

Genre Play

Essential Questions

Why is sharing your opinion an important part of democracy?
Why is it necessary for a healthy government?

THE **SEARCH** FOR THE
MYSTERIOUS PATRIOT

*by Vidas Barzdukas
illustrated by Ivanov*

CHARACTERS

- Abigail
- Samuel
- Father
- Alexander Hamilton
- Printer
- Apprentice
- Gouverneur Morris
- Servant

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in New York City in 1787.



SCENE 1

AT RISE: A silversmith's shop in New York City, 1787.

ABIGAIL peers intently at the inside of a clock on a table. A workbench sits nearby. FATHER enters.

FATHER: Are you still studying the insides of that clock, Abigail? I'm surprised your eyes don't hurt.

ABIGAIL: I want to know everything about clocks, Father. I want to know how the gears move, why it ticks, why these things are called hands . . . the workings of a clock are a mystery to me. As you know, I do love a good mystery.

FATHER: Then maybe you can solve the mystery of where your brother is? He was supposed to help me sweep up the shop.

(ALEXANDER HAMILTON enters.)

FATHER: Ah, how do you do, Mr. Hamilton? 'Tis so nice to see you again.

HAMILTON: Good morning, sir. I seem to have broken a silver buckle on one of my shoes. Could you repair it?



FATHER: Indeed! (*pointing to ABIGAIL*) Mr. Hamilton, I would like to introduce you to my daughter, Abigail. Abigail, this is Mister Alexander Hamilton.

ABIGAIL: Very nice to meet you, sir.

HAMILTON: The pleasure is mine, madam.

FATHER: Now then, Mister Hamilton, if you'll just follow me.

(*FATHER and HAMILTON step to the workbench to examine the broken shoe buckle. SAMUEL enters in a huff. He carries a newspaper.*)

ABIGAIL: (*whispering hotly*) Samuel, where have you been? Father's been looking all over for you. You were supposed to sweep the shop!

SAMUEL: (*ignoring her and holding up newspaper*) They've done it again, sister!

ABIGAIL: They've gone and printed a newspaper. What ever will they think of next?

SAMUEL: No, Abigail. 'Tis not the newspaper I'm angry about. 'Tis what's *in* the newspaper.

ABIGAIL: You're in a mood today.





SAMUEL: This is serious business, Abigail. This Publius fellow has written another article. Listen to this. *(reading from newspaper)* "Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of government, and it is equally undeniable, that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights in order to vest it with requisite powers."

(HAMILTON subtly turns to listen to ABIGAIL and SAMUEL's conversation.)

ABIGAIL: He's arguing for the ratification of the Constitution.

SAMUEL: How do you know that?

ABIGAIL: You're not the only one who reads the newspaper, Samuel. Do you think the Constitution should be ratified?

SAMUEL: *(proudly)* I'm an anti-Federalist. The Constitution gives too much power to the national government.

ABIGAIL: You don't think our national government should be powerful?

SAMUEL: A strong national government takes away the liberty of the people. It takes away the freedoms that people like Father fought for during the revolution.

ABIGAIL: No, the Constitution limits the power of the national government through checks and balances. *(off SAMUEL's look)* You're not the only one who reads books, Samuel.

SAMUEL: You speak like a Federalist.

ABIGAIL: Indeed. Perhaps that's because I am one.

SAMUEL: *(gasping)* My own sister, a Federalist? You better not let Father know.

ABIGAIL: I am allowed to have my own opinion.

SAMUEL: You think everyone should have your opinion.

ABIGAIL: *(laughing)* Come now, I'm sure we can find common ground. Like our shared interest in this Publius fellow.

SAMUEL: I wonder who it might be? Alas, we will never know his true identity.

ABIGAIL: *(thinking)* I say we test that statement.

SAMUEL: What do you mean?

ABIGAIL: I've been tinkering with this clock all day—studying the gears, the hands, the springs. All of these mechanics are clues to discovering how the clock works. Maybe if we study these papers and follow some clues, we can figure out the identity of the writer behind them? What do you say?

SAMUEL: I say that's the first thing you've said all day that I agree with.

(FATHER and HAMILTON cross the stage.)

FATHER: Thank you for coming in, Mister Hamilton. I hope you didn't find my children's arguing too bothersome.

HAMILTON: Not at all. I have reserved a room above the meetinghouse while I am in town for business. I am leaving for Philadelphia the night after tomorrow. Will the buckle be ready by then?

FATHER: Aye, sir. I will deliver the buckle myself.

HAMILTON: Very good, sir. *(picking up the newspaper)* Is this Publius fellow writing again? He is a bit long-winded at times, don't you think? I wish you all a good day.

FATHER: Good day, Mister Hamilton. *(HAMILTON exits. FATHER turns to ABIGAIL and SAMUEL.)* Come on, you two. Stop that lollygagging and get back to work. And Samuel, grab that broom! Many hands make light work!



SCENE 2

A printer's shop, early morning. A PRINTER and his APPRENTICE work at a printing press. ABIGAIL and SAMUEL enter.

ABIGAIL: Remember, a good investigator asks questions and follows clues. Which newspapers are the Federalist Papers published in?

SAMUEL: *The Independent Journal, The New York Packet, and The Daily Advertiser.*

ABIGAIL: Based on my investigations, this is the printer's shop that prints *The New York Packet*. Perhaps they can divulge the secret of Publius's identity. But we need to be subtle about it.

SAMUEL: I can be subtle.

(The PRINTER approaches ABIGAIL and SAMUEL.)

PRINTER: Can I help you?

SAMUEL: We want to know the identity of Publius!

ABIGAIL: *(whispering hotly)* Samuel! I said be subtle. *(to PRINTER)* How do you do, sir? I apologize for my brother's outburst. He must have fallen off his horse and bumped his head.



PRINTER: You two work at the silversmith's shop, don't you?
If you wish to print an advertisement . . .

ABIGAIL: No, we didn't come here for that, sir. We have
some questions we would like to ask. Sir, do you
print *The New York Packet*?

PRINTER: We do.

ABIGAIL: We also know that you publish the Federalist
Papers written by a person who goes by the name
of Publius.

SAMUEL: We want to know the identity of Publius!

PRINTER: *(smiling)* I see. Unfortunately, sir, I don't know
what you are talking about.

ABIGAIL: Can you tell us if Publius is a man or a woman?

SAMUEL: Is Publius young or old?

PRINTER: I'm sorry, but I already told you. I don't know what
you are talking about. Now if there's nothing else,
I have some pamphlets to print. If you wish to have
anything printed, my apprentice can help you.

*(The PRINTER exits. The APPRENTICE turns his attention to
ABIGAIL and SAMUEL.)*

SAMUEL: Our adventure is over before it started.

ABIGAIL: I'm sorry, brother. I guess I'm not a very
good investigator.

(The APPRENTICE approaches ABIGAIL and SAMUEL.)

APPRENTICE: *(whispering)* You want to know who Publius is, do you?

SAMUEL: *(whispering)* Aye!

ABIGAIL: *(whispering)* Do you know who it is?

APPRENTICE: No, but there has been a lot of interestin' traffic around here lately, if you get my meanin'.

SAMUEL: What do you mean?

APPRENTICE: Every three or four days, we've been instructed to leave at dusk. No exception. I'm not complainin', mind you. But the printer always stays behind. And, in the mornin'? Another paper is published! No receipt. No extra money in the drawer.

ABIGAIL: Let's think about it. If Publius came during the day, people would see. And if Publius paid to have the letters printed, then there might be a receipt. And the receipt usually includes the name of the person paying for the service.



SAMUEL: Someone doesn't like to spend money . . .

ABIGAIL: Or maybe the person wants to stay secret. But why? Maybe it is because this person is well-known. If the public knew this person was really Publius, it might create a scandal.

(A BLACK-GARBED FIGURE enters behind ABIGAIL and SAMUEL. A cloak covers the FIGURE's face, hiding his identity. The FIGURE watches ABIGAIL and SAMUEL closely.)

SAMUEL: So what do we do now?

ABIGAIL: Let's think about what we know so far. What are the Federalist Papers about?

SAMUEL: The ratification of the Constitution.

ABIGAIL: Correct. And the person writing them has taken great pains to make sure his or her identity remains a secret.

SAMUEL: Correct.

ABIGAIL: And that leads me to believe that the person writing the papers is somehow involved with the writing of the Constitution.

SAMUEL: But Abigail, over fifty delegates attended the Constitutional Convention. You can't expect to interview all of them!

ABIGAIL: No, but there is one person we *can* talk to. *(to PRINTER and APPRENTICE)* We must take our leave. Thank you for your time. Good day. *(to SAMUEL)* Come on.

(SAMUEL turns and spots the BLACK-GARBED FIGURE. The BLACK-GARBED FIGURE quickly exits.)



SAMUEL: Abigail, did you see that?

ABIGAIL: What?

SAMUEL: I thought I saw . . . never mind. It was nothing.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL exit.)

SCENE 3

The Governor's House. Several servants and delegates mill about. ABIGAIL and SAMUEL enter.

SAMUEL: Abigail! This is the Governor's House. Look at all these bigwigs! You expect us to find a clue here?

ABIGAIL: Shhhh! I'm looking for someone.

SAMUEL: But the New York Governor is George Clinton. And Clinton is a staunch anti-Federalist. He's against the ratification of the Constitution because he thinks it doesn't do enough to protect an individual's rights. There's no way he can be Publius.

ABIGAIL: I know that, Samuel.

SAMUEL: That's right, I forgot. *(mockingly)* You read the newspaper.

ABIGAIL: And if you read the newspaper this morning, you would have known that another politician is visiting Governor Clinton today. And there he is!

(GOUVERNEUR MORRIS enters with a cane and a suitcase. MORRIS has a wooden leg. ABIGAIL and SAMUEL approach him.)

ABIGAIL: Sir, are you Gouverneur Morris?

MORRIS: *(speaking impatiently)* I am. Are you Governor Clinton's servants? Here is my bag. Bring it up to my room at once.

SAMUEL: But we aren't—

ABIGAIL: *(nudging SAMUEL, motioning him to pick up bag)* Of course we are. *(to MORRIS)* This way, sir.

(SAMUEL picks up the bag. ABIGAIL leads MORRIS and SAMUEL slowly across the stage.)

ABIGAIL: Fine Federalist Paper in the newspaper today, wasn't it, sir?

MORRIS: Hmm? Oh, yes.

ABIGAIL: I heard you were at the Continental Congress when the Constitution was drafted. Is that right?

MORRIS: I was. I was a delegate from Pennsylvania at the time. I was one of the youngest delegates to attend, along with Alexander Hamilton.





SAMUEL: Were you part of the writing of the Constitution, then?

MORRIS: My dear boy, I was more than a mere *part* of the writing. I was the one who drafted the original Constitution!

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL react with surprise.)

MORRIS: I was given the task of taking the other delegates' ideas and writing a draft.

ABIGAIL: I heard that the debates were fierce.

MORRIS: They were. Many argued for a strong national government while others argued for states' rights.

ABIGAIL: Which side did you argue for?

MORRIS: I favor a strong national government.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL look at each other. They stop walking. SAMUEL nods to ABIGAIL.)

ABIGAIL: *(carefully)* Sir, you must be aware of the debate taking place in the newspapers about the ratification of the Constitution.

SAMUEL: She reads the newspaper.

MORRIS: You refer to the letters penned by Publius?

SAMUEL: That's right. My sister and I have reason to believe that Publius was at the Continental Congress.

MORRIS: Oh really? And why do you think that?

ABIGAIL: I can't go into detail, sir. But we know that Publius has taken great pains to keep his identity a secret. We also think that Publius wants his identity kept secret because his true identity would create a scandal. Therefore, we assume he must be someone who is in the public eye.

MORRIS: My, what informed servants you are!

SAMUEL: Huh? Oh yes, thank you, sir.

MORRIS: And you two are right.



ABIGAIL: Publius was at the Continental Congress?

MORRIS: Yes, they were.

SAMUEL: *They?* Do you mean that Publius is more than one person?

MORRIS: Well of course.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL look at each other in astonishment.)

ABIGAIL: *(whispering)* You wrote the Constitution, and you are a Federalist. Then does that mean you are Publius, sir?

MORRIS: Me? No, no, I am not Publius, madam.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL react with disappointment.)

MORRIS: However, your hunch is correct. Publius *did* ask me to write a few letters. I was grateful for the invitation, but I declined. I was simply too busy.

SAMUEL: Can you tell us the identity of one of the writers then?

MORRIS: Alas, I've already said too much. However, if one truly wants to know the identity of Publius, all they need to do is take a closer look at the letters themselves.

(A SERVANT enters.)

SERVANT: Gouverneur Morris? I am Governor Clinton's servant. Do you need help with your bag?

MORRIS: Yes, thank you.

(The SERVANT takes the bag. The SERVANT and MORRIS begin to exit.)

MORRIS: *(confused)* Wait, you're the servant? *(looking at ABIGAIL and SAMUEL)* Then who are they?

(MORRIS and the SERVANT exit. Behind them, the BLACK-GARBED FIGURE enters and watches the pair closely.)

ABIGAIL: *(repeating)* "All they need to do is look closer at the letters themselves."

SAMUEL: Father has a stack of newspapers in his shop. Let us—

(SAMUEL spots the BLACK-GARBED FIGURE, who quickly exits.)

SAMUEL: You! Stop right there!

ABIGAIL: Samuel, what are you doing?

SAMUEL: I saw him again, sister! A black-garbed figure!

ABIGAIL: I don't see anything. Are your eyes playing tricks on you?

SAMUEL: Perhaps all this investigation has made me overly suspicious of everyone. Come on; let's go back to Father's shop.

SCENE 4

The silversmith's shop. ABIGAIL and SAMUEL look through a pile of newspapers on a table. FATHER enters carrying a stack of newspapers.

FATHER: Here are the last of the newspapers.

ABIGAIL: Thank you, Father. Can you place them next to the others?

(FATHER dumps the newspapers onto the table.)

FATHER: Why do you need these newspapers?

SAMUEL: Abigail and I are trying to figure out a mystery. A clue is in these newspapers.

FATHER: I see. And you'll clean up this mess when you're finished?

SAMUEL: Of course, Father.

FATHER: *(exiting; imitating Samuel)* "Of course, Father." Just how you swept the shop when you promised to do so a few days ago . . .

SAMUEL: Have you found anything yet?



ABIGAIL: No. I must have read every Federalist letter three times, too. What about you?

SAMUEL: No. All of these letters are signed by Publius. No other signatures are on any of the letters.

ABIGAIL: There has to be something we are overlooking.
(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL look through the newspapers again.)

ABIGAIL: Wait a moment. The letters are all signed by Publius. But what else do you notice about the letters? What is one thing they all have in common?

SAMUEL: I don't know. Tell me.

ABIGAIL: Who are the letters addressed to?

SAMUEL: *(reading)* "To the People of the State of New York." So what?

ABIGAIL: What needs to take place for the Constitution to be ratified?

SAMUEL: It needs to gain the approval of nine of the thirteen colonies.

ABIGAIL: New York is a colony with one of the largest populations. Therefore, it has considerable influence.

SAMUEL: So what are you saying?



ABIGAIL: Publius is trying to convince the people of New York to support the ratification of the Constitution.

SAMUEL: All right. And?

ABIGAIL: I think Publius is from New York. And if he was at the Constitutional Convention, then he must have been a delegate from New York. Quick, when did the Constitutional Convention take place?

SAMUEL: Let me think. It began in May and ended on September 17, 1787. I know because it ended on my birthday.

ABIGAIL: Quick! Look for a newspaper dated right after September 17, 1787.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL sort through the newspapers. SAMUEL points at a newspaper.)

SAMUEL: Here 'tis.

ABIGAIL: What does the newspaper say about the New York delegates?

SAMUEL: *(reading)* It says that three delegates from New York were at the Constitutional Convention. Two of the delegates, Robert Yates and John Lansing, Jr., refused to sign the Constitution.

ABIGAIL: That means only the third delegate signed the Constitution.

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL look at each other.)

ABIGAIL and SAMUEL: (together) That means the third delegate might be Publius!

ABIGAIL: And I know just where to find him. Let's go!

(ABIGAIL and SAMUEL exit. FATHER enters.)

FATHER: Where are you two going? And who's going to clean up all these newspapers?



SCENE 5

The exterior of the meetinghouse, night. ABIGAIL and SAMUEL enter in a rush.

SAMUEL: Slow down, Abigail!

ABIGAIL: We need to find him before he leaves! I hope we came in the nick of time!

SAMUEL: Find who? And where are we anyway?

ABIGAIL: The meetinghouse! We need to talk to him before—

(The BLACK-GARBED FIGURE enters.)

SAMUEL: There he is, Abigail! Do you see him this time?

ABIGAIL: He is real! *(to FIGURE)* Step aside, ruffian!

FIGURE: I am no ruffian! But tell me, why do you wish to discover the identity of Publius?

SAMUEL: *(quickly)* We don't. We're sorry. We shall never do it again. *(to ABIGAIL, pulling on her arm)* Come on, Abigail—

ABIGAIL: Hold still, Samuel. *(to FIGURE)* How did you know we were looking for Publius?

FIGURE: You aren't the only one secretly doing things in this city. But I ask again: Why do you wish to discover the identity of Publius?

ABIGAIL: Because we are curious. I love mysteries, and my brother and I challenged ourselves to discover his identity.

FIGURE: Your discovery can have disastrous consequences.

ABIGAIL: We shall tell no one. We promise.
Are you Publius?

FIGURE: I am.

ABIGAIL: Then reveal yourself, Publius. Or should I say . . .
Mister Alexander Hamilton.

(The black-garbed figure pulls back his hood. It is ALEXANDER HAMILTON.)

HAMILTON: That's right. Well done, Abigail.

SAMUEL: You knew it was Mister Hamilton all along?

ABIGAIL: No. 'Twas only when I realized that Mister Hamilton was the only New York delegate to support the Constitution. It made sense that he might be writing letters to gain support.
(to HAMILTON) There are others who write as Publius, too.



HAMILTON: James Madison and John Jay are the other two authors. I came up with the idea for a series of essays as I was traveling from Albany to New York City. By the time I arrived in New York City, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. So what happens now, Abigail?

ABIGAIL: Our investigation was for personal reasons, Mister Hamilton. Your secret is safe with us.

(FATHER enters, carrying a box.)

FATHER: Abigail? Samuel? What are you two doing here?

HAMILTON: They have come to pay their respects, sir. I am about to embark on my trip to Philadelphia.

FATHER: I see. *(hands HAMILTON the box.)* Here is your silver buckle, sir. 'Tis good as new.

HAMILTON: Thank you, kind sir. Now I must be off.

(HAMILTON starts to exit. He turns to the FATHER.)

HAMILTON: Your children are very special. When they get older, perhaps I could add them to my staff. Our new country needs quick minds such as theirs. Good evening to you all.

(HAMILTON exits.)

SAMUEL: That was quite an adventure, Abigail. However, next time we should pick an easier mystery to solve.

ABIGAIL: Should I challenge you to another one? I think I would sweep the floor with you!

FATHER: The only sweeping that will be done is at the shop! Come on, both of you!

(FATHER, ABIGAIL, and SAMUEL exit.)

THE END



Essential Question

How can coming together lead to great things?

HOME

by Maggie Smith-Beehler

illustrated by Will Sweeney



We must build the house
we will live in here,
the house we call America.

We will pour the foundation.
We will raise the tall beams
against the wide blue sky.
We'll hold the nails in place.
We'll swing the hammers.
The sound they make, striking,
is freedom. Our voices
rise over us like a roof.

This is America.
What we are building
is the freedom we'll call home.

TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING TONIGHT



You will answer the comprehension questions on these pages as a class.

Did You Know?

The Federalist Papers were published under the name *Publius*. This name is a reference to Publius Valerius Publicola, a Roman Consul who worked toward overthrowing the monarchy in the 5th century.

Text Connections

1. What does Samuel read in the newspaper that makes him angry? About what do Samuel and Abigail disagree?
2. Which newspapers publish the Federalist Papers?
3. In the poem "Home," the poet compares America to a house people must build together. In the play, how does Alexander Hamilton use his voice to improve America?
4. Why does Hamilton publish anonymously under the name Publius? Why might writers and journalists today publish anonymously?
5. If you disagree with someone as Samuel and Abigail disagree in the play, how can you persuade him or her to see your point of view?



Write

Write about the importance of freedom. What freedoms do you have? How would your life be different if you did not have these freedoms?

Look Closer

Keys to Comprehension

1. How do Samuel and Abigail have different personalities? Draw on specific details in the text to support your answer.

Writer's Craft

2. In the poem "Home," the poet uses a house as a metaphor for democracy. Find a simile, or a comparison using *like* or *as*, in the poem. How does the simile connect to the metaphor of the house?
3. Why do you think the poet chose to divide "Home" into three stanzas? What is the role of each stanza?

Concept Development

4. How do the illustrations help you understand the play?
5. How do the characters in "The Search for the Mysterious Patriot" compare to the characters in "The Mystery of Washington Park"? How are their attempts to solve a mystery similar? How are their attempts different?



Read this Social Studies Connection. You will answer the questions as a class.

Text Feature

Photographs are pictures taken with a camera. They show the reader what something looks like in real life.

Constitutional Democracy

You just read about the Federalist Papers, which Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay wrote to explain why the new Constitution would be good for the United States. The United States is a constitutional democracy. This means that the Constitution is the most basic law. All other laws—including local, state, and federal laws—must agree with the Constitution.

In a constitutional democracy, citizens have many rights. American citizens are seen as equal in the eyes of the law. All citizens have the right to express themselves freely, the right to privacy, and the right to justice in the legal system. But what are citizens' responsibilities?

A constitutional democracy requires its citizens to be informed and involved. Informed voters should know how the government works. They use this knowledge to help elect the representatives who will look out for the interests of their electors, or the people who vote them into office.

Because the founders recognized that the needs of the country may change, they built a Constitution that future generations could modify with amendments. An amendment is a change to the Constitution that adds or cedes rights. In order to add an amendment to the Constitution, the United States Congress or a certain kind of state convention must first propose the potential change. The change must then be ratified by three-fourths of the states before it is considered official.

It may seem like a considerable amount of effort to amend the Constitution, but that is what the founders wanted. They wanted a government that could adapt to change, but that was also stable. By creating a rigorous process for amending the Constitution, they hoped to have the best of both worlds.



1. What is *constitutional democracy*?
2. In a constitutional democracy, what is the balance between citizens' rights and responsibilities?
3. If you were to found a government, how adaptable would you make your constitution? How would you balance the need for flexibility with the need for stability?



Go Digital

Search for more information about the United States Constitution and the freedoms guaranteed in the amendments.