

# **The Man Without a Country**

by  
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Adapted from the short story by Edward Everett Hale

**PRODUCTION SCRIPT for Boar's Head Players**

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(620) 340-7322

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

NOLAN

DANFORTH

BURR

RUTLEDGE/GRAFF

MORGAN

SMYTHE

JONES

PAPER BOY

EDWARDS

AUSTIN

JENKINS

LAWYER

EVERETT

GUNNER

ANOTHER GUNNER

SAILOR

OTHER SAILOR

WAITER

SERVANT

CHORUS, OTHERS, SAILORS, SOLDIERS, SEAMEN, ETC.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

IN / OUT = Nolan's Uniform

ACT I

1. Damn                                      Treason Trial 1807  
    Paper Boy, Morgan, Chorus, Nolan            IN
  
2. Snip it out                                Nautilus            1830  
    Capt. Jones, Danforth                      N/A
  
3. Have any Rum?                            Nautilus            1830  
    Nolan, Danforth                              OUT
  
4. Poem                                      Nautilus            1930  
    Nolan, Sailor, Other sailor                OUT
  
5. Garden party                             New Jersey 1804  
    Jenkins, Nolan, Waiter, Burr, Rutledge, Chorus  
IN
  
6. Burr's Final Arguments                 Treason Trial 1807  
    Paper Boy, Chorus, Morgan, Burr            IN
  
7. Before the Ball                          Nautilus            1832

	Admiral Smythe, Danforth	N/A
8.	The Ball	Nautilus 1832
	Everett, Nolan, Graff, Sailor	OUT
9.	After the Ball	Nautilus 1832
	Danforth, Smythe, Everett, Nolan, Capt. Jones	OUT
9a.	Scrubbing	Nautilus 1832
	Nolan, Sailors	OUT
10.	Burr Gets Off	Treason Trial 1807
	Paper Boy, Chorus, Morgan, Burr	IN
11.	You're Fired	Treason Trial 1807
	Burr, Nolan, Lawyer	IN
12.	Guns!	Nautilus 1834
	Gunner, Another Gunner, Capt. Jones, Nolan, Others, Danforth, (No Smythe)	OUT
13.	Sword	Nautilus 1834
	Smythe, Danforth, Others, Nolan	OUT

INTERMISSION

ACT II

14. Welcome Home	Nautilus	1846	
	Danforth, Edwards, Austin, Nolan		OUT
15. Betrayal	Treason Trial	1807	
	Nolan, Burr, Servant		IN
16. Nolan's Trial	Treason Trial	1807	
	Paper Boy, Jenkins, Nolan, Chorus, Morgan		IN
17. The Dossier	Infinity	N/A	
	A few soldiers/sailors		N/A
18. Crickets	Nautilus/	1847	
	Nolan, Danforth	Flat-boat	OUT
18a. Slaves	Schooner	1847	
	Danforth, Smythe, Nolan, (Sailors?)		OUT
18b. Home	Flat-Boat	1847	
	Danforth, Nolan		OUT
19. A General?	Flat-Boat	1806	
	Nolan, Burr		IN
20. Tide Shift	Nautilus	1847	

Danforth, Nolan

OUT

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1.

PAPER BOY

Latest Edition! Latest Edition! The great treason trial at Richmond *still* has no convictions! Traitor Colonel Aaron Burr goes free! Traitor General Wilkenson spared his life! Will no-one hang? Lynch mob forming if Colonel Morgan fails! Hang all traitors! Latest Edition!...Latest Edition!

*The great treason trial at Richmond.  
PHILLIP NOLAN , 20. Summer 1807.*

CHORUS

Traitor!  
Hang em all!

*(Etc. Ad-lib, crescendo)*

MORGAN

Well, Lieutenant Nolan, it seems the big flies have all escaped, Colonel Burr, General Wilkenson, the whole lot of irregulars, and that does make me weary. Even you have managed to use the favor of Mr. Burr's clever finagling to keep most of the evidence of your supposed "agricultural," mission at bay. However, Mr. Burr is not an officer in the United States Army. You are, Mr. Nolan, and I have evidence on paper of your being absent without leave, a deserter of some eight months at least, from your regiment at Fort Massac.

CHORUS

Traitor!

*(Etc. Ad-lib, crescendo)*

MORGAN

Order! Order! Now, the testimony of Lieutenant Jenkins has given us reason enough as to your moral character and of your generally being fed-up and uninterested in your duties as a soldier in the US Army. Not to mention your being absent without leave for some eight months...

## CHORUS

Deserter!  
Traitor!

*(Etc. Ad-lib, crescendo)*

## MORGAN

Order!... Mr. Nolan, we have indeed found you guilty of being a deserter and further guilty of being in the company of suspected traitors. We are now ready to sentence. Do you have anything you'd like to say?

## NOLAN

Your honor?

## MORGAN

Would you like to address the court, Nolan?

## NOLAN

With what, your honor? For what purpose?

## MORGAN

Perhaps you might like to show that you have always been faithful to the United States of America, and that this association with Aaron Burr was an error in judgement, something of the kind. You seem to have omitted that part from your testimony.

## NOLAN

I don't think I understand what you mean, your honor.

## MORGAN

I'd like to believe that this error was due to your lack of proper counsel. Now, I am trying, in earnest, to give you the opportunity to show the court that you are loyal and faithful to the country that bore you. Are you prepared to do so, Lieutenant?

## NOLAN

Am I prepared for what, your honor?

## MORGAN

To proclaim some type of oath to the United States of America.

## NOLAN

*An oath? To the United States of America?*

## MORGAN

If for nothing more than self-preservation.

NOLAN

United States?! Damn the United States of America! Damn Aaron Burr, the “mission,” all of it. I wish I’d never heard of Aaron Burr, the Army, or the united states.

*(Spits)*

I wish that I may never hear of the United States again, so help me God!

CHORUS

Blasphemer!

Hang him!

Hang the traitor!

*(Etc. Ad-lib, crescendo)*

*OFFICERS jump to restrain NOLAN.*

*During the following, NOLAN is stripped of his uniform.*

2.

*On board the Nautilus. 23 years later. It is now, 1830.*

*SFX: the sea, wind, waves, wood creaking...*

*DANFORTH, a young officer, midshipman, sits with CAPTAIN JONES at a table, with a newspaper that has a hole cut in it.*

CAPTAIN JONES

You see, the trick is, when in doubt, just snip it out.

*DANFORTH picks up the scrap of paper that has been cut out.*

DANFORTH

Even this, sir?

CAPTAIN JONES

Yes, Danforth. Especially that.

DANFORTH

Why, there's nothing of America in this article, Captain.

CAPTAIN JONES

Turn the thing over, Danforth.

DANFORTH

Oh, yes... Why, it's just an advertisement of a packet for New York, Captain.

CAPTAIN JONES

And where is New York, Danforth?

DANFORTH

Aye, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

Aye, Danforth. Keep a sharper eye about you.

DANFORTH

Aye, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

I expect more from my lieutenants.

DANFORTH

Captain.

CAPTAIN JONES

Oh, yes, by the way, I'm promoting you to lieutenant.

DANFORTH

Captain?

CAPTAIN JONES

This Nolan situation. It warrants a bit of incentive, yes? It's about time you take charge of something. Your rank is Lieutenant, and your assignment is Nolan.

DANFORTH

Aye, sir!

CAPTAIN JONES

See that he never hears of America, Lieutenant. That is your only charge.

DANFORTH

Aye, sir. Thank you, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

When in doubt, snip it out.

DANFORTH

Aye, Sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

Did you receive the dossier?

DANFORTH

Aye, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

In it, you'll find all the specifics, what you can talk about, what you may read when he's about. If he's in his state room, or at mess with another regiment, you're at ease, but you'll find every thing of interest in the manifest.

DANFORTH

The dossier?

CAPTAIN JONES

Yes.

DANFORTH

Well, I'll get right to it, then--

CAPTAIN JONES

Excellent. Then I will test you over these items tomorrow.

DANFORTH

It all seems quite complex, sir.

CAPTAIN JONES

I don't see how it could be any simpler. The Navy has a clear-cut system. We don't question. We don't interpret. We are do-ers, Danforth.

DANFORTH

Aye. When in doubt, snip it out.

3.

*DANFORTH exits and sits to study the DOSSIER as NOLAN , noticeably older, appears elsewhere on the stage, in his STATE ROOM, writing in a journal and inspecting various insects on pins.*

*After a moment of studying, DANFORTH crosses to NOLAN'S stateroom. It is the next day.*

DANFORTH

Hello Mr. Nolan.

NOLAN

Good afternoon, Middy.

DANFORTH

Actually, it's Lieutenant, sir.

NOLAN

Well, that was rather fast, but, then, you are the new guy. Where is your brass, sir?

DANFORTH

No need to call me sir. I'm not a commanding officer. I am waiting on the brass, the Captain just promoted me, yesterday, sir.

NOLAN

Not to worry. I'm sure you'll have your relief soon enough.

DANFORTH

There's always a new guy.

NOLAN

Yes, Lieutenant. There's not much to this at all. I'm sure you'll learn quick enough, just like all the others. When in doubt-

DANFORTH

Snip it out. Yes, sir.

NOLAN

Please, enough with the, "sir." I have no rank. Just, "Nolan." "Mr. Nolan," if you insist.

DANFORTH

I do, *Mr.* Nolan.

NOLAN

You know, the boys call me, "The Iron Mask."

DANFORTH

Never to your face, I hope.

NOLAN

Oh, never, not that it would bother me. You know how busy he was.

DANFORTH

Indeed.

NOLAN

Though it does not do for one to try and read all the time, more than it would for anyone to do *anything* all the time. I read five hours a day, then I keep up my notebooks; I have six, all of different subjects. One on history, natural science, odds and ends. I do the drawings myself, rather crude, but this is my profession, now. Five hours reading and two hours with the notebooks.

DANFORTH

Rather impressive, Mr. Nolan.

NOLAN

Hardly. The men help me out, bringing up birds and fish when they can. On long cruises the centipedes and caterpillars have to suffice, things of that nature.

DANFORTH

I must say, you are the most jovial prisoner I have ever met.

NOLAN

Well, I hope to be. I've found it all quite enlightening, actually, this journey. I am a citizen of the world, now.

DANFORTH

A citizen of the world? Where else have you been, sir?

NOLAN

Just this ship. But, I make do.

DANFORTH

As do we all.

*Pause...*

NOLAN

So nice to have made your acquaintance, Danforth.

DANFORTH

Lieutenant.

NOLAN

Please, call me "Phillip," or "Mr. Nolan," if you insist, but I have no rank, Danforth.

DANFORTH

No, Mr. Nolan. *I* am a Lieutenant.

NOLAN

Well, *Lieutenant*, Danforth, might I ask a favor of you?

DANFORTH

I suppose it might depend on the favor. But I seriously doubt--

NOLAN

Oh, nothing out of the ordinary I just need a little rum, if you have any.

DANFORTH

There are rations, Mr. Nolan, but personal bottles are contraband, as I'm sure you know.

NOLAN

Yes, then, let's see about those rations.

DANFORTH

I'm sure that if you visit the quartermaster, he'd be able to--

NOLAN

No, Lieutenant Danforth, I've been to see him, and he was not as nice a fellow as you.

DANFORTH

I'm sure he's a fine man.

NOLAN

Indeed. But, he says I need notice from an officer. And it seems you happen to be one.

DANFORTH

I'll see what I can do, Mr. Nolan. But, there are rules on the Nautilus. Especially pertaining to you.

NOLAN

I am aware. Have you read--

DANFORTH

The dossier?

*Pause...*

Have you?

NOLAN

I live it every day, so as you might imagine, I have an above average recollection of the items in the dossier. I was there when it was first read, after all.

DANFORTH

Good for you, Mr. Nolan.

NOLAN

You going to have to recite for the Captain today?

DANFORTH

Well, I fail to see how that is of any--

NOLAN

Nobody on this ship knows that document as well as I. Not even the Captain. You take care of the rum, and I'll make sure you keep your promotion.

DANFORTH

I'm not here to make deals, Mr. Nolan.

NOLAN

Consider it a gesture of friendship.

DANFORTH

Nor am I here to make friends.

NOLAN

Perhaps it will simply pass the time for *me*. You still get something out of it, of course. No deals, just two men passing the time is all. Makes things easier for the both of us.

DANFORTH

Sounds fair.

NOLAN

But you will at least try to see about the rum, won't you?

DANFORTH

I'll see what I can do, Mr. Nolan.

4.

*NOLAN ENTERS the deck with a couple of the ENLISTED MEN, singing, "High Barbary." DANFORTH watches from afar. It is a week later. 1830*

SAILOR

Why don't you read us a poem, Mr. Nolan?

OTHER SAILOR

Yes, a poem, Mr. Nolan!

DANFORTH

I was just finishing a rather lengthy poem by Sir Walter Scott, perhaps you might like to read us the final canto, Mr. Nolan.

NOLAN

Sir Walter Scott? What poem is this?

DANFORTH

"The Lay of the Last minstrel."

NOLAN

Yes, I seem to remember coming across that at some point. At least ten years ago... at any rate, long enough that I don't remember much about it. Something about Scottish and English history.

DANFORTH

Yes something like that, Mr Nolan.

NOLAN

And have you read the end, yourself.

DANFORTH

Yes, actually, I just finished it this morning. But I'd love to hear you read it Mr. Nolan.

OTHER SAILOR

Yes, that would be fine, Mr. Nolan.

SAILOR

Would you?

DANFORTH

Come Mr. Nolan, let us not disappoint your adoring public.

NOLAN

Yes, fair enough... canto sixth, the final chapter in,

*(Grand)*

“The Lay of the Last Minstrel.”

*DANFORTH remains stoic as the other two clap for Nolan.*

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!”

*NOLAN hesitates, for a second, looking to the MEN, then returns to the poem.*

“Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,  
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,  
From wandering on a foreign strand!”

*It is now apparent to all, including NOLAN, the true nature of this poem, but NOLAN takes a drink, pushes on with a stiff upper lip, as the other MEN stare in silence.*

If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;

*NOLAN breaks from the book.*

DANFORTH

Is every thing alright, Mr. Nolan? Would you like me to finish the poem.

SAILOR

You don't have to finish the poem.

OTHER SAILOR

Yes, we can hear something else.

SAILOR

Yes, I don't even know how the story began.

NOLAN

No, not at all, gentlemen. I am rather curious myself to see how it all ends.

*NOLAN finishes off his glass, reads on.*

“High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentrated all in self,”

*NOLAN returns the book to the table, sits,  
not acknowledging any of the men.*

SAILOR

Mr. Nolan?

OTHER SAILOR

Would you like us to read something else?

*NOLAN does not answer, just sits, staring  
off. DANFORTH picks up the book.*

DANFORTH

“The wretch, concentrated all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,  
Unwept, unhonor'd, and unsung.”

*By the end of the poem, the other men have  
left the scene, leaving only DANFORTH  
and NOLAN.*

*Danforth sets his small book down, next to NOLAN, and exits, leaving NOLAN alone on the stage.*

*We follow HIS memory...*

*NOLAN is changed into full uniform by the others as the scene changes.*

5.

*We are now at a garden party in New Jersey, 1804.*

*NOLAN, 17 years old, waits with JENKINS, similar age, both lieutenants in the US Army. As the following continues, perhaps there are folks crossing and dancing to give the feel of a grand party.*

*A WAITER enters with a tray, offers to NOLAN who starts to accept before...*

JENKINS

We're in uniform, Nolan!

*WAITER moves on.*

NOLAN

Are we? I can never tell.

JENKINS

Why else would we be here?

NOLAN

Dance partners?

JENKINS

Nolan, be serious. We're guarding the Vice President.

NOLAN

Is he still the Vice President?... I thought the Army was supposed to be exciting.