JOHN: That I am unwilling to face reality.

ABIGAIL: Foolishness, John.

JOHN: That I am pig-headed.

ABIGAIL: (*Smiling*) Ah, well, there you have me, John. I'm afraid you *are* pig-headed.

(*He smiles; a pause*)

JOHN: Has it been any kind of life for you, Abby? God knows I haven't given you much.

ABIGAIL: I never asked for more. After all, I am Mrs. John Adams—that's quite a lot for one lifetime.

JOHN: (*Bitterly*) Is it, Abby?

ABIGAIL: Think of it, John! To be married to the man who is always first in line to be hanged!

JOHN: Yes. The ag-i-ta-tor. (*Turning to her*) Why, Abby? You must tell me what it is! I've always been dissatisfied, I know that; but lately I find that I *reek* of discontentment! It fills my throat and floods my brain, and sometimes—sometimes I fear that there is no longer a dream, but only the discontentment.

ABIGAIL: Oh, John, can you really know so little about yourself? And can you think so little of me that you'd believe I married the man you've described? Have you forgotten what you used to say to me? I haven't. "Commitment, Abby—commitment! There are only two creatures of value on the face of this earth: those with a commitment, and those who require the commitment of others." (*A pause*) Do you remember, John?

JOHN: (*Nodding*) I remember.