**THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**

**By George Lippard**

***Journal book 2 – BRIDGE TO FREEDOM***

To the Gentle Reader: In honor to our beloved Saint Germain (the embodiment of the Freedom Flame to our Earth), we give, below, his exact words spoken to those who signed the Declaration of Independence as he appeared in the room with them and “fired” them with his enthusiasm and courage so to do.

It is a cloudless summer day, a clear blue sky bends over an expanse above a quaint building rising among the giant trees in the center of a wide city. That house is built of plain red brick, with heavy window frames and a large hall door. It is the State House of Philadelphia, the year is 1776.

In yonder wooden steeple which tops the summit of that red brick State House, stands an old man with snow-white hair and sunburned face. He is humbly dressed, yet his eye gleams, as it is fixed on the outline of the bell suspended in the steeple there. By his side, gazing into his sunburned face in wonder, stands a flaxen-haired boy, with laughing eyes of summer blue. The old man thinks for a moment about the strange words written upon the bell, then, gathering the boy in his arms, he speaks:

“Look here, my child, will you do this old man a kindness? Then hasten down the stairs and wait in the hall below until a man gives you a message for me, when he gives you that word, run out into the street and shout it up to me. Do you mind?”

The boy sprang from the old man's arms and ran down the dark stairs.

Many minutes passed. The bell keeper was alone.

“Ah!” groaned the old man, “he has forgotten me.”

As the word was upon his lips, a merry ringing laugh broke on his ear and there, among the crowd on the pavement, stood the blue-eyed boy, clapping his tiny hands while the breeze blew his flaxen hair all about his face. Swelling his little chest, he raised himself on tiptoe and shouted the single word, “Ring!”

Do you see that old man's eye fire? Do you see that arm so suddenly bare to the shoulder? Do you see that withered hand grasping the iron tongue of the bell? That old man is young again. His veins are filling with a new life. Backward and forward, with sturdy strokes, he swings the tongue. The bell peals out, the crowds in the street hear it and burst forth in one long shout. Old Delaware hears it and gives it back on the cheers of her thousand sailors. The city hears it and startsup from desk and workshop, as if an earthquake had spoken.

Under that very bell pealing out at noon day in an old hall, fifty-six traders, farmers and mechanics had assembled to break the shackles of the world. The committee, who had been out all night, are about to appear. At last the door opens and they advance to the front. The parchment is laid on the table. Shall it be signed or not? Then follows a high and stormy debate. The timid cringe in corners. Then Thomas Jefferson speaks his few bold words and John Adams pours out his whole soul. Still there is a doubt, and that pale-faced man, rising in one corner, speaks out something about “axes, scaffolds and a gibbet.”

A tall, slender man rises and his dark eyes burn while his words ring through the hall:

“Gibbets! They may stretch our necks on every scaffold in the land. They may turn every rock into a gibbet, every tree into a gallows, and yet, thewordswrittenonthatparchmentcanneverdie!They may pour out our blood on a thousand altars and yet, from every drop that colors the ax or drips on the sawdust of the block, a new martyr to freedom will spring into existence. What! Are there shrinking hearts and weak voices here, when the very dead upon our battlefields arise and call upon us to sign that parchment or be accursed forever?

“Sign! If the next moment the gibbet's rope is around your neck. Sign! If the next moment this hall rings with the echo of the falling ax. Sign! By all your hopes in life or death, as husbands, as fathers, as men! Signyournamestothatparchment!

“Yes, were my soul trembling on the verge of eternity, were this voice choking in the last struggle, I would still, with the last impulse of that soul, with the last gasp of that voice, beg you to remember this truth: ‘GodhasgivenAmericatothefree!’Yes, as I sink down in the gloomy shadow of the grave, with my last breath I would beg of you—-SIGN THAT PARCHMENT!”

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