Chapter Six

p. 116, ¶ 1, line 11 – “As the weary delegates soon realized, the faced a double dilemma: Who could they trust to choose the president, and what could they trust that president to do?”

p. 116, ¶ 2, line 2 – “The delegates had been cooped up in a locked room for over a month and a half, listening to one another argue, bicker, and drone on about matters large and small, and everyone’s patience was wearing thin.”

p. 118, ¶ 2, line 1 – “Hamilton’s absence was less deeply felt by other nationalists at the convention. In truth, he had ceased to be a major force at the convention on June 18 when he had present his own plan for a new government.”

p. 119, ¶ 1, line 11 – “Yet Hamilton’s departure also reflected a deeply ingrained preference for policy making rather than for the construction of a government.”

p. 120, ¶ 2, line 10 – “Before the month was over, delegates had begun to talk of the president as the representative of the people and as the people’s guardian against legislative hubris.”

p. 120, ¶ 3, line 1 – “The new concern about unchecked legislative power reopened the debate over the mode of electing the president.”

p. 121, ¶ 1, line 1 – “‘If the Legislature elect,’” Morris declared, “it will be the work of intrigue, of cabal, and of faction; it will be like the election of a pope by a conclave of cardinals; real merit will rarely be the title to the appointment.’”

p. 121, ¶ 2, line 6 – “The people, he said, ‘will never be sufficiently informed of characters.’”

p. 122, ¶ 1, line 4 – “If the people elect the executive, Gerry said, any organized group that draws together men from across the nation will be able to control the outcome.”

p. 122, ¶ 2, line 4 – “An aristocrat through and through, Morris seemed nevertheless to be one of the few men with confidence in the people’s judgement. ‘If the people should elect,’ he assured the convention, ‘they will never fail to prefer some man of distinguished character, or services; some man, if he might so speak, of continental reputation.’”

p. 123, ¶ 2, line 3 – “When it was proposed that the judiciary should share veto power over the
legislation with the executive, it became immediately clear that the need to preserve the separation of powers.”

p. 125, ¶ 2, line 1 – “James Madison decided it was time to review the available options and provide a candid evaluation of the problems inherent in every proposal for the election of the executive.”

p. 126, ¶ 2, line 8 – “The fatal flaw in a popular election — the lack of familiarity with men outside the voter’s native state — was a matter of practical circumstance rather than an intellectual or moral defect.”

p. 129, ¶ 1, line 3 – “It had taken a seven-year war to make General George Washington a household name; it was unlikely that any event in peacetime America would catapult another to national fame.”

p. 130, ¶ 1, line 2 – “With Washington presiding and thus unwilling to enter into the discussions, Madison found himself disturbingly alone, the sole committed nationalist and the only advocate of a ‘president of the people’ in his delegation.”

p. 131, ¶ 3, line 1 – “For the next five weeks, the convention picked apart and revised virtually every clause of the committee’s handiwork on virtually every aspect of the new national government.”

p. 132, ¶ 2, line 1 – “What had prompted this outpouring of frustration and anger from the members of the committee was the return to the mire of the presidential debate.”

p. 133, ¶ 1, line 8 – “Although they were not willing to deprive Congress of its power to select the president, the delegates did vote to reduce its power to overturn a veto. The reversal process now required the support of three-quarters rather than two-thirds of the legislators.”

p. 134, ¶ 2, line 1 – “On August 24 Daniel Carroll of Maryland proposed, once again, the popular election of the president, and, once again, it was voted down.”

Definition: sine die (pronounced see-nay dee-ay) Adverb: Without a day specified for a future meeting; indefinitely: Parliament was dismissed sine die. Etymology: Medieval Latin : Latin sine, without + Latin di, ablative of dis, day. The American Heritage Dictionary®

p. 137, ¶ 2, line 12 – “Despite the virtually unbroken code of silence the delegates had maintained, newspapers and private letters were rife with rumor and conjecture.”

p. 137, ¶ 3, line 4 – “To the outrage of several, the delight of a few, and the surprise of the entire convention, the committee had decided to endorse the popular election of the president through state electors. Their proposal read like a patchwork of several suggestions that had surfaced over the
summer.”

p. 139, ¶ 1, line 7 – “Several years after the convention, John Dickenson claimed full credit for the creation of the electoral college.”

p. 140, ¶ 2, line 2 – “Dickenson may have proposed the electoral college on that September afternoon, but the idea itself belonged to James Wilson, who had patiently, persistently argued for some form of popular participation in the choice of the national executive since early June.”

p. 140, ¶ 3, line 6 – “Despite Dickenson’s later claim that a concern for the people’s confidence had motivated the committee, Morris made no mention of this. Instead, he focused on the convention’s bedrock fear of abuse of power, conspiracy, and corruption.”

p. 140, ¶ 3, line 13 – “The only way to avoid that danger was to limit a president to single term, and this came at too high a cost.”

p. 143, ¶ 2, last sentence on page – “He proposed that the election fall to the House, but that the states each cast one vote apiece in selecting the president.”

p. 146, ¶ 2, line 11 – “At George Mason’s suggestion they added ‘high crimes and misdemeanors’ to ‘treason and bribery’ as grounds for impeachment.”

Note: In 18th century American English “misdemeanors” did not mean what it does today.

p. 146, ¶ 3, line 1 – “For the first time in well over a month, a not of good humor and playful sarcasm made its way into Madison’s record of the proceedings.”

p. 147, ¶ 1, line 6 – “He (the vice president of the United States) was to be ex officio president of the Senate, but, except in cases a tie vote, he would not be allowed to cast a vote in Senate deliberations. In case of impeachment of the president, the vice president would step down and the chief justice would preside.”

p. 147, ¶ 2, line 1 – “The president’s powers were situational, potential, and dependent upon historical developments that the convention delegates could not be expected to predict or even imagine. Many of those powers were crisis-driven: In case of war, he would command the military operations; to prevent war, he could send diplomats to negotiate treaties.”

p. 148, ¶ 1, line 7 – “In the end, there was a protean quality to this branch of government that would make ‘original intent’ more a historical curiosity than a Rosetta stone of interpretation.”