

A TUTTLE TWINS SERIES OF STORIES

# AMERICA'S HISTORY

1776-1791

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# A Continuing Clash of Ideas

History is far more interesting than we're taught—and that's because what is taught is often an overly simplistic version, "written by the victors." Whoever got their way in the past got to also control what was written about them. And so, we only get part of the story. But we can't learn the true lessons of history if we don't explore the full picture.

This book covers a period of time in which there were strong disagreements between two different groups that had to unite to defeat a common enemy. On the one hand, there were freedom-loving Liberals who wanted to maximize individual rights and keep the government small and local. On the other hand were the political elite—the Conservatives who felt that a strong national government was needed in order to prosper. When all was said and done, there certainly were victors.

Both sides cared about their country but had very different ideas about how it would best succeed. Those disagreements were never fully resolved, so those same tensions still exist today! Should Americans be governed by a powerful, national government? Or should power be spread out among the states and individuals themselves?

How can we actually have a government that is strong enough to protect our rights, yet not too powerful that it becomes the chief violator of our rights? Could the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights really keep the national government limited?

The Founding Fathers faced these important issues, and so must we in our time. As we consider the answers for ourselves, we can still learn from their debates from 250 years ago—with the advantage of also being able to see what has happened since then. We can start to consider what worked and what did not.

We can learn from the mistakes of the past, so we don't repeat them as we try to build an even better future. And that's the real reason why we should learn true history—not the simplistic stuff that portrays the victors as right, but the real, raw history showing a clash of ideas and a contest for power.

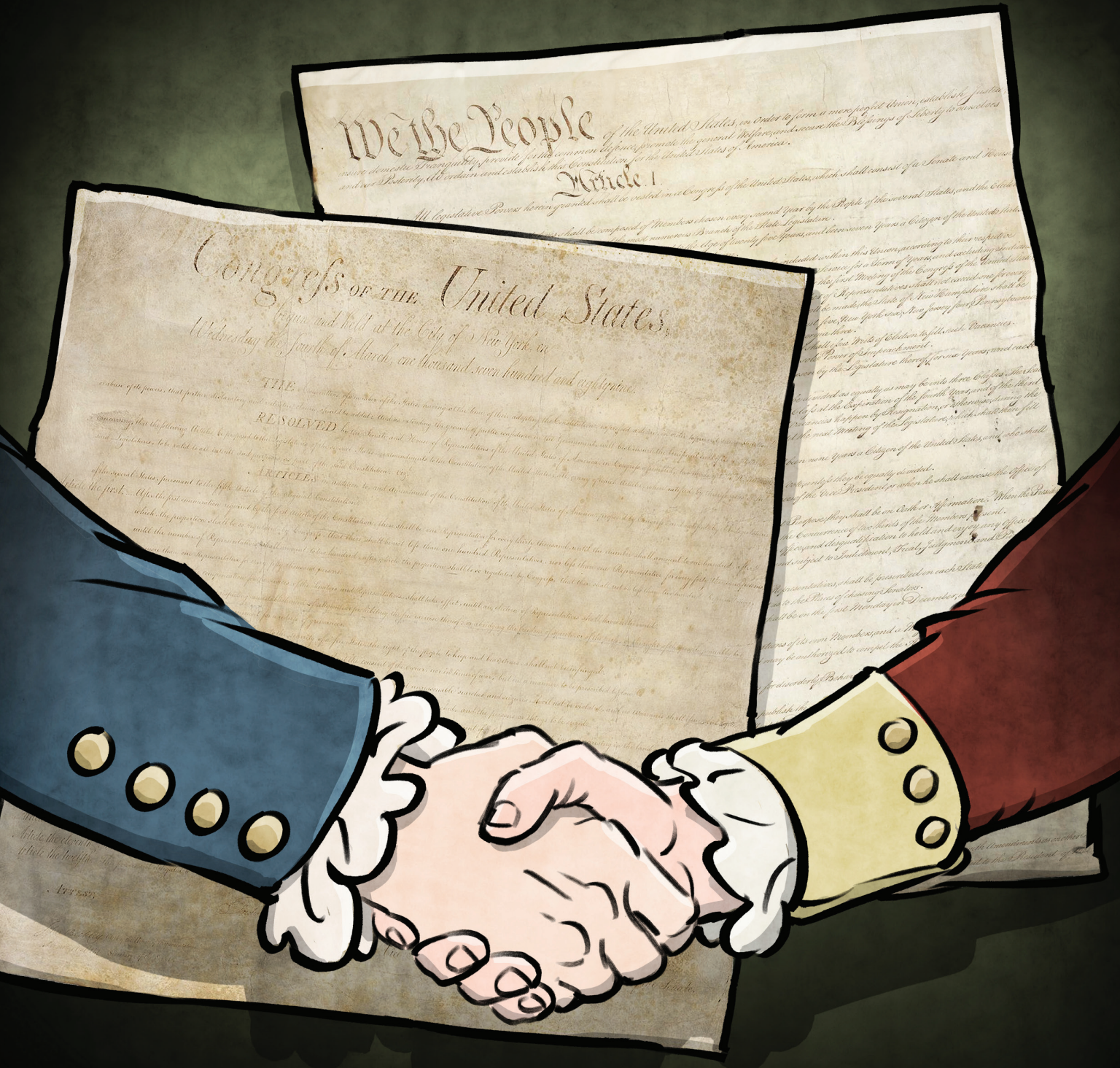
It's a controversial story worth sharing. Shall we begin?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connor Boyack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line underneath the name.



## Chapter 11

# A Bill of Rights







The stands began to fill up, while calliope sounds created a festive mood.

“Before it gets too loud in here,” Grandma Tuttle said, sitting between the twins, “I want to tell you what happened at the ratifying conventions. It will help you understand Atlas’s act. Ethan snuggled his popcorn bucket, and Emily replaced her peanuts with a rootbeer.

“Even though most people agreed with the Anti-Federalists about the dangers of a stronger central government, the Federalists were convincing enough to cause people to consider the new Constitution. After all, they *were* desperate to solve the problems they were having, and the Federalists also promised that this new government would be limited,” she explained. “Some of the states ratified quickly, but some of the key state conventions stayed firmly planted on the Anti-Federalist team, such

as Governor George Clinton’s New York, Governor Patrick Henry’s Virginia, and Governor John Hancock’s Massachusetts. Those conventions refused to ratify it.”

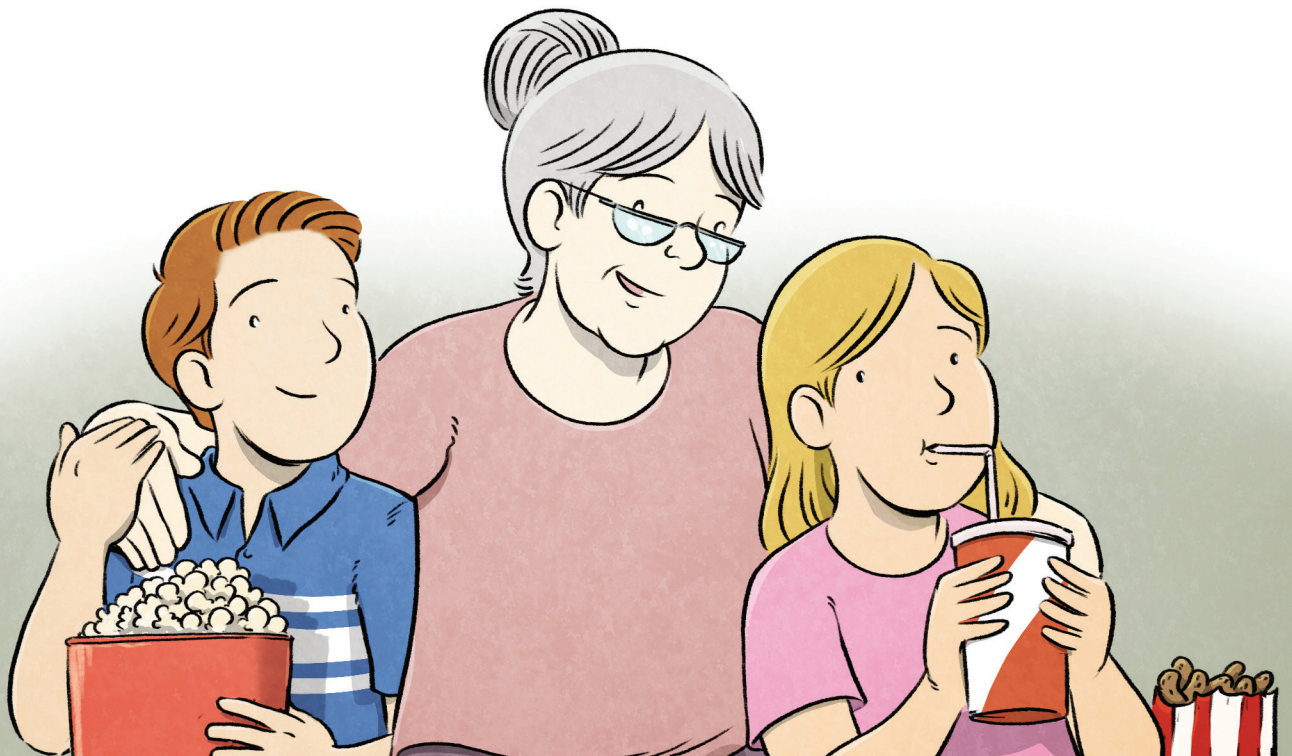
“Atlas showed us the checks and balances,” Ethan said. “And Federalists promised that Congress would have enumerated powers... that means being in charge of just a few things.”

“Weren’t the checks and balances enough to trust the Constitution?” Emily wondered.

Grandma replied, “Wisely, these resistant states didn’t trust politicians to simply keep their promises once they got power. Remember, politicians will do...”

“...whatever the people let them do,” the twins said in unison.

“We promised that we would remember,” Emily said, hugging her grandma’s arm.



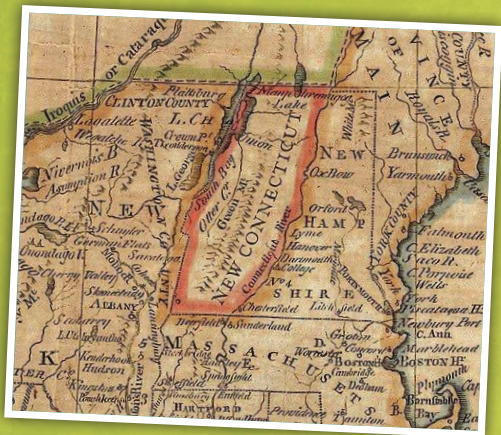


## More About This!



### Trade with Great Britain

After the Treaty of Paris, Americans could buy imported goods from Great Britain again, which could sell their items cheaply because of their mercantilist empire. American merchants couldn't compete against this unfair system, leading many of them to call for a tariff—a tax on British products to make them more expensive so people would buy locally instead. Under the Articles of Confederation, states that had a lot of merchants would vote yes for a tariff, but the farming states that liked the cheap products would vote no. A national government would make passing a tariff easier.



### Land Disputes

As the states defended their new independence, they also sometimes squabbled between themselves over land claims. For example, both New York and New Hampshire battled over New Connecticut (renamed Vermont), a disputed area that had declared itself an independent nation. A national government would resolve these conflicts and would admit new states more easily than under the Articles. Vermont became the 14th state soon after the Constitution was ratified.



### Western Land Threats

The Treaty of Paris gave Americans more territory to settle. As they started moving westward, they often had trouble. Because the states did not have a big army, other countries would not always respect their border agreements. Spain would not let farmers send their harvest crops down the Mississippi river. They were also encouraging American settlers to leave the United States and join Spain instead. And the British teamed up with Native Americans to attack settlers and advance their forts into American territory.



“Perfect!” Grandma Tuttle said, stealing a bit of popcorn from Ethan’s bag. “Also, their suspicions were heightened when they carefully read the powers given to Congress. Listen to these and tell me what *you* think.”

She continued, “The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, and provide for the common defense and *general welfare* of the United States.”

Ethan asked, “What does ‘general welfare’ mean?”

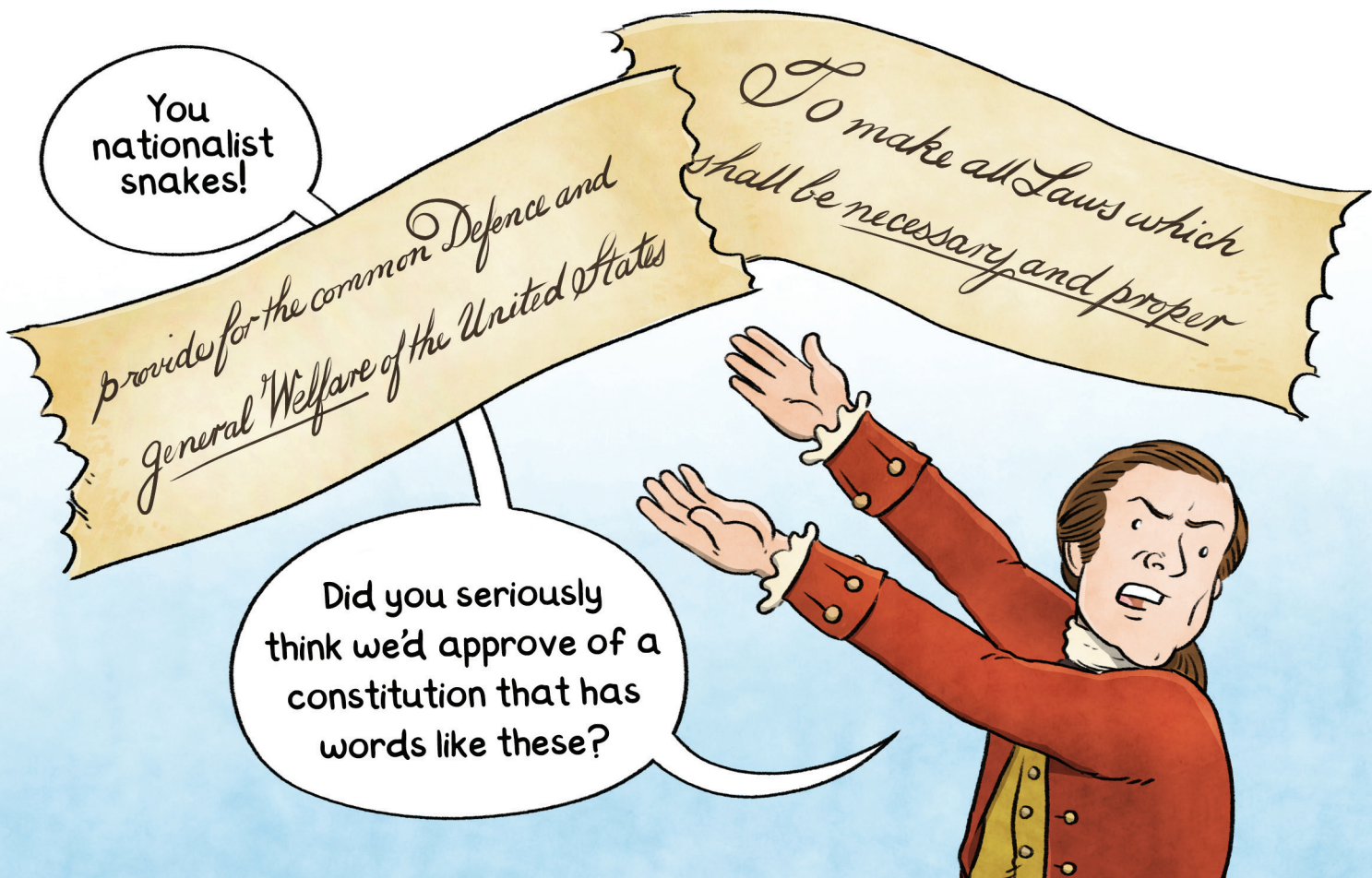
“That’s what the Anti-Federalists wanted to know too. To them, it sounded fishy, like the Federalists were trying to give the central government the power to do

anything they believed was *good* for the country. And later in the Constitution, it says that Congress would have the power ‘To make all laws which shall be *necessary and proper*.’”

“That *does* sound fishy,” Emily said. “It could be a trap to take all the power.”

“Many believed it was, and they asked to scratch that part out, but the Federalists insisted they wouldn’t change any of the words,” Grandma said. “And so the Anti-Federalists wouldn’t change their minds.”

“Well, we *do* have the Constitution today, so we know something changed their minds,” Emily said. “What was it?”





“Not really what, but *who*,” Grandma explained. “John Hancock was one of the wealthiest merchants in Boston, but he was also born a son of a poor preacher from Lexington. He was the secret financier of the rabble-rousing Sons of Liberty, who knew firsthand what a tyrannical government was capable of. He was also elected as a president of the Continental Congress.”

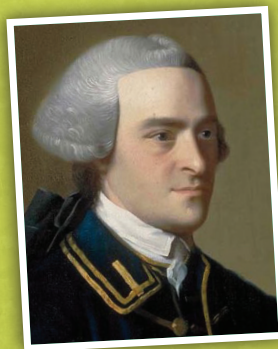
“So he was a hero of the common people and respected by the political elite too,” Emily thought out loud.

“Kind of like George Washington was,” Ethan added.

“It was exactly for this reason that he had been elected again as governor of Massachusetts, where citizens had recently been divided by a violent tax rebellion,” Grandma explained. “The people of that state needed someone who could compromise and bring the people back together, and that’s what he was able to do in the ratifying convention too. With the support of his old partner Samuel Adams, Hancock struck a deal that calmed the fears of the Anti-Federalists without changing the words of the Constitution.”

“Another balancing act,” Emily guessed, swapping her root beer float with Ethan’s popcorn.

## More About Me!



**John  
Hancock**  
1737 - 1793

As one of the most influential and popular leaders from the Revolution, it is strange that of all his deeds, John Hancock is remembered mostly for having the largest signature on the Declaration of Independence. Reviewing his many other accomplishments and acts will help us recognize how special he really was.

- Graduate of Harvard
- Inherited his uncle’s merchant business, becoming one of the wealthiest men in Boston
- Heroically demanded the removal of the British troops involved in the Boston Massacre
- Spoke against the Tea Act and in favor of the Tea Party rebellion.
- Secret financier of the Boston Sons of Liberty
- Was elected as a delegate and the first president of the Second Continental Congress
- First signer of the Declaration of Independence
- Helped create the Patriot fleet of ships for the Revolution
- Signer of the Articles of Confederation
- Generous philanthropist
- Elected the first and third governor of Massachusetts by over 90 percent of voters
- President of the Massachusetts ratifying convention
- Nominated for president but yielded to the popular leadership of George Washington

Just at that moment, horns blared out and drums started up their rat-a-tat-tat. Calliope music booped and beeped from the center of the circus tent, and the voice of the ringmaster boomed out, “Come one, come all! And let the show begin!”

The crowd jumped in their seats when a flock of four, rocket-propelled clown cars bolted from behind the curtain. The vehicles were hilariously tiny, but their noises deafening and their

speeds startling. Their jumps and tricks were death defying, making everyone gasp with nervousness, but also burst with cheer. This was already the best performance the twins had ever witnessed, and it was only the beginning. But like magic, the loud noises of the clowns’ vehicles stopped at the exact moment the tent went completely dark. The crowd held their breath as only a single drumroll echoed through the blackened arena.





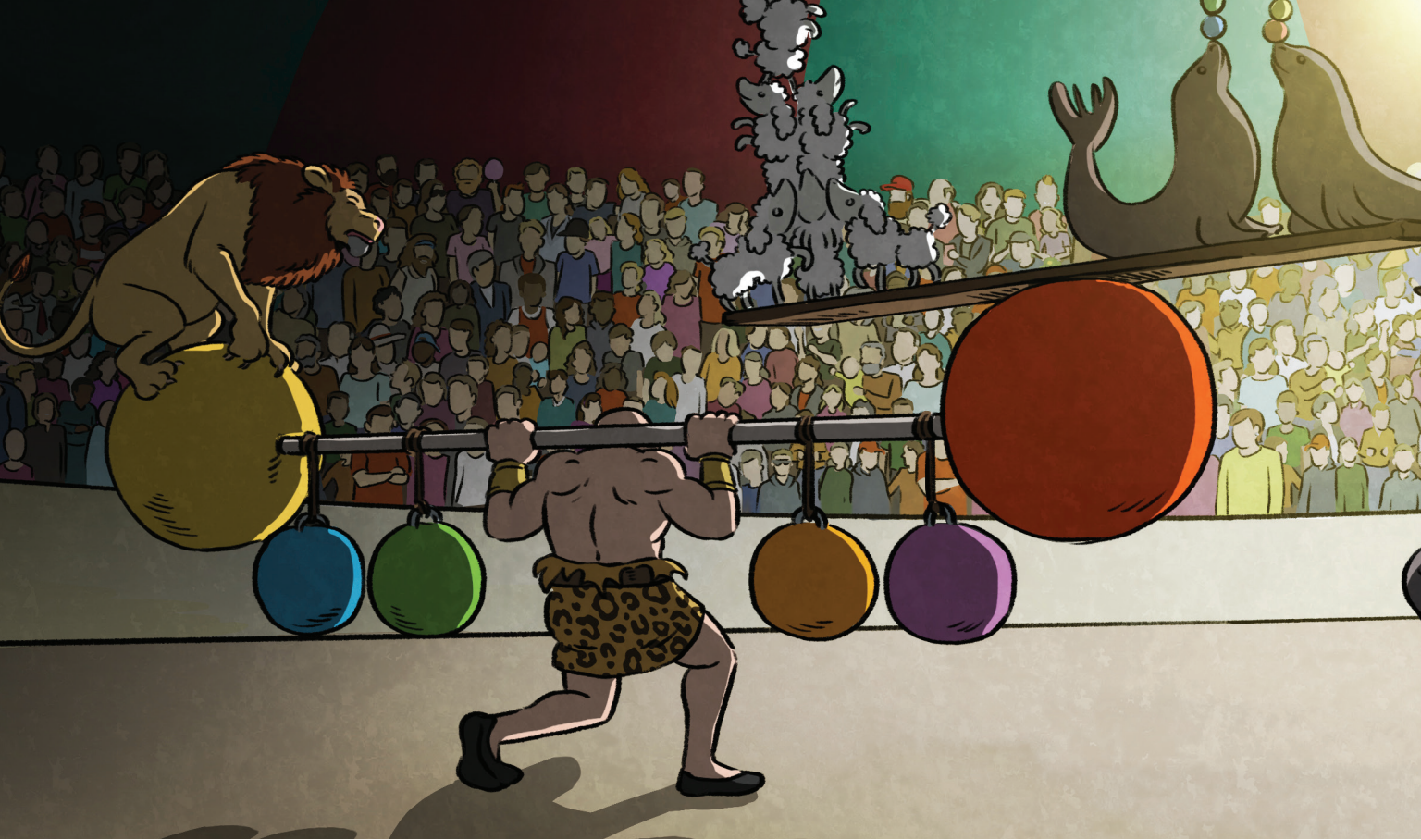


Then with a loud crack, a spotlight revealed a woman standing on a platform at the highest point of the tent. She dove, but without a trapeze or even a net to catch her! The crowd gasped as she fell like an arrow toward the hard, dirt floor below. Surely, she was doomed! Then at the very last moment, she curved horizontally and soared gracefully along the ground, waving to the audience. She must have been attached to invisible wires. What an effect!

The crowd exhaled in joyful screams. Suddenly, there were half a dozen acrobats flying through the air, twisting and turning in their sparkling costumes and dazzling the spectators below.

And then, there was Atlas. In a flourish of trumpets, he descended from the ceiling, arms outstretched, by the same gravity-defying magic. His voice boomed through the big top: "Welcome, my friends... to the greatest show ever!"





The applause was thunderous, as the crowd roared with approval.

The show proceeded just the way the twins had seen it planned on the chalkboard—only better! Animal acrobatics, hoops of fire, smoke bombs, lasers... everything a circus was meant to be and more. When Atlas ripped his toga, revealing his judicial tattoo, they knew it was time for the finale.

“Goodness. I hope that’s not permanent,” they heard Grandpa Tuttle grumble.

The sound of the entire audience gasping and holding their breath at once created enough tension to match the intensity of Atlas’s face as he crouched down to heave the colossal contraption. Surely

the strongest man in the world could do it... couldn’t he?

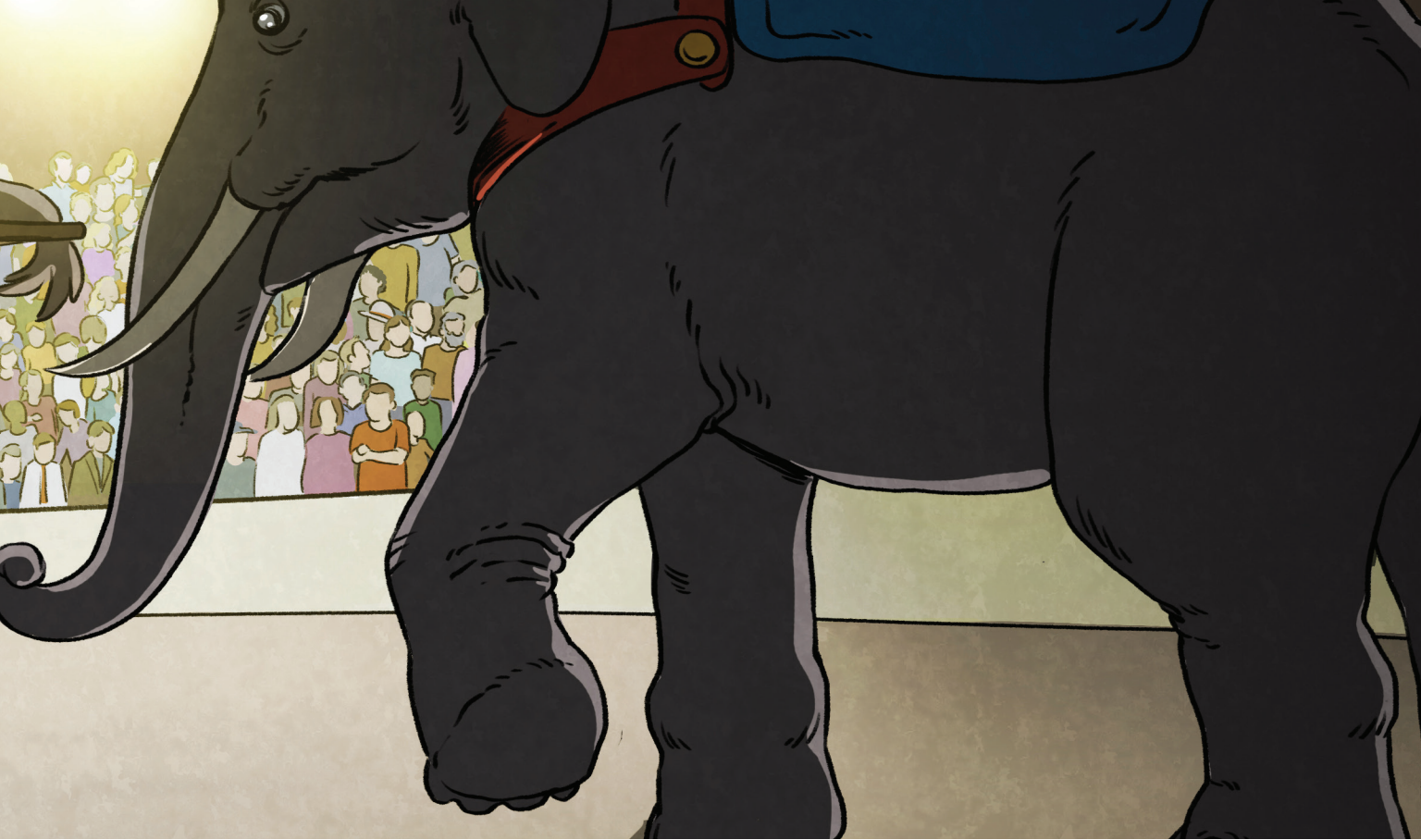
His muscles rippled and bunched, the pole bowed, and the spheres filled with animals began to rise slowly. The crowd oohed as, inch by inch, the mass rose from the floor. Then, with a mighty roar, Atlas lifted it over his head. He had done it!

But there was more. Drums beat out a cadence, and the flap of the tent opened again. Through it, Bill, the circus elephant, emerged from the shadows into the ring.

“What’s this?” Ethan said, elbowing Emily. “He didn’t tell us about this part!”

“Atlas always has a surprise,” Emily said. “That’s why he’s the best!”





While Bill was getting into position, a red, white, and blue cannon rolled in from the opposite side. The audience rose to its feet, every eye focused on the spectacle. The large gun boomed, and from the cloud of smoke appeared the Human Cannonball rocketing over Atlas and then into a cushioned throne on Bill's back.

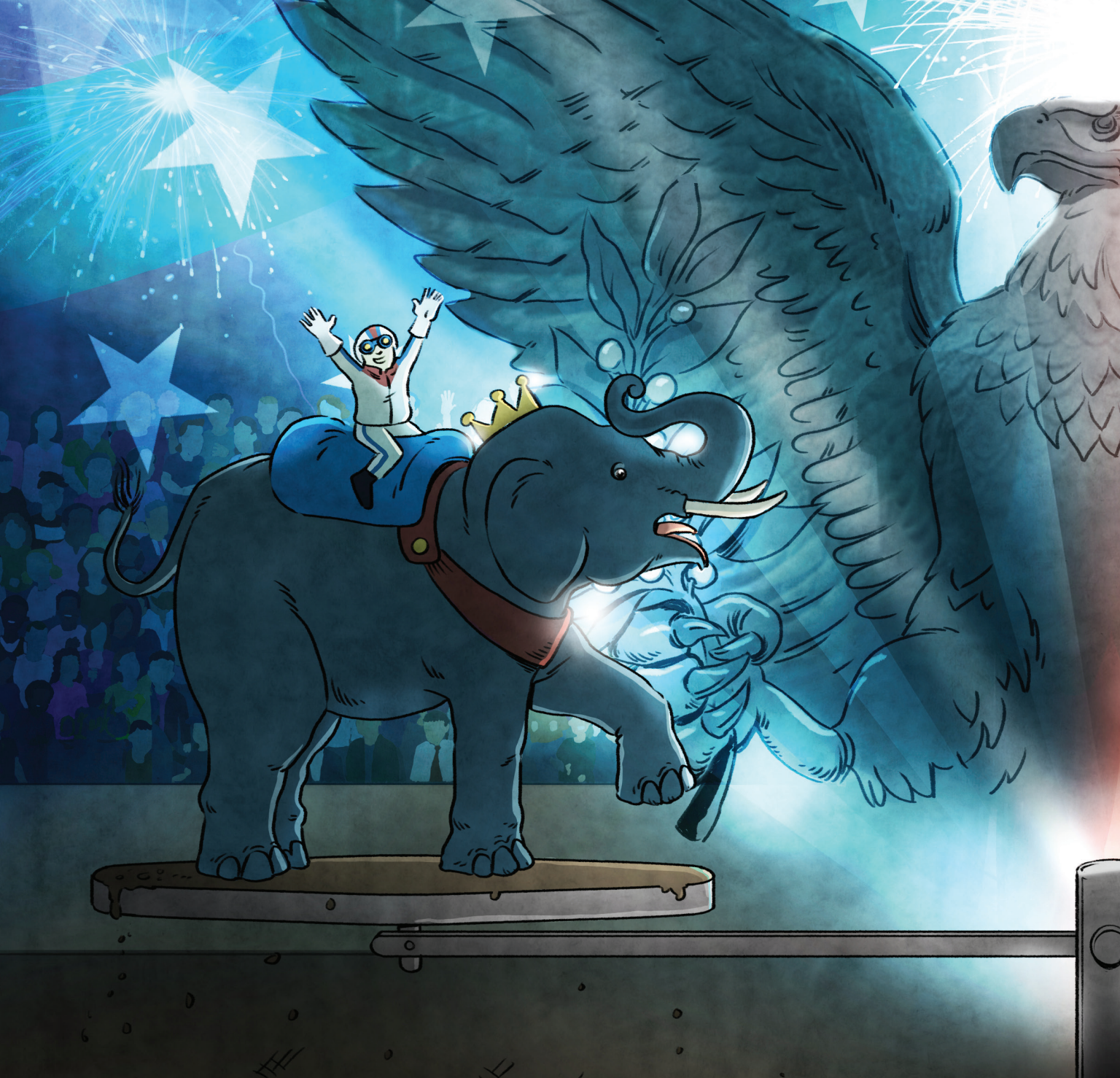
For a moment, the crowd couldn't even breathe... then they exploded with the loudest cheer of the night! The twins would have held their hands over their ears, but they were too busy banging them together and screaming themselves.

And yet, the show *still* wasn't finished.

The ground shook. A few people screamed in fright. Was there an earthquake? From below the circus performers, two massive platforms rose from the dirt, carrying Atlas on one and Bill and Cannonball on the other. A pillar in the middle balanced a beam that connected all the parts, making a seesaw that filled the area floor. Music swelled as the platforms holding Atlas and Bill rocked. It tipped one way, then the other, threatening to dump the whole apparatus into a catastrophic pile. Hands reached out as if they could steady the entire mass, crying out in wonder and dismay. Could it hold? Would it end in disaster?

But slowly the seesawing settled. Perfect balance!





“The *Bill* of Rights,” Grandma Tuttle yelled at them over the cheers and music. “Get it, Bill, the elephant?”

The twins *didn't* get it actually. They had heard about the Bill of Rights but didn't know what it had to do with elephants or Atlas's balancing act.





Smoke rose up and rolled through the tent. The audience murmured and squirmed. What *e/se* could there be? Suddenly a giant hologram of an American eagle, the same symbol the twins had become familiar with—olive branch on the left side, a bundle of arrows on the right—was projected over the balancing act, filling the whole big top with its wings. The band played the last few measures of the Star-Spangled Banner. Fireworks blasted and sparkled. It was a glorious tribute to the American republic and the twins thought it was the most impressive circus act ever designed.



The applause might never have stopped that night, but at some point the fair lights started flickering off while staff herded people out the gates. Lines of cars sat waiting for their turn to exit the parking lot. In the Tuttle's van, Emily rekindled the conversation.

"I think I understand now," she said. "On Atlas's side were the thirteen arrows bundled together in the eagle's claw—that represents a union of states, the Constitution, and the Federalists."

Ethan understood immediately. "And the side with the olive branch represents the side of liberalism and decentralized governments. That was the Anti-Federalists."

"Correct," Grandma Tuttle affirmed. "The Bill of Rights was the deal that John Hancock struck for the Anti-Federalists. They were to be amendments, which means updates, to the Constitution that would guarantee that the states, and the people, could resist the new central government if it ever exceeded the enumerated powers that were delegated to it—creating true federalism, not nationalism."

"The federal government has checks and balances... but the Bill of Rights would give the states and the people an ultimate check against the whole thing... just in case."

"After Massachusetts ratified, the others followed with the same demand—to amend the Constitution with a new Bill of Rights as the first action of the new Congress."

Ethan didn't hear anything after that. He fell asleep in the car.







## More About This!

### Ratification Dates

- Delaware: December 7, 1787
- Pennsylvania: December 12, 1787
- New Jersey: December 18, 1787
- Georgia: January 2, 1788
- Connecticut: January 9, 1788
- Massachusetts: February 6, 1788
- Maryland: April 28, 1788
- South Carolina: May 23, 1788
- New Hampshire: June 21, 1788  
*\* With this ratification the Constitution became officially adopted.*
- Virginia: June 25, 1788
- New York: July 26, 1788
- North Carolina: November 21, 1789
- Rhode Island: May 29, 1790

### The 14th State!

- Vermont: March 4, 1791  
*Like the other states in 1776, the Patriots of "New Connecticut" also declared their independence. When they created their first constitution the next year, they changed their state's name to Vermont. The Vermont Militia, led by Ethan Allen, was called the Green Mountain Boys and they fought in some very important battles, including the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga. But because New York claimed ownership of Vermont's land, the state wasn't recognized by the other states. It functioned as a completely independent republic all through the war, until finally the land dispute was settled!*







When he woke up, Ethan was standing on the top of a hill, looking over Spoonerville at night. It was the same overlook that Fred had brought them to months before. How did he get here?

Shaken from his confusion, a growl echoed from the mountain to his right. It was Atlas and the animals from his balancing act. A fire ignited the circus performers, and they began to blend and grow together into a monster so titanic that the rocks crumbled under its feet! Arrows appeared in the monster's clutches as it bellowed a blood-freezing call. The fire-draped beast stomped toward the defenseless town of Spoonerville. Buildings, businesses, and homes were smashed. The monster seemed unstoppable!

But then, from the forests to the left, came Cannonball riding Bill the elephant. They were also enormous and adorned in armor. Bill held a piece of parchment in his trunk, and Cannonball grasped a mighty hammer of judgment in his fist.

The fiery monster shrieked in outrage at his challengers and thundered toward the heroes. Surely this clash of titans would leave Spoonerville in shambles, but Bill and his noble rider were its only hope to stop total destruction.

Locked in combat, they screamed back and forth to each other:

“FREEEEEEEDOM!” bellowed Cannonball.

“POWWERRR!” the monster roared back.

“Eeedom!”

“Owwerr!”

“Eeetham!”

“Showerrr!”

“Ethan. Shower!”

It was Emily, pounding on his bedroom door and shouting. The monsters faded away as Ethan sat up and rubbed his eyes. What a weird dream! He checked the clock. It was still early.

“Your turn in the shower, Ethan! Get up! We have to be at the fairgrounds early!”

With a groan, Ethan swept his covers aside and grabbed his robe.

