

# **The Merchant of Death**

**By**

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**(156 pages)**

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## THE MERCHANT OF DEATH

FADE IN:

EXT. STOCKHOLM TENEMENT - REAR COURTYARD - DAY

No snow yet, but it is very cold. Urgent puffs of vapor burst from the mouth of four-year-old ROBERT NOBEL. Because he is so small and the stairs are slippery with ice, he has spread-eagled himself against the railing and is edging sideways down to the yard below.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN  
OCTOBER 21, 1833

Two-year-old LUDVIG NOBEL watches from the landing above, as his brother reaches the ground and dashes into:

INT. THE RAMSHACKLE WORK SHED - DAY

where IMMANUEL NOBEL, a big, passionate, Viking of a man, with amazing blue eyes and flying blond hair is shouting into the determined face of a PORTLY CREDITOR:

IMMANUEL

Bankrupt? Impossible! This device alone will revolutionize manufacture of all textiles! And I have invented a portable house! Yes! You can actually take it from place to place! Does that astound you? No! And do you know why? Because you are without imagination!

ROBERT

Papa!

Ignoring the boy, Immanuel grabs a rubber knapsack and stretches it violently back and forth:

IMMANUEL

A soldier's knapsack of India rubber! Inflated, it is a cushion, or a float!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBERT

Papa!!

IMMANUEL

...Several together are a bridge!  
This alone will pay my debt to you  
a thousand times over!

ROBERT

PAPA!!

Immanuel flings the knapsack aside and thrusts a stout, iron-banded box with long rods protruding from the sides into the arms of the Creditor.

IMMANUEL

An explosive mine! See?

Reaching into the box, he retrieves a handfull of powder and sprinkles it through his fingers.

IMMANUEL

Gunpowder! Buried in the earth, or  
floating in the sea...

Balling his fists, Robert angrily pounds on his father's considerable thigh.

ROBERT

Papa! Papa! Papa! Papa!

IMMANUEL

... One touch on these rods and  
BOOM! What is it boy?

ROBERT

The baby comes!

IMMANUEL

Ah! God sends me another mouth  
while bloodsuckers pound on my  
door!

He propels Robert outside ahead of him, leaving the horrified Creditor staring down into the powder-filled mine.

INT. STOCKHOLM TENEMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

ANDRIETTE NOBEL is thirty years old; handsome, wise, serene and witty. But not now. Now she is in the last contraction of a difficult labor and the strain is so great it erupts as a SHOUTED SOUND.

Drawing the infant from her body, THE DOCTOR hesitates, then his face becomes resigned. Hearing no cry, Andriette rouses, looking down:

THE DOCTOR

It is a boy. Very small... He is not breathing, I regret to sa...

ANDRIETTE

Make him live!

Immanuel bangs into the kitchen beyond, but halts diffidently in the bedroom doorway.

THE DOCTOR

I'm sorry, Mister Nobel, it will not breathe.

ANDRIETTE

No!

Immanuel, his own tears not far away, comes to her side, intending comfort:

IMMANUEL

Andriette... my *alskling*...  
But it has happened before. And we have two fine sons... God may mean some blessing we do not understand...

ANDRIETTE

Give him to me. Now.

Immanuel steps back, smarting, while the Doctor places the tiny bundle in Andriette's arms. She lowers her mouth over the mouth of the baby and gently blows her breath into him. Once, again, again...

Then a tiny coughing squeak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR  
Please... do not be hopeful...

In the background, Robert and Ludvig peer through the kitchen door. They whisper:

ROBERT  
That is our brother.

LUDVIG  
What's his name?

Andriette hovers over the infant with primal protection.

ANDRIETTE  
Alfred. I name him Alfred. Alfred  
Bernhard Nobel.

Now HEAR her voice, softly SINGING a LULLABY, as...

TITLES BEGIN

A. INT. TENEMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andriette, in nightclothes, kneels by the crib, SINGING softly. Immanuel lifts her to her feet. He is powerful and male and she kisses him hungrily. But as he draws her toward the bed, the infant coughs.

She struggles to free herself and hurries back to the crib, leaving Immanuel frustrated and resentful. The LULLABY begins again, and CONTINUES throughout:

B. EXT. A STOCKHOLM PARK - DAY

A group of boisterous children are playing tag with Immanuel. ALFRED, a frail four-year-old, wants to join in. Andriette diverts him with a book:

ANDRIETTE  
There are other ways to play,  
Alfred. This is a book of numbers,  
see?

C. EXT. STOCKHOLM TENEMENT - DAY

The LULLABY CONTINUES as Alfred, not much older, wrapped like an invalid in a blanket, looks down from the landing into the yard, where three or four CREDITORS, including the Portly one, are watching Immanuel nervously.

He is across the yard, tying a string to an upright stick, which in turn is holding up one end of a heavy plank. Recrossing the yard:

IMMANUEL  
(from the top)  
With the exploding mine buried in  
the earth, the wooden board will  
represent the footstep of an  
approaching soldier...

PORTLY CREDITOR  
Excuse me, Mister Nobel, you said,  
"Today I will pay my creditors."

IMMANUEL  
I will show how you will be paid!

Alfred watches expectantly as his father yanks the string. The stick is snatched away. The plank slaps down.

BOOM! A gout of dirt, black smoke and splinters blasts higher than the roof tops.

The Creditors run for their lives.

Immanuel glares after them, then is annoyed by something pulling at his arm. He looks down. It is Alfred, eyes gleaming:

ALFRED  
Do it again.

D. INT. STOCKHOLM TENEMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

With the LULLABY CONTINUING, see Immanuel kneeling before Robert and Ludvig, Andriette tearfully at his side. Behind them, Alfred, obviously ill, slips off the chair of his little study desk and joins his brothers. But Immanuel addresses only the older boys:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMMANUEL

Bankruptcy is not failure!  
Sometimes it means you are too big  
for the little minds around you! So  
I go to Russia, where a man with  
ideas can get rich. Then I will  
send for you.

He hugs his older sons briefly, fiercely. Alfred gets a tepid pat, Andriette a noisy kiss, then hoisting his sea chest, he hurries OUT. Everyone is crying. Except Alfred. Alfred reaches up and takes his mother's hand.

C. INT. STOCKHOLM TENEMENT - KITCHEN/BEDROOM - DAY

The study desk by the stove is piled with weighty textbooks. With the LULLABY always present, ALFRED, now nine, shivering inside his bundle of tattered clothes, ENTERS, accompanied by a billow of blowing snow. Dropping his hat and gloves on the desk, CAMERA FOLLOWS him into the bedroom.

ALFRED

I sold the kindling, mama!

He stops, because Andriette is seated on the edge of the bed, sobbing. But the tears are gladness, not grief. She shows him the thick letter:

ANDRIETTE

Your father is sending for us,  
Alfred! We will go to Russia, Saint  
Petersburg!

(hugs him)

The Tsar has given him a contract  
for the exploding mines. We are  
rich, he says! Read. A big house;  
private tutors for you boys, the  
very best...

(laughing)

He even wants another baby!

(weeping)

As though five years had not  
passed. Five years!

CAMERA CLOSES ON Alfred's face. He is happy for her, but unsure for himself. THE LULLABY CONCLUDES as:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TITLES END

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE SWEDISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A sprightly, high-stepping mare comes swiftly along a narrow road through the rolling fields and orchards.

HELENBOURGE, SWEDEN

AUGUST 1864

The rider is ALFRED BERNHARD NOBEL (31), well-dressed; enjoying himself, laughing as the horse fords a brook splashing him a little.

But gaining the bank on the other side, the horse begins to act up, tossing her head, shying sideways. Alfred gets her stopped, leans forward, stroking her trembling neck:

ALFRED

Here, Lisle, Lisle, what is it my  
*alskling*? What frightens you?  
Shh... Shh...

Now Alfred begins to sense something too. Very quickly ALL SOUNDS BECOME MUFFLED AND DULL. There is a moment of preternatural dread, then a RUSHING IMPACT shakes the trees, followed at once by a HUGE, THUDDING EXPLOSION.

ANGLE ADJUSTS as Alfred twists around in the saddle to see a GIGANTIC FIREBALL rising wildly in the distance. He stares, realizes, and from deep inside a terrible cry erupts:

ALFRED

NO!

He yanks the horse around so hard she rears, then spurs her back the way they came.



EXT. HELENBORG ON SODER - THE NOBEL FACTORY - DAY

PULLING BACK QUICKLY from an open, anguished mouth to reveal a peasant woman grabbing at her ears, which trickle blood. ANGLE ADJUSTS to see Volunteer Firemen in their rather comical uniforms, shouting orders, wielding the thin hoses, struggling with rolling-eyed fire horses.

There is an enormous crater. All that remains of the large factory building is part of a brick wall, burning rubble and a twisted, fire-streaked sign: "NITROGLYCERINE, LTD.," an obscene joke.

ALFRED

gallops into the scene, bringing the lathered mare to a sliding stop. Leaping down, he sweeps the destruction with agonized eyes.

The CONSTABLE, a simple, rural man, overwhelmed by the disaster, approaches Alfred:

CONSTABLE

You are Mister Nobel, the owner?

ALFRED

This is my factory, yes.

CONSTABLE

My God, what kind of factory?

ALFRED

Nitroglycerine.

CONSTABLE

What?

ALFRED

An explosive oil. Where are my parents?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONSTABLE

The old couple from down the road?  
A neighbor took them home, I  
think... Sir, five people are  
killed!

Perhaps to prove it, perhaps so that someone else has to see,  
the policeman snatches back a tarpaulin, revealing only a  
hint of the blackened somethings beneath.

CONSTABLE

You can identify them?

With a cry, Alfred whirls around and in an odd, primitive  
gesture of rejection, bends at the waist and pushes backwards  
with both hands, as though to make the sight go away.

CONSTABLE

Please, sir. We must know who they  
are.

Alfred breathes deeply, deeply as he can, trying to get  
control. At last he turns back, steels himself and:

ALFRED

Our mechanic, Carl Eric Hertzman;  
an errand boy, I don't know his  
name; a maid employed by my father,  
Anna, I think. This man I do not  
know, a passer-by perhaps... And  
this... this is my... brother...  
Emile Oskar Nobel.

When he hears this, the Constable stops writing and looks at  
Alfred. The tragedy is beyond the fellow. He lifts his palms  
helplessly.

ALFRED

I must go to my parents.

The Constable watches Alfred stagger away through the rubble.

EXT. HELENBOURGE HOUSE - DAY

Alfred halts the mare in the yard, dismounts, hands the reins to the weeping STABLE BOY, goes to the house and knocks on the door.

A moment, then it is opened by his mother, ANDRIETTE NOBEL. Nearing sixty, she is a handsome woman, serene and witty. But not now. Now her bewildered eyes are red from weeping and seeing Alfred, fresh tears come.

ANDRIETTE

Oh Alfred, he was my baby...

She clings to him. He holds her, his own tears welling.

ALFRED

(manages)

And father?

ANDRIETTE

Asleep, thank God. I fear for him... How can this pain be born...?

Alfred does not reply, because:

IN THE BEDROOM DOORWAY

stands IMMANUEL NOBEL, a big, Viking of a man, with a great shock of once-blond hair and astonishing blue eyes. His face is ravaged with grief. But staring at Alfred, another, savage emotion rises:

IMMANUEL

You! Murderer!

Alfred has no defense against such an attack. He cannot speak. He cannot move.

ANDRIETTE

Immanuel! No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMMANUEL

Do not take his side! Emile was too young to leave alone in the laboratory! Too inexperienced...!

(choking on it)

Too eager to please...!

(shoves her aside)

And this son, that you love so much, let him die!

ALFRED

Leave her alone! My God will you use even this to attack me?

IMMANUEL

(lunging)

I will use my hands, weakling!

Andriette pushes between them, screaming:

ANDRIETTE

MY SON IS DEAD!

There is such awful power in her cry that the men are frozen.

ANDRIETTE

My son is dead and you snarl and blame and think of yourselves! How dare you treat me this way!

It is as though she has slapped them. Silence. Only the short sounds of her breathing. Finally Alfred steps back, ashamed, knowing how deep is her pain.

ALFRED

Forgive me.

(sits, exhausted)

What we do to each other, father...

What we have always done.

Staring at her husband, the words come from between her clenched teeth:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDRIETTE

Then in the name of merciful God  
let it stop!

Immanuel furious, still glaring at Alfred, turns abruptly and retreats into the bedroom, slamming the door. Andriette watches after him, then woodenly sits at the table with Alfred. Hold this tableau a long moment, then:

FLASHBACK

EXT. NOBEL ET FILS - LABORATORY - DAY

**BOOM! - CRASH!**

Windows are blown out! A door flies off its hinges, with a man flattened against it's surface. Smoke, no fire.

CAMERA DRAWS BACK to discover this is an outbuilding of a large, ugly brick factory. The blast echoes a moment, then it is oddly quiet.

In the distance CHURCH BELLS, begin to ring.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA  
1857

MEN COME RUNNING

including Alfred's eldest brother, ROBERT, 30, handsome and capable, and his father, Immanuel (now 55).

More BELLS have joined the first. These are closer.

The door on the ground begins to move and suddenly Immanuel is rushing forward:

IMMANUEL

Alfred...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He halts as ALFRED (26) crawls from under the door and gets to his feet: smudged, a few cuts, clothes dusty, a little wobbly.

Far off, CANNON FIRE is added to the RINGING BELLS.

ALFRED

That confirms it: nitroglycerine is unpredictable.

IMMANUEL

If you'd listen to direction and stop trying your own...!

ALFRED

It was your damned formula I was trying!

IMMANUEL

(moment)

Wash well before we get home, or your mother will kill us both! She's planned a dinner tonight...

He stops because a NEARBY BELL has begun RINGING wildly. Now a great CHEERING arises as:

THE MAIN FACTORY DOORS

burst open and the workers stream out, dancing, embracing, SHOUTING with joy, including Alfred's two other brothers: his youngest is EMILE, a strapping, sunny-faced teen and the apple of everyone's eye:

EMILE

Hurrah! Hurrah! It is over! Hurrah! The war in Crimea is finished! In Paris they have signed a peace treaty!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He is followed by LUDVIG (27) big, gentle and steady, struggling to get into his frock coat as they run toward Immanuel, Robert and Alfred.

Yelling with delight, Emile embraces Alfred. Immanuel raises his fists into the air jubilantly. Flinging one arm around Robert and the other around Alfred, he kisses them both. They all cheer.

Alfred tries to join in, but he is too astonished by Immanuel's show of affection.

IMMANUEL

Come, you intellectual bag of bones, let's hear a cheer from you!

ALFRED

It is wonderful news, Father...

IMMANUEL

A cry of ecstasy!

He releases Alfred's shoulders, with exaggerated delicacy, then roisters ahead with Robert and Emile. Ludvig falls in beside Alfred, eyes the cuts, hands him a handkerchief.

LUDVIG

You might be a little happier with the news.

ALFRED

What happens if the Tsar cancels our contracts?

Now Ludvig looks worried as well. CAMERA HOLDS as they walk toward the factory, where capering workmen shout and cheer.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG HOUSE - DAY

A magnificent residence on the fashionable Nevsky Prospekt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRIETTE (V.O.)

... Your father at the head of the  
table, I at the other end...

INT. ST. PETERSBURG RESIDENCE - DINING ROOM - DAY

ANDRIETTE NOBEL somewhat younger, beautiful, cordial and in love with her family. Her boys are there as well as their wives. Robert's wife PAULINE, is Finnish and lovely. MINNA, Ludvig's wife, is pretty and pregnant.

ANDRIETTE

Robert, you and Pauline on this  
side, Ludvig and Minna on the  
other... Emile by your father...  
Where is Alfred?

EMILE

I'll get him.

Emile darts back into:

THE DRAWING ROOM

where Alfred is just ENTERING from a side door, still showing a cut or two from the explosion. Slim and pale, he will never be completely healthy. But the eyes are quick, reflecting intelligence and inner power. Emile idolizes him:

EMILE

Minna has brought you a surprise  
dinner partner.

ALFRED

They keep trying to marry me off.

EMILE

All the girls are interested.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ALFRED

We own the largest factory in  
Russia... At least I hope we still  
do.

EMILE

Alfred, she is beautiful!

INT. THE DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON NATALIA ALEXANDROVICH PETROV (17). Emile is right,  
she is beautiful. Blond, with slightly oriental eyes and a  
breath-taking figure, she stands behind her chair next to  
Alfred, while CAMERA DRAWS BACK to reveal the dining room.  
Everyone is standing, heads bowed as:

ANDRIETTE

In the name of Jesus, At this table  
we meet...

ALL JOIN IN

...to ask God's blessing on the  
food that we eat. Amen.

As they take their seats, Alfred holds Natalia's chair.

MINNA

Natalia was presented at court this  
spring, Alfred.

NATALIA

I wore a gown from Paris: the  
Empire fashion, with little pearls  
across here.

She gestures to her bodice, not suggestively, but to explain  
the design.

ANDRIETTE

Alfred is very fond of reading.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATALIA

Yes, I know. And because of that, I  
read a book too: Hans Christian  
Anderson. It took ever so long.

Alfred and his mother smile politely. Glance at each other.  
And all of this has been counterpointed by:

IMMANUEL

When I show the Tsar the power of  
nitroglycerine, he will make me a  
Baron!

LUDVIG

Be sure not to blow him up while  
you're at it!

EMILE

Think of the English charging  
cannons fired with explosive oil  
instead of gun powder!

IMMANUEL

Careful, Alfred is delicate about  
the demise of the Light Brigade.

ALFRED

Only when I think they were  
slaughtered by Nobel cannon.

ANDRIETTE

(a quick intercession)  
All this excitement over an oil  
that explodes?

EMILE

Nitroglycerine, mother...  
(reciting to Alfred)  
A mixture of purified glycerin,  
nitric and sulfuric acids, yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

And far more powerful than gun powder.

LUDVIG

The trouble is half the time it won't go off and the other half it goes off for no reason!

IMMANUEL

There'll be a way to make it reliable.

ALFRED

And we will find it.

IMMANUEL

This from the family pacifist?

ALFRED

The value of nitroglycerine is not killing, Father. It is building, roads, canals, tunnels...

IMMANUEL

(to Natalia)

Alfred thinks the munitions business is immoral.

Natalia smiles vaguely, while:

ANDRIETTE

I'm sure that wasn't his intention...

ALFRED

War is immoral. Are you saying it isn't?

IMMANUEL

Oh God! He's been reading that Shelley again!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROBERT

Who is Shelly?

IMMANUEL

(girlishly)

An English poet, my dear.

EMILE

His wife writes about monsters...

(making a face)

Frankenstein...!

...which frightens Natalia.

ALFRED

There's nothing wrong, or  
effeminate, about desiring peace!  
Wasn't Jesus the Prince of Peace?

IMMANUEL

He could afford to be!

(then, quickly)

Oh.

(to poor Natalia)

I meant no sacrilege.

ANDRIETTE

Your father does not favor war...

IMMANUEL

Well, I'm not so sure. It provides  
Alfred with a fine house, doctors -  
my God the doctors! - tutors, the  
clothes on his back, everything!

Natalia is smiling, but her eyes are desperate.

ANDRIETTE

Immanuel, please, of course Alfred  
appreciates...

IMMANUEL

He makes righteous judgments...!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ALFRED

Not righteous, practical. To invest  
- over invest - in weapons  
manufacture is short-sighted!

IMMANUEL

Russia is at war!

ALFRED

Not any more! And very soon they'll  
realize they don't need more  
weapons. But roads are built  
whether men murder each other or  
not!

ANDRIETTE

Stop, both of you! You embarrass  
our guest.

Natalia's smile has become a kind of rictus.

LUDVIG

The wonderful thing about our  
family, Natalia, is you will never  
fail to have an explosive evening.

Laughter. Andriette sighs, this is only an uneasy peace.

EXT. NOBEL ET FILS - LABORATORY - DAY

Alfred and Emile, along with some workmen, are surveying the  
damage caused by yesterday's blast: shattered windows,  
scorched brick, the door.

Emile looks off, nudges Alfred to look too.

ALFRED

My God. So Soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A PLATOON OF SOLDIERS

is marching toward the factory.

CLOSE - THE WINDOWS OF THE MAIN FACTORY BUILDING

Immanuel and Robert are seen inside leaning over a drafting table. The marching soldiers are reflected in the glass.

A command from the RUSSIAN OFFICER:

RUSSIAN OFFICER

(in Russian)

Platoon halt! ... Right face!

Immanuel looks up, sees them, realizes. Dread fills his face. Robert's hand is on his shoulder, unfelt.

ALFRED AND EMILE

watching with anguished eyes, as:

IMMANUEL

stands before the soldiers, too benumbed to even offer a protest when the Officer hands him the elaborate official document.

CLOSE - THE FACTORY DOORS

as a heavy chain is shoved through the handles and padlocked.

THE NOBELS

Alfred, Immanuel, Robert, Ludvig and Emile stand together in the factory street as the workers dispiritedly move away down the road. They step to one side as the departing soldiers march briskly past.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMMANUEL

fights the tears that are welling in his eyes. Alfred reaches a comforting hand to touch his arm. Immanuel savagely thrusts it away as though this whole business is Alfred's fault.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG HOUSE - DAY

Tall horse-drawn moving vans are standing in front.

INT. ST. PETERSBURG HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

OPEN CLOSE on the lid of a large wooden crate as a hammer drives home the nails. Then, as Emile brushes on mucilage and affixes the label (NOBEL - STOCKHOLM - SWEDEN), the ANGLE OPENS, revealing Pauline, Minna and all four Nobel sons busily packing barrels and crates for shipping.

Andriette ENTERS from the dining room carrying a few linens. She is dressed for traveling. Bursts of Immanuel's angry VOICE are HEARD in the background throughout:

ANDRIETTE

(to Emile)

Time for you to dress.

(to Alfred)

Is there room for these?

She gives him the linens. He sees the tears in her eyes. She wipes at them impatiently:

ANDRIETTE

I am glad to be returning to Sweden, truly I am, but it is hard to leave three sons behind...

(kisses Pauline's cheek)

...and two daughters.

(Immanuel ROARS O.S.)

He is looking for the Tsar's medal, to wear when we arrive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILE

I should stay too!

ALFRED

(digging through a barrel)

You, little cossack, will go to  
Sweden and become civilized!

ANDRIETTE

It seems there is so little left.

ALFRED

The Tsar canceled our contracts,  
not our debts. Here's the medal.

Alfred pulls a flat velvet box from the barrel and EXITS.  
Andriette looks after him pensively, then to Minna:

ANDRIETTE

Your friend, Natalia was lovely,  
but I think Alfred is looking  
for... well, a more educated girl.

LUDVIG

Educated girls in Russia, Mother?  
It's against Imperial Law!

Laughter. Minna gives her husband a hit.

INT. MASTER SUITE - DAY

Immanuel, in a filthy mood, is thrashing through the drawers  
of a bureau, when Alfred ENTERS.

IMMANUEL

Come to gloat?

Alfred freezes, suddenly too furious to speak. Then he  
thrusts the velvet box toward his father, who, feeling  
foolish now, is even angrier. He takes the box...snatches it.  
Alfred turns and starts out. But he stops:

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ALFRED

I remember your first bankruptcy.

IMMANUEL

I knew it...!

ALFRED

You fought back then! Fight back now!

This is unexpected, perhaps unwelcome, so Immanuel's reply is more retort than self-pity:

IMMANUEL

A young man can say this...!

ALFRED

Genius knows no age!

Alfred grabs the box from his hands, snaps it open, revealing a beautiful gold medal, studded with diamonds and sapphires.

ALFRED

"For Industrial Artistry." You converted their fleet from sail to steam, when steam engines were unknown in this country!

IMMANUEL

And they thank me with ruin!

ALFRED

Your mind is not ruined! What of the surgical devices, the machine tools, the hot water heating - My God half the great houses in this ungrateful city are warmed by your system!

IMMANUEL

Very good! I am a clever fellow!  
But you tell me where a clever  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IMMANUEL (cont'd)  
fellow starts when he is sixty and  
penniless!

ALFRED  
Nitroglycerine.

Immanuel hesitates. The idea is intriguing. His eyes slide  
back and forth as he considers... but:

IMMANUEL  
I'd need facilities, Alfred, a  
laboratory, besides money to live.  
My God we're returning to Sweden in  
second class cabins!

He stops, glaring at how hopeless it is. Neither notice that  
Andriette has ENTERED, thinking they might need an  
intermediary:

ALFRED  
You're an inventive genius, father,  
so...

IMMANUEL  
What am I to do, invent cash?

ALFRED  
You might simply use the cash in  
hand.

He meaningfully places the box with the jewel encrusted medal  
in Immanuel's hands.

ANDRIETTE  
You will sell the Tsar's medal?

IMMANUEL  
Ah, my dear!... Well. That's why I  
was looking for it, actually.

Alfred might retort, but Andriette neatly steps in his path  
allowing Immanuel to EXIT, shouting as he goes:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

IMMANUEL

Emile! Send word to change our  
accommodations to first class!

Andriette smiles at Alfred knowingly, pleased that a battle  
has been avoided.

ANDRIETTE

You really should come with us my  
dear. He needs you.

ALFRED

He doesn't want me, mother. Surely  
you've noticed. I'll do my own  
research. Here.

EXT. A SHABBY SEMI-INDUSTRIAL AREA - DAY

Alfred comes out of the low, wretched house into the freezing  
air. The sickly pallor, the threadbare greatcoat and  
fingerless gloves, all indicate deep poverty.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

1863

Alfred trudges across the wide yard toward the Machine shop  
at the rear. HEAR IMMANUEL'S VOICE, reading a letter:

IMMANUEL (V.O.)

My dear, Industrious Alfred, I have  
been reviewing the letters you have  
sent Mother and me since we  
returned to Sweden.

INT. MACHINE SHOP - DAY

A forge, lathes, grinders and tools of the era, take up most  
of the space. Ludvig and Robert are busy hammering rivets  
into a steam boiler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMMANUEL (V.O.)

I must tell you that both of us are concerned. You seem to have become obsessed with your nitroglycerine research.

Alfred has ENTERED and now pulls away the sheet covering a workbench, revealing six heavy glass tubes, about ten inches by two, standing in a rack. They contain nitroglycerine. On another rack are six smaller tubes, made of brass, about four inches long and a half inch in diameter. Coils of fuse stick out of one end.

IMMANUEL (V.O.)

Every spare moment is spent trying to find a reliable way to make the stuff detonate, with no results.

Alfred sinks a fused brass tube into each of the larger glass nitroglycerine tubes and seals the top, leaving the fuses hanging outside. All while:

IMMANUEL (V.O.)

I tell you now, Alfred, there is no answer. Nitroglycerine will never be practical...

During the above, Ludvig and Robert have spotted Alfred and now cross to him. They eye the tubes nervously.

IMMANUEL (V.O.)

I have given up on it. I urge you to do the same and turn your mind to other things.

LUDVIG

Nitroglycerine again...?

ALFRED

Father advises me to stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROBERT

It's time we all stop, Alfred.  
Since the bankruptcy, we've  
averaged about a ruble a day.

LUDVIG

We own a machine shop in a country  
without machines.

ALFRED

These are ready for testing. It's a  
new concept...

ROBERT

Alfred it's been five years of new  
concepts! We need honest jobs!

(then)

Pauline and I are moving to her  
parents place in Finland.

ALFRED

I was hoping the Nobel boys could  
remain together some way...

LUDVIG

It's Southern Russia for me, little  
brother. The Baku Valley has lakes  
of petroleum welling out of the  
ground. There's opportunity in it.  
In America they've started a whole  
industry.

ROBERT

It's you we're worried about.

Alfred shrugs, then nods toward the nitroglycerine tubes.  
Robert and Ludvig each gingerly take a pair, while:

ALFRED

If my idea works, I'll go back to  
Sweden, patent it, raise some  
capitol and start my own industry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROBERT

If not...?

ALFRED

I'll get an honest job.

EXT. THE MACHINE SHOP - DAY

CLOSE ON last of the glass tubes as Alfred, holding on to one end of the fuse, sinks it in the deep drainage ditch at the very back of the property. Now lighting a gunner's match, he ignites the fuse, then quickly walks along the edge of the ditch touching off the other five fuses which are lying on the bank.

NEXT TO THE HOUSE

Robert and Ludvig watch him coming rapidly toward them.

ALFRED

Father insists the oil should be mixed with gunpowder. My idea is to keep them separate. Two explosions, one causing the other like a giant hammer...

The earth heaves, and:

**BOOM!!**

THE DITCH erupts, geysering mud and water a hundred feet in the air!

Then: **BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!!** five more towering explosions in rapid succession!

THE BROTHERS

are knocked to the ground. Windows shatter, trees shudder, neighbors are alarmed. Pauline and Minna rush outside to find the men working their jaws, trying to get their ears going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All of them are staring at Alfred, who wears an expression of beatific satisfaction:

ALFRED

Wait till Father sees this!

EXT. A SWEDISH OPEN PIT MINE - DAY

**BOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!!** More, much bigger explosions send tons of rock into the air, astonishing the crowd of engineers, miners and other interested observers.

AMMEBERG, SWEDEN

MAY, 1864

ALFRED

is smiling up at his work. He is healthier-seeming, and certainly better dressed. Next to him is his younger brother, Emile, who is now twenty and working on a mustache.

EMILE

It's fantastic!

The debris is still settling and some of the observers are already making for Alfred. The first is:

JANNSEN

Kent Jannsen, mining engineer. Can you deliver a thousand pounds a week? What is it called...?

ALFRED

"Blasting Oil." A thousand pounds?  
See Mister Smitt. He is my financial partner.

He gestures to a prosperous-looking man, who has a quill and order book ready for business on the barrel he is using for a table. As other men crowd toward Alfred:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

All of you, please! My partner,  
Mister Smitt will see to your  
orders!

As the men change course, Alfred and Emile head toward the  
road which leads to the top of the mine.

EMILE

But Father spends all his time  
supervising the factory, I thought  
he was your partner.

ALFRED

He is. I've given him half my share  
in the Swedish company. Smitt is  
our financial partner. We have been  
discovering some unpleasant things  
about nitroglycerine, Emile.

EMILE

I've heard. It doesn't travel well.

ALFRED

That's why I'm building plants  
close to where the oil will be  
used: Germany, Italy, England, even  
America. It means separate  
companies, more financial partners,  
patents...

EMILE

So much business!

ALFRED

One day you'll be running it for  
me.

(suddenly)

You!

At first confused, Emile sprints after Alfred toward:

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

A WAGON

parked behind some rocks. The back contains several cases marked "BLASTING OIL - DANGER - HANDLE WITH CARE." An OAF of a driver has cracked open a case and taken out one of the long zinc canisters, which is marked with similar warnings.

He is pouring the oil onto the axle of a wagon wheel!

ALFRED

Stop! What are you doing?

OAF

The wheel squeaks...

ALFRED

Didn't you see the explosions? This is what made them!

OAF

No, this is only oil, sir. I shine my boots with it...

ALFRED

It's Blasting Oil! Explosive!

EMILE

Read the labels!

The man looks uncomfortable. They realize he can't read. Alfred shouts at a big workman in the background: GUSTOV.

ALFRED

Gustov! Tell this man what he's using to shine his boots!

The workman hurries over, begins berating the Oaf.

ALFRED AND EMILE

have turned back toward the road to the top of the mine:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALFRED

Stupidity is the main reason  
nitroglycerine doesn't travel well.  
I've heard of people frying  
sausages in it!

NEAR THE TOP OF THE ROAD

they are accosted by a big, broad-featured man full of  
booming bonhomie: TALIAFERRO P. SHAFFNER

SHAFFNER

A most impressive demonstration,  
sir! As an old explosives hand -  
considered an expert in my country -  
allow me to congratulate you!  
(thrusts out a hand)  
Taliaferro P. Shaffner, of the  
State of Virginia. Have you heard  
of Virginia?

ALFRED

I... have been to New York...

SHAFFNER

Then I am not the first American  
you've met!

ALFRED

It is always startling. This is my  
brother, Emile...

Shaffner flicks a smile at Emile, but his quarry is Alfred.  
Taking his arm in a friendly, but unwelcome grip, the  
American speaks in rapid-fire dramatics:

SHAFFNER

As you may know, my country is  
presently engaged in a great and  
terrible civil war. But all wars  
conclude. Then, sir, a Great  
Juggernaut of Westward Expansion  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SHAFFNER (cont'd)  
shall commence. Do you follow my  
vision, sir?

Alfred nods, yes, then slides a look at Emile, who is trying to keep a straight face.

SHAFFNER  
Railroads into virgin country!  
Farms, timber, mines! What bounty  
may next be suckled from Nature's  
ample breast?

ALFRED  
I could not guess...

Shaffner's eyes fix Alfred with steely sincerity. Emile pretends a barking cough to hide his laughter.

SHAFFNER  
What I propose is nothing more than  
your fair share of those untold  
millions, by allowing me the honor  
of financing and operating a  
Blasting Oil company in the United  
States of America - always assuming  
they become united again. You all  
right boy?

He bangs Emile on the back, which stops the coughing, but not the glee.

ALFRED  
I am afraid you're too late. I  
already have a partner in New York  
City, as well as an attorney in  
Washington, D.C., securing the  
American patents...

SHAFFNER  
You don't have the American patents  
yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

But Alfred hasn't noticed Shaffner's almost predatory shift in attitude, for they have reached:

EXT. THE TOP OF THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

where a number of wagons and carriages are parked.

Alfred is not rude to Shaffner, but:

ALFRED

My family is waiting.

Taking Emile firmly by the arm, he hurries away among the carriages. CAMERA REMAINS with Shaffner, who quickly steps to his own carriage, ordering the Driver to::

SHAFFNER

Get me to the Patent Office in  
Stockholm as fast as you can!

EXT. THE EDGE OF THE PIT MINE - CONTINUOUS

MOVING WITH Alfred and Emile, both laughing.

EMILE

He's like a carnival barker! Are  
all Americans that way?

ALFRED

Not all. But among their resources  
is a vast supply of hot air.

They have reached a carriage from where Immanuel and Andriette have watched the demonstration.

ALFRED

(kisses Andriette)

Hello, mother.

(carefully)

I think the demonstration went  
well, Father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILE

They all want Blasting Oil now!

ANDRIETTE

But such noise!

IMMANUEL

Ingrate! Thief!

They stare at him. His face is florid with anger.

IMMANUEL

You dare to strut about taking  
credit for my discovery!

ANDRIETTE

No! Stop this! Do not...!

It is too late.

ALFRED

Your discovery?

IMMANUEL

I am the inventor here! Not you!  
Never you!

ALFRED

You gave up your research!

IMMANUEL

I showed a similar device to the  
military.

ALFRED

It didn't work! This is an  
engineering tool! It has nothing to  
do with your bloody wars!

IMMANUEL

MY NAME SHOULD BE ON THE PATENT!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

NEVER!

ANDRIETTE

Stop it! Stop it! Please...!

Immanuel suddenly lashes the horses and the carriage leaps away. Alfred watches after it a long moment, then the crowd arrives full of congratulations.

EXT. HELENBOURGE, SWEDEN - DAY

Alfred is leading his mare by the halter, stroking her head now and then. He likes horses. Emile walks at his side.

They are approaching a small brick and wood industrial building. A sign on the roof announces: "NITROGLYCERINE LTD." in bold red letters.

ALFRED

I didn't cheat Father, Emile.

EMILE

I know. Mother says he still suffers from the bankruptcy.

ALFRED

I wish he'd get over it. He hasn't set foot in the factory for three months. We need his expertise.

Reaching the entrance, Alfred mounts the horse.

EMILE

You're not coming in?

ALFRED

I have business in Stockholm. Be careful in there today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMILE

(mock offended)

I'm a University man!

ALFRED

With no experience. Listen to the  
foreman. Follow procedures.

Emile grins and strides into the building. Alfred looks after him fondly, turns the mare and canters away.

INT. HELENBOURGE FACTORY - SHIPPING DOCK - DAY

Emile, in shirtsleeves, is checking a shipping ledger as glass demijohns of nitroglycerine are being carefully loaded onto pallets by a workman.

Another man is about to attach a rope sling to the pallet, but:

EMILE

(cautions)

Stay back until he finishes  
loading.

The man nods sullenly, yanks the sling back, catching the first man's foot.

SLOW MOTION

as he stumbles, the demijohn slips from his arms and smashes into the others on the pallet.

There is an instant of horror. Then relief when nothing happens.

ANNA

Mister Nobel?

Emile turns to see his parents pretty maid ANNA:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Your mother asks you to come to lunch.

EMILE

Yes, thank you, Anna.

(to the men)

Clean it up and for God's sake be careful.

He walks back through the loading area, unaware that:

A WISP OF SMOKE

has appeared where the spilled nitroglycerine is dripping onto the greasy wooden floor.

EMILE AND ANNA

start out together. Smiling. Is something going on between them? It will never be known, for there is a sudden, devastating EXPLOSION.

#### A MONTAGE OF NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATIONS

These are black and white line engravings, the kind that were used prior to photography.

I -- A RAILROAD TRAIN, TRAILING SPARKS AND SMOKE, CROSSES A HIGH WOODEN TRESTLE OVER A FOAMING RIVER.

A. SPARKS STREAM INTO A BOXCAR CONTAINING SEVERAL CRATES MARKED "BLASTING OIL - HANDLE WITH CARE."

B. THE BOXCAR EXPLODES.

C. SEVERED IN THE MIDDLE, TRAIN AND TRESTLE FALL INTO THE TORRENT AMID SMOKE AND FIRE.

D. CAMERA DRAWS BACK, REVEALING THAT THIS IS THE FRONT PAGE OF A NEWSPAPER, WITH BANNER HEADLINES: "NITROGLYCERINE KILLS 23!"

II -- A LARGE MINING OPERATION WITH GIANT WHEELS, SPARS,

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ROPES AND STEAM-DRIVEN MACHINERY. MEN ARE LOADING CRATED DEMIJOHNS MARKED: "DANGER - BLASTING OIL" ONTO THE ELEVATOR OVER THE MAIN SHAFT.

- A. A NAIL IS HAMMERED INTO A CRATE, WHICH IS STAINED BY LEAKING NITROGLYCERINE.
- B. A HUGE DETONATION BLASTS SPARS, WHEELS AND MACHINERY HIGH INTO THE SKY. ANGLE OPENS TO SEE THIS TOO IS A NEWSPAPER FRONT PAGE, WITH THE HEADLINE: "MINE DISASTER! MANY DIE!"

III -- A CALIFORNIA STREET, WITH A STAGE COACH IN FRONT OF THE WELLS FARGO OFFICE. CASES OF "BLASTING OIL" ARE TOSSED DOWN FROM THE ROOF OF THE STAGE.

- A. ONE OF THE CASES IS DROPPED.
- B. THE STAGE OFFICE, THE COACH, THE HORSES, THE PEOPLE AND EVERYTHING ELSE ON THE STREET ARE BLOWN TO PIECES. ADJUST TO SEE THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "FREIGHT OFFICE EXPLOSION!"

IV -- AN OCEAN-GOING FREIGHTER, TIED UP AT A TROPICAL PORT, IS BUSY OFF-LOADING FREIGHT.

- A. IN THE HOLD, NATIVE STEVEDORES HOIST LEAKING, DRIPPING CRATES LABELED "BLASTING OIL - DANGER HIGH EXPLOSIVES" ONTO A FREIGHT PALLET.
- B. A STUPENDOUS EXPLOSION FIRST PIERCES THE HULL, THEN LITERALLY LIFTS THE GREAT SHIP OUT OF THE WATER, BLOWING THE DOCKS TO MATCHWOOD. CAMERA MOVES TO THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "BLAST DESTROYS SHIP - HUNDREDS DIE!"

- C. CAMERA TRAVELS DOWN THE PAGE TO FIND SMALLER HEADLINES: "U.S. TO OUTLAW TRANSPORT OF BLASTING OIL!"

Suddenly the newspaper is whipped away, revealing:

INT. DELMONICO'S RESTAURANT - NEW YORK - NIGHT

as Alfred Nobel folds the paper with an angry snap and slaps it into the sausage-fingered hands of OTTO BURSTENBINDER, a corpulent German stock promoter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Here it is, Herr Burstenbinder, our  
problems announced on the front  
page of every newspaper!

The MAÎTRE D' bows and escorts them to their table.

NEW YORK CITY

1865

Delmonico's is New York's premiere restaurant and it is  
decidedly masculine, dark clothing, dark woods, the smell of  
spirits and lilac cologne. But there are women present too,  
creating little gardens of color. Some are more powerful than  
the men who dine here, and often more dangerous.

BURSTENBINDER

I am only relieved you do not blame  
me for the difficulties here in  
America, Herr Nobel...!

ALFRED

It's hysteria over the accidents.  
Europe is the same. They want to  
outlaw Blasting Oil, instead of  
following simple rules of safety!

They are just being seated, when:

FISTICUFFS!

erupt across the room. Two angry men knocking over their  
chairs. Swing! Punch! Tables crash. Women scream. Men  
carrying their napkins, hurry for a better view.

But it is over almost at once. The combatants get up,  
laughing, back-slapping, calling for drinks.

ALFRED AND BURSTENBINDER

The German is horrified. But Alfred only shrugs:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

America is becoming civilized at last. Ten years ago they'd have settled things with firearms!

Alfred is not aware that none other than:

TALIAFERRO P. SHAFFNER

has also been watching the altercation. Spying Alfred, he changes course, eyes narrowing in happy speculation:

SHAFFNER

Well! If it isn't my old friend Alfred from the boom business! Taliaferro P. Shaffner at your service, sir.

The American helps himself to a chair, pistol-points a finger at the startled German and, with a canny smile:

SHAFFNER

Otto Burstenbinder. German Stock promoter; immigrated to This Great Land and now partnered with our mutual companion in the American Blasting Oil Company.

Burstenbinder is disturbed that anyone would know so much about him. He answers stiffly:

BURSTENBINDER

I have that honor.

SHAFFNER

One I envy, though rumor has it you are near ruin.

ALFRED

What is it you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SHAFFNER

It's what you want. Investors. I  
can bring them to you, more than a  
million dollars worth.

BURSTENBINDER

Are you making a proposition, sir?

(staying Alfred )

Please! My interests must be  
considered too!

(to Shaffner)

What would you want in return?

SHAFFNER

One third of the company and a seat  
on the board.

ALFRED

I'd rather do business with P.T.  
Barnum.

BURSTENBINDER

You will turn down a million...!

ALFRED

In Sweden he did all he could to  
steal my patent. Including bribery.  
In America he has claimed Blasting  
Oil is his discovery! I won't have  
this man in my company.

Unfazed, Shaffner smiles soothingly at Burstenbinder:

SHAFFNER

Exaggerations, I assure you.  
However I can understand how you'd  
want me to prove myself.

He holds up a hand to stop Alfred's retort. Thinks, then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SHAFFNER

I will use my influence in  
Washington to have this death  
penalty law reversed or dropped.

BURSTENBINDER

Death penalty?

SHAFFNER

You don't know? The big gunpowder  
interests have a bill before  
Congress. If it passes, any  
fatality caused by nitroglycerine  
will be punishable by hanging.

Burstenbinder is stunned. But Alfred is skeptical:

ALFRED

Why should I believe you?

SHAFFNER

Do you know Henry DuPont?

(shouts)

Henry! Say hello to the gent you're  
trying to hang! Alfred Nobel!

AT A NEARBY TABLE

HENRY DUPONT, dining with A LADY, glances over with an easy  
smile, though you could strike matches on his eyes.

DUPONT

I'll wager nitroglycerine itself  
will cheat the hangman!

With a leonine nod of his head, DuPont acknowledges the  
chuckle he gets from those overhearing. He does not expect  
the piercing retort from the foreigner:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ALFRED

Nitroglycerine is safer than your  
gunpowder, Mister DuPont, safer,  
cheaper and far more effective.

DuPont's head swivels toward Alfred like a gun turret:

DUPONT

My gunpowder does not blow up for  
no reason...

ALFRED

Neither does nitroglycerine...!

DUPONT

(shouting over him)  
...and murder hundreds of innocent  
people!

DuPont is on his feet now, with an operatic tremolo in his  
voice. Alfred, disgusted by the theatrics, is up and moving  
toward him:

ALFRED

Enough! I will give a public  
demonstration to prove the safety  
of my product once and for all.

DUPONT

Trickery!

ALFRED

Each step will be observed by New  
York's best scientists and  
engineers...

DUPONT

Preposterous!

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

Are you afraid, Henry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Laughter. DuPont, not used to derision, turns on his heel and strides from the room, amid even more laughter.

ALFRED

returns to his table, glares at Shaffner, who finally gets the hint and rises to leave.

SHAFFNER

A grand gesture, Alfred! But you'll still need investors... provided you survive the demonstration.

A sly smile at Burstenbinder, who is clearly frightened and Shaffner saunters away. Alfred sits, obviously disturbed as well:

ALFRED

There's nothing to worry about.

EXT. NOLTE'S QUARRY - DAY

On the lip of a huge, craterish hole, Alfred is viewing the site with Burstenbinder, who is near panic:

BURSTENBINDER

Madness! One mistake and...!

ALFRED

I've been handling nitroglycerine since I was a boy! If the ingredients are pure - and I have seen to it they are...!

BURSTENBINDER

Herr Nobel, I am your partner, not your customer! Do not reassure me! Blasting Oil - pure Blasting Oil - explodes trains, ships! And it cannot all be bad ingredients, or carelessness!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

It is carelessness! Most of it...  
It may be that nitroglycerine  
becomes unstable with age and  
temperature changes. There is  
always more to learn.

He turns and strikes off down the path to the bottom of the  
quarry. Burstenbinder shouts after him:

BURSTENBINDER

This learning can get you killed!

ALFRED

A small risk.

It is unclear whether he means the risk is unimportant, or  
his life. The German watches him a moment, then turns as:

SHAFFNER

comes striding along the lip of the quarry toward him.

SHAFFNER

Hello, Otto. You look worried.

BURSTENBINDER

He takes chances... I've talked to  
him, Herr Shaffner. He wants  
nothing to do with you.

Shaffner pauses, looking down at Alfred descending the path.

SHAFFNER

Stubborn fellow. Must be hard for  
you. Like a starving man held back  
from a full dinner plate.

Burstenbinder sighs. He won't deny it.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

SHAFFNER

You're aware that stockholders have  
the right to vote people on and off  
the Board of Directors...?

BURSTENBINDER

If they control enough stock...

SHAFFNER

A million dollars of my stock  
joined with the stock you vote,  
would control the company.

(hands him a card)

We could vote Alfred right out of  
the company... Dinner bell's a-  
ringin', Otto.

Shaffner smiles, tips his hat and strolls away. Burstenbinder  
studies the card, then, his lips forming a thin, determined  
line, he looks down at:

EXT. THE BOTTOM OF THE QUARRY - CONTINUOUS

where Alfred is setting up his demonstration. FIRE MARSHAL  
BAKER, in full uniform, is at his side, casting increasingly  
anxious looks at the canisters of Blasting Oil and kegs of  
Dupont's gunpowder Alfred handles so cavalierly.

The shouted taunts from above by PROFESSIONAL HECKLERS are  
also unnerving him.

During this Alfred hands the fireman a long tube, then fills  
it with nitroglycerine from a heavy, gurgling canister:

FIRE MARSHAL BAKER

(from the top)

I heard it could go off in too much  
sunshine...

ALFRED

Yes? I've heard cold makes it  
explode. Or moderate

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED (cont'd)  
temperatures...  
(gurgle, gurgle )  
... Or evil thoughts.

Alfred inserts a blasting cap with a long coil of fuse. Then the whole thing is allowed to slide down into a prepared bore hole at the base of the cliff.

FIRE MARSHAL BAKER  
Well! I'd best be getting up top!  
The Mayor needs me. Can't be in two  
places at once!

ALFRED  
Unless something goes wrong... then  
you might be in several places at  
once.

The Fire Marshal spurs his horse and gallops up to:

EXT. THE QUARRY'S RIM - CONTINUOUS

A good CROWD has gathered. Peddlers hawk lemonade. Reporters cast about for statements and reactions.

CAMERA PICKS OUT Shaffner and Burstenbinder among the notables.

MAYOR HOFFMAN raises his handkerchief and waves it at Alfred, who now begins his lecture.

Alfred may be a little schoolmasterish, but he is not a bad showman. Pouring a generous amount of nitroglycerine on the surface of an anvil, he speaks loudly:

ALFRED  
Contrary to what you have heard,  
nitroglycerine is actually very  
difficult to explode! Most  
explosions are limited...

He strikes down with a heavy hammer. There is a loud CRACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Crowd flinches back, startled, then realizing it is only a noise, smiles and murmurs with relief.

ALFRED

...are limited, to the point of impact only.

Alfred calmly pounds the pool of nitro: CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!  
The Crowd grants him some light applause.

ALFRED

steps to a plank table. There is a two pound mound of gunpowder at one end and a bowl containing two pounds of nitroglycerine at the other. Alfred breathes deeply, takes a handful of black powder and trails it away from the mound, making a kind of fuse.

Is he nervous? Very. But with iron will, he keeps it from being obvious to those above.

Now, lighting a cigar with a sulfur match:

ALFRED

Many of you have been told heat will detonate nitroglycerine. And while that is certainly true of gunpowder...

He touches the tip of his cigar to the gunpowder "trail", and steps back as the granules burn rapidly to the pile of powder. A WHOOSHING FLASH and much black smoke.

The Crowd ohhs and ahhs. Alfred is now puffing his cigar to a bright coal:

ALFRED

...Blasting Oil is more reserved.

The Observers gasp as Alfred tosses the hot cigar into the bowl of nitroglycerine. It goes out! He strikes a match and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

thrusts it into the bowl. After a while a halfhearted flame appears.

ALFRED

It can be made to burn... if one is patient.

Some tentative LAUGHTER from above. A shocked MURMUR as Alfred splashes the contents of the bowl into the bonfire. Then a GASP when he tosses the whole canister onto the fire as well. It may look casual, but Alfred has to fight to control the tremor in his voice:

ALFRED

You have no doubt read that nitroglycerine will explode, sometimes from the smallest disturbance. Mister Mayor?

MAYOR HOFFMAN

Yes...?

ALFRED

Would you please throw down that canister of Blasting Oil?

Perhaps fearing public ridicule more than annihilation, His Honor picks it up and drops it over the side. A GASP as:

THE CANISTER

hurtles down. And it takes everything:

ALFRED

has to stay rooted to the spot as it smashes into the rocks near his feet. A moment, then enthusiastic APPLAUSE from the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SHAFFNER AND BURSTENBINDER

standing near the Mayor. Shaffner turns to the German:

SHAFFNER

(sotto)

That is either the bravest son of a  
bitch in the world, or the  
craziest.

ALFRED

has crossed to where the bore hole with the tube of Blasting  
Oil is located. He lights the fuse. All while:

ALFRED

If you are satisfied that Blasting  
Oil is at least as safe as  
gunpowder, we will see now why  
Mister DuPont is so upset with me.  
Please step back from the edge and  
cover your ears.

Alfred mounts his horse and canters to:

THE TOP OF THE QUARRY

where he dismounts among the expectant crowd. Then:

THE WHOLE SIDE OF THE QUARRY

seems to lift up and away. There is a TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION.  
Tons of rock are displaced.

THE OBSERVERS

SCREAM or SHOUT in dismay. Some are thrown to the ground.  
Dust billows up from the quarry. But as Alfred strides  
through the crowd, they begin to recover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LAUGHTER! CHEERS! APPLAUSE!

EXT. JUST BEYOND THE CROWD - CONTINUOUS

Shaffner is letting Burstenbinder use his back as a desk to sign the contract. Done. Shaffner turns and hands him the stock orders. Done.

SHAFFNER

Now, let's have a quick board meeting. I nominate you for President of American Blasting Oil, and me for Vice President...

ALFRED

is coming toward them through the assemblage, with the Press at his heels. Shaffner shakes hands with Burstenbinder then moves toward Alfred and the Reporters:

SHAFFNER

(to Reporters)

We'll be right with you boys!

(takes Alfred's arm)

Alfred, I've brought you a million dollars in investors.

ALFRED

Why would you do that?

SHAFFNER

For a third of the company and a seat on the board. I'm Vice President now.

(winks)

Otto and I made an arrangement. We out-vote you... In fact we voted you out. And there isn't a damned thing you can do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He coolly enjoys watching Alfred realize he has been double-crossed. Burstenbinder can't meet his eyes.

SHAFFNER

Oh. I had that death penalty bill  
dropped. Wouldn't want to get  
myself hung!

With a hearty laugh, Shaffner steps toward the Reporters, arms out, ready to tell them his good news. Alfred, full of rage, is about to launch himself at Shaffner, but:

A UNIFORMED MESSENGER

bars his way.

MESSENGER

Message, Mister Nobel.  
(hands him the envelope)  
It came over the Atlantic Cable.

All right. He takes the damned envelope, even tips the young man. The rage has become frustration. He rips open the envelope. CAMERA MOVES CLOSE TO THE CABLE:

"TERRIBLE ACCIDENT STOP EXPLOSION  
DESTROYED HAMBURG FACTORY STOP"

ALFRED

jolted by the news, struggles to get his emotions under control. The Reporters are jostling for comments. Alfred moves away quickly, murmuring only:

ALFRED

I must return to Europe at once.

EXT. HELENBOURGE FACTORY RUINS - NIGHT (FOG)

OPEN CLOSE on the scorched and twisted NITROGLYCERINE LTD. sign. It is rusting badly. The ANGLE ADJUSTS to find Alfred and Andriette, wrapped against the cold, are turning off the road into the rubble of the factory where Emile was killed.

The lantern Alfred carries makes only a dim nimbus in the mist.

ALFRED

In Hamburg the factory and everyone  
in it was annihilated. I come home  
to Sweden, to where Emile was  
killed... I seem to leave ruins in  
my wake. Is that father?

Just ahead, Immanuel, wearing bathrobe and slippers, is  
treading back and forth through the rubble, speaking and  
gesturing in passionate conversation... to no one.

ANDRIETTE

I wake up at night and he is gone.  
This is where I find him.

ALFRED

Who is he speaking to?

ANDRIETTE

Ghosts.

Alfred moves toward his father.

IMMANUEL

Emile? Emile? Ah. There you are!

(a complaint)

You sent me that damned dream  
again, Emile. Can't you think up  
something new?

(listens)

Of course it frightens me! My God,  
you send all those who died from my  
weapons! Legions of them! Headless

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

IMMANUEL (cont'd)  
men flying to accuse me! It makes  
me quake!

Alfred gently takes the old man's arm. But Immanuel leaps  
back with a gasp:

IMMANUEL  
No! Not you too! Do not...!

ALFRED  
I'll take you home, Father.

The old man is frightened, breathing heavily, still not sure  
if Alfred is a shade. Alfred pats him, soothes him, leads him  
back to Andriette. They start home together. Immanuel is  
docile, unconnected. Alfred silently questions her.

ANDRIETTE  
He doesn't hear you.

ALFRED  
I thought he blamed me for Emile.

ANDRIETTE  
Only himself. He thinks that if his  
pride over that silly patent  
business had not kept him from the  
factory, he could have supervised  
Emile. Protected him.

Alfred clutches the old man to him.

ANDRIETTE  
Just an old fellow now. I tried to  
prepare you.

ALFRED  
I wasn't prepared for how much I  
love him.

They reach the road and move away into the fog. CAMERA HOLDS  
a moment, then:

EXT. HELENBOURGE FACTORY RUINS - DAY

Alfred stands quietly near the wall with the twisted sign, a sense of sad aloneness about him. He picks up a scorched test tube, looks at it a moment, then begins to think.

His eyes travel to the debris-filled crater - a ruptured water pipe - blackened beams and bricks - then suddenly back to:

THE RUPTURED WATER PIPE

It is still dripping slowly. The drops fall onto a bit of charcoaled wood, and are absorbed. Alfred kneels, at first with speculation, then possibility, and last, decision.

EXT. VINTERVIKIN FACTORY - DAY

Several brick buildings set in the woodlands, far from habitation.

VINTERVIKIN, SWEDEN

1867

A horseman rides down the road and turns in at the gates. His name is PAUL BARBE. He is about thirty, suave, intelligent and extraordinarily handsome. He turns toward a building marked "LABORATORY." Over this, HEAR:

ALFRED (V.O.)

With the business all but shut down  
world wide, we have been inundated  
with orders, as though each  
catastrophe is a kind of ghastly  
advertisement for Blasting Oil.

INT. VINTERVIKIN LABORATORY - DAY

CLOSE ON a glass petri dish containing a whitish clay substance. Now DRAW BACK to see Alfred in a black apron, seated at a table in a spacious, well-equipped laboratory. Watching him work are Robert and Ludvig.

LUDVIG

You blamed yourself for the disasters?

ALFRED

Of course. I was to blame. For all the good blame does. What we needed was a way to make the stuff safer.

He is pouring small amounts of nitroglycerine onto the clay, which absorbs it, much as the charcoal absorbed the drops of water. Now scooping the soaked clay onto a square of heavy red cartridge paper, he rolls it into a tube.

Through the open door, Barbe clatters to a halt, the horse snorting. The men turn as he dismounts and enters.

ALFRED

Paul! I'm glad you're here!  
(to his brothers)  
Paul is my partner in the French company.

The men ad-lib introductions, then Paul turns to Alfred:

PAUL

Your telegram said we might be back in business.

ROBERT

He says it's in that mess he's mixing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Kieselguhr. It's a clay that  
absorbs nitroglycerine without  
changing the chemistry.

PAUL

(laughing)

Kiesel... Talk to me of sales,  
markets, production, I will  
understand you!

LUDVIG

Thank you. We've been here an hour  
learning more than is good for us  
about clay!

Alfred picks up the clay-filled tube and inserts a small,  
fused blasting cap into one end. A red tube, ten inches long,  
with a fuse; it is a very familiar shape.

EXT. VINTERVIKIN TESTING RANGE - DAY

The clay tube EXPLODES with a loud CRUMP! Dirt and dust are  
blown high into the air. CAMERA PULLS BACK QUICKLY to see  
this is the view of Alfred, his brothers and Paul Barbe as  
they watch the test from behind a log barricade.

ALFRED

Understand, it is less powerful  
than pure nitroglycerine... But it  
is much safer.

PAUL

Then you have done it, my friend!

He grabs Alfred and kisses him! Ludvig and Robert bang him on  
the back. Then:

PAUL

"Blasting Oil" has many bad  
memories. We need a new name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Yes, I've been thinking about one,  
is a Greek word: *dynamis*. It means  
power. How do you like the sound of  
"Dynamite?"

They consider, nodding slowly, then smiling.

EXT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - DAY

A stately four-story brownstone surrounded by an iron fence.

PARIS

APRIL, 1876

Two men of great wealth and influence come out of the house  
and through the gate to the sidewalk. Alfred Nobel and Paul  
Barbe are both in their early forties, but the years are far  
more evident on Alfred than Paul.

PAUL

Germany, England, France, Spain,  
the Americas, and each with its own  
company - nests of baby birds.

He opens and closes the thumb and fingers of one hand,  
illustrating the stretched, demanding beak of a hatchling.

ALFRED

And I am the mother flying from  
beak to beak.

PAUL

Your health suffers.

ALFRED

But the health spas prosper... When  
I bought this house I was dreaming  
of roots, finally. Some quiet hours  
in the laboratory...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

And friends, yes?..

ALFRED

I have friends. A few. You are my friend, Paul. I spend evenings at Juliette Adam's salon...

PAUL

Enduring George Sand's memories, Zola's reforms, and the appalling bombast of Victor Hugo!

ALFRED

(laughs, but insists)  
They are stimulating.

PAUL

They are acquaintances only. A man acquires a house, a staff, a decorator, to share with a woman.

ALFRED

I thought that way as a young man. Here in fact.

PAUL

Paris. There was romance?

ALFRED

(laughs)  
It was the time of Louis Napoleon, there was hardly anything else.

As they continue down the street:

EXT. THE FORMAL GARDENS OF A GREAT FRENCH ESTATE - DAY

Known to court gossips as "the Mournful Parrot," THE EMPEROR LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE (NAPOLEON III) is peering into the amazing *décolletage* of several deeply curtsying women. Evidently he is making a selection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARIS  
1858

Accompanied by an entourage of silk-hatted gentlemen, Louis Napoleon nods to a mincing FUNCTIONARY, who in turn crooks a finger at Alfred and a great bear-like man, who might be mistaken for an amiable innkeeper: THEOPHILE-JULES PELOUZE.

FUNCTIONARY  
The Chemist Pelouze.

LOUIS NAPOLEON  
Not chemist, alchemist. Pelouze  
turns poison arrows into medicine.

He chuckles. The entourage, realizing their Emperor has made a joke, titters and fawns.

PELOUZE  
*Curare*, Your Grace, it relaxes the  
muscles. May I present a colleague  
from Sweden? *Monsieur* Alfred Nobel.

Alfred steps forward, bows deeply. The Emperor flicks a quick, penetrating glance at him.

LOUIS NAPOLEON  
The name is known to me. You make  
weapons for Tsar Nicholas.

ALFRED  
No longer, Your Grace. My father  
has returned to Sweden.

The Emperor makes a moué and shrugs, so what?

ALFRED  
There is an oil, nitroglycerine,  
which is so powerful it will change  
the whole concept of explosives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PELOUZE

He does not exaggerate, Your Grace.  
I know of this oil. It has a  
fantastic potential. But it is wild  
and unstable.

ALFRED

My father seeks funds to tame it.

LOUIS NAPOLEON

Your Father has been my enemy.

ALFRED

The war is over. France won.

LOUIS NAPOLEON

And you dare come here for money!

ALFRED

I was told the Emperor has vision!

A GASP from the entourage. Then deadly silence. Pelouze is  
sure the guillotine will soon fall, but:

LOUIS NAPOLEON

You bring me an impertinent fellow,  
Pelouze.

The entourage is ever alert to agree with their ruler.

PELOUZE

He has lived among the barbarians  
too long, Majesty. Not only the  
Russians, but the Americans as  
well. Still, I like his mind.  
Engineering, chemistry, factory  
production, six languages...

LOUIS NAPOLEON

How does France know this  
explosive, once perfected, will not  
be used against her?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

ALFRED

It is not a military explosive.

LOUIS NAPOLEON

Not military, yes of course...

ALFRED

It is industrial, Your Grace:  
roads, mining - right now your  
engineers are building a canal  
through the Suez. Nitroglycerine  
can halve the time and expense!

The Emperor, holds up a hand to forestall further persuasion.  
He ponders a long, suspenseful moment. Then:

LOUIS NAPOLEON

I was exiled to America once. Noisy  
people, but inventive. And  
passionate. Did you admire their  
women, *Monsieur* Nobel?

ALFRED

I did, Majesty, very much... They  
were intelligent and quite  
beautiful...

LOUIS NAPOLEON

Excellent! I thought so too!

Alfred isn't sure what to say about that. But the Emperor is  
beaming at him. Then, abruptly to a Functionary:

LOUIS NAPOLEON

You may tell the banker Pairere  
that France has no objection to  
this gentleman's petition.

With a casual flick of his hand, Alfred and Pelouze are  
dismissed. Moving backwards, they bow deeply, however The  
Imperial Eyes have returned to devour the *décolletage*.

EXT. THE ACRES OF LAWNS - CONTINUOUS

where CAMERA TRACKS Alfred and Pelouze past fabulous topiary, flowers, hedges and fountains delight the senses. Elegant Guests stroll and posture, flirt and maneuver.

PELOUZE

I hope you are better with  
explosives than Emperors! I'm  
grateful he didn't demand a  
demonstration.

ALFRED

He could have had one.

Alfred takes a small, corked test-tube of nitroglycerine from his pocket. Pelouze is horrified.

PELOUZE

*Mon Dieu!* Nitroglycerine in your  
pocket? A slip, a fall, and the  
Second Empire disappears!

ALFRED

Every great development has its  
graveyards: electricity, steam,  
gas, *curare*...

Pelouze hesitates, then laughs. Alfred stops, looking:

THROUGH A FOUNTAIN'S SPRAY

where an exquisite young woman has stopped to dampen a handkerchief. DAPHNE DU POITOU is about nineteen, very bright, with a small, but voluptuous figure. She presses the wet cloth to her brow and neck. It is no help. She clutches at the rim of the fountain. CAMERA RACES WITH Alfred as he reaches her in time to prevent her falling.

ALFRED

Allow me, *Mademoiselle*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He guides her to a stone bench in the shade of a tall hedge, while Pelouze inspects her with professional eyes:

PELOUZE

Bend at the waist. Deep breaths.  
Good. Again. Your family is here?

DAPHNE

My Aunt only... But please do not call her. She is with the Emperor and would never forgive me.

PELOUZE

I will fetch a cool drink. Please keep your head on your knees.

She bends again as Pelouze moves away. Her shoulders begin to shake. Alfred is alarmed, but she is laughing!

DAPHNE

This is an absurd position!  
(straightens)  
Forgive me, I am just out of a sickbed and a little shaky still. They said it was "stomach fever." Days of cupping, leeches, potions!

ALFRED

I am glad they were wrong.

She is like a young boy, filled with grisly fascination:

DAPHNE

It is not really the stomach, you know. It is the bowels. At the connection of the small and large intestine, the cecum to be exact - at the bottom there's a tiny tube...

ALFRED

The appendix.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAPHNE

Yes. And if it becomes infected and  
rots...

(stops)

*Mon Dieu...*! We have not yet met  
and I am indelicate! Unless you are  
a doctor...

ALFRED

No, an engineer, a chemist, a... I  
don't know what really... Alfred  
Nobel. *Enchanté*.

DAPHNE

My father is an engineer! Daphne du  
Poitou, *Enchanté*. Be truthful. Have  
I disgusted you?

ALFRED

Not at all. I was raised in a  
sickbed. Truly. My leeches were so  
familiar, I gave them names.

DAPHNE

(laughs)

You look well enough now.

ALFRED

I am happy now.

He hesitates, realizing it is true. Daphne is suddenly shy.  
The silence is awkward. But delicious. CAMERA PUSHES CLOSE TO  
HER FACE. It seems to swim and swirl, as:

INT. MAISON PELOUZE - LABORATORY - DAY

A CLOSE SHOT of Daphne's face, DISTORTED by a viscous,  
spinning something in the FOREGROUND. ANGLE ADJUST to see it  
is a flask of nitroglycerine that Alfred is swirling. They  
are in a large bright room, with several work tables and all  
the latest equipment of the day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Daphne watches with fascinated eyes as Alfred draws the cork from the flask, steps to a bench and pours a drop of the oil onto a steel plate. He pauses to rub his temples.

ALFRED

(at her questioning look)  
Headache. It comes from handling  
the nitroglycerine.

DAPHNE

Nature is talking to you, Alfred.

He gives her a look, picks up a heavy hammer and strikes down on the dab of oil. CRACK! The hammer is wrenched out of Alfred's hand and sent clattering across the room.

DAPHNE

Oh!

Startled, she takes his arm. He turns to her and they find themselves very close. A moment, then:

DAPHNE

(not moving)  
Sweden is terribly cold, Alfred,  
would it not be desirable to do  
your research here?

ALFRED

It would be very desirable...

He bends to kiss her. Then:

PELOUZE

is at the door.

PELOUZE

Forgive me, my friends, *Madame*  
Pelouze has prepared a lunch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAPHNE

And my chaperon wants to be sure  
all is science in here, no?

Pelouze shrugs in his Gallic way and precedes them OUT.

EXT. THE PARIS OPERA - NIGHT

OPERETTA! - OFFENBACH! - "ORPHEÉAUX ENFERS!" the posters  
announce.

Alfred and Daphne, formally dressed, emerge from the  
glittering entrance along with the very last trickle of  
elegant audience. Almost drunk with the pleasure of being  
together, it takes a moment to realize that:

DAPHNE

We lingered too long, *mon cher*. All  
the cabs have gone.

No matter. They float down the Place de l'Opera. He sings a  
bit of what they have just seen. She joins in. They laugh at  
their attempts.

Walk, walk. She slides a glance at his profile. He is  
frowning, thinking, deciding something. And finally:

ALFRED

Pelouze has offered to find me work  
here in Paris.

DAPHNE

Alfred, that is wonderful!

ALFRED

*Madame* Pelouze says I am welcome to  
live with them... temporarily.

DAPHNE

Temporarily?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

I'll want my own house, if... I  
love you, Daphne. I can't be  
without you. Will you marry me?

She expected it, hoped for it, but still it takes her breath  
away. When at last she speaks she is almost formal:

DAPHNE

Yes, Alfred. I will.

Slowly they kiss, tender and sweet, a kind of gentle bargain.  
Then the rising bubble of excitement bursts:

ALFRED

We need your father's blessing!

DAPHNE

He returns next week.

ALFRED

Will I be suitable to him?

DAPHNE

You're both engineers... And it is  
I who must find you suitable.

They are in each other's arms again. This time the kiss is  
fierce and joyous.

INT. MAISON PELOUZE - LABORATORY - DAY

Pelouze, in shirt sleeves and apron, is pouring liquid from a  
beaker into a distillation cylinder. Alfred ENTERS with a  
worried face:

ALFRED

Her father returned six days ago. I  
send flowers, notes. There is no  
reply. What can it be?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PELOUZE

Do you have much experience with  
women, *mon ami*?

ALFRED

Nothing I am proud of. Why?

PELOUZE

Well, I mean this may be a girl's  
way to make your ardor grow...

ALFRED

Not Daphne. I can't wait. I will  
present myself at her door tonight.

He goes OUT. Pelouze looks after him with concern.

EXT. AVENUE MONTAIGNE - NIGHT

A tree-lined street of large residences. Alfred, with a  
bouquet of roses, dismisses his cab, steps to the door of one  
of the houses and pulls the bell. Finally:

THE FRONT DOOR

is opened by Daphne's father, MONSIEUR DU POITOU, a slim man  
in his forties with a high forehead. But this is just an  
impression. What Alfred sees at once is the man is  
distraught. His eyes are red from weeping.

ALFRED

*Monsieur* du Poitou? I am Alfred  
Nobel. I have come to see...

Du Poitou is staring at him wildly. Alfred, with growing  
alarm, almost shouts:

ALFRED

What is it, sir? What is the  
matter?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MONSIEUR POITOU  
Daphne... I am sorry...

ALFRED  
Sir, please! I must know!

A terrible moment. Then the man blurts:

MONSIEUR POITOU  
Daphne has died.

ALFRED  
No. There is a mistake... A  
mistake!

MONSIEUR POITOU  
She has died.

A MAID appears, guilty that *Monsieur* has answered the bell.  
She leads the stricken man back inside, closing the door.

ALFRED

is still standing there when the maid reopens the door. In  
grief herself, she glances at the young man, then sets about  
hanging a black wreath on the door. Alfred's mind is numb.

The Maid turns to him, with great pity, then goes back  
inside. The wreath shudders as the door is closed. He is  
beginning to tremble.

Then suddenly an anguished sound rises out of his chest, a  
cry that echoes off the buildings. Again. Again.

THE DOOR

flies open. The frightened Maid stares out. The young man is  
gone. She looks down and sees:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE ROSES

trailing from the steps along the street to where Alfred is running blindly away into the night.

EXT. #53 AVENUE MALAKOFF - NIGHT

A Lamplighter is firing the street light outside Alfred's house.

PARIS 1876

INT. #53 AVENUE MALAKOFF - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

CAMERA SPIRALS DOWN FROM ABOVE, past the splendid chandelier toward Alfred, who is quietly standing beneath in the center of the marbled floor.

The Butler, HENRI, passes through, notes his master's distracted mood, silently asks if there is something he can do. Alfred shakes his head, no. Henri bows and continues.

ANGLE ADJUSTS to see that Alfred is studying his own reflection in a mirror. Suddenly he strides into:

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

Book-lined walls, furniture of rich woods and leathers. Alfred goes to the large desk, takes up a pen and begins to write:

ALFRED (V.O.)

'A wealthy, highly educated elderly gentleman, resident of Paris, is looking for a lady of mature age, with a knowledge of several languages, to act as his secretary and housekeeper.'

EXT. THE AUSTRIAN COUNTRYSIDE - THE VON SUTTNER ESTATE - DAY

A palatial manor house, with gardens, terraces and vast, manicured lawns that have been rolled daily for three hundred years.

In the distance, a very angry BARONESS VON SUTTNER marches down the perfectly groomed path toward the boat house on the lake. She is fairly dragging her TWO LITTLE GIRLS (8&9) along behind.

AT THE BOAT HOUSE

with the tearful little girls resisting, the Baroness flings open the door, revealing:

A NAKED COUPLE

*inflagrante delicto* on a bearskin rug by the fireplace. A SHRIEK from the Baroness. Giggles from the little girls. She tries to cover their eyes.

LITTLE GIRL

She made us tell! She made us...!

Slap!

BARONESS

Away! Both of you! And you, Arthur.  
Go! At once!

The young man, ARTHUR VON SUTTNER (25), tall and handsome, but totally panicked, scrabbles for his clothes, clutches them to his nakedness and hurries for the door.

COUNTESS BERTHA VON KINSKY (33) is poised, very beautiful, and angry:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

In most civilized society,  
Baroness, such an intrusion is  
considered bad manners.

BARONESS

Manners?

BERTHA

I suppose apologies are out of the  
question. You obviously won't and I  
have nothing to regret.

BARONESS

You despoil my child!

BERTHA

He is not a child I assure you.

BARONESS

You are how much older?

BERTHA

(evenly)

Seven years.

The Baroness flings up a hand; pah! Case closed!

BERTHA

We are in love.

BARONESS

You seek his fortune.

BERTHA

Now you do insult me.

BARONESS

If this becomes known, Arthur will  
be disowned. No fortune, no title,  
no standing in the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BERTHA

You would do this...?

BARONESS

The Baron would. If you truly love  
my son, Countess, you will not ruin  
his life so.

Shaken, Bertha turns away. The Baroness is cold, but not  
vicious:

BARONESS

You will seek employment elsewhere,  
preferably not in Austria. I'll see  
you get excellent references.

Bertha's turns back to her, tears close.

BARONESS

The girls and I were to holiday in  
Italy next month. We'll leave  
immediately instead. Arthur will  
come with us. When we return, you  
will not be here.

The women look at each other a long moment. Finally Bertha  
closes her eyes in resigned agreement. The Baroness nods  
curtly, turns and leaves.

When she is gone the tears come in a rush.

INT. THE PARIS TRAIN STATION - DAY

Next to the shunting Orient Express, Alfred scans the  
nearly deserted platform. He is about to leave, when:

A LAST PASSENGER

descends from her coach. She is the Countess Bertha Von  
Kinsky and, seeing Alfred:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA  
*Monsieur Nobel?*

He steps toward her, a little bewildered. Bertha is so lovely he has trouble not staring. Her movements are graceful, her eyes warm and intelligent and if they have a kind of haunted quality, there is also humor:

BERTHA  
I kept my seat until everyone was gone, sure I had been deserted. You must promise me this is your very last lie.  
(at his shock)  
Your advertisement said "an elderly gentleman"...

ALFRED  
My lie is more truthful than yours. I expected a substantial old spinster.

She takes his arm. They are instant friends.

INT. #53 AVENUE MALAKOFF - ENTRY HALL - DAY

CAMERA IS HIGH, on a level with the top of the stairs, and MOVES DOWN as Alfred, Bertha and the rather frantic decorator, MONSIEUR PHILIPPE, descend.

MONSIEUR PHILIPPE  
(showing cloth swatches)  
A simple decision, *Monsieur*, mauve, or rose?

ALFRED  
My mother did these things so smoothly, I didn't know what skill it took.

BERTHA  
With your permission...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alfred smiles, gladly!

BERTHA

The rose, *Monsieur* Philippe. But do not use this inferior cotton, raw silk is much better, yes?

MONSIEUR PHILIPPE

Oh, much!

*Monsieur* Philippe fairly dances off in one direction, while Alfred and Bertha cross the entry hall.

Two INVENTORS sit expectantly, one holds a big brass ball decorated with tubes and dials. As Alfred and the stunning Viennese woman pass, he holds up a finger to tell them it won't be much longer.

INT. THE STUDY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alfred leads her to the littered desk:

ALFRED

Correspondence is the largest task, often fifty letters a day..

BERTHA

And those men outside?

ALFRED

Inventors, dreamers, clever people who don't get much encouragement.

He looks a little embarrassed, she smiles softly, pleased that he is a kind man. Alfred opens his large date book:

ALFRED

Appointments are noted here...

BERTHA

Juliette Adam... The writer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Yes, Friday. Would you like to meet her?

She would very much, and that pleases him. Then, leading her to a side door, he ushers her into:

INT. PRIVATE LABORATORY - DAY

Bertha pauses just inside the door, admiring the clean beautifully equipped working laboratory.

ALFRED

This is the real reason I need you... To give me time here.

BERTHA

Is Dynamite to have children?

ALFRED

Not everything I do explodes...

He points to one of the gas lights on the wall.

ALFRED

You know of the blast and fire at the Paris Opera House?

BERTHA

Terrible. We had one in Vienna.

ALFRED

They've happened all over Europe. But no more. See?

He points to a brass collar at the base of the fixture.

ALFRED

This preheats the air.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BERTHA

So combustion is complete. Nothing escapes.

ALFRED

Exactly...

(blurts)

How is it you have never married?

(instantly)

What a terrible question!

BERTHA

There have been a few offers. None I could accept.

Clearly he is drawn to her. And she to him. But the odd, haunted look has slipped into her eyes and she holds back.

EXT. BOULEVARD POISSONIERE - JULIETTE ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Carriages, liveried servants, beautiful guests arriving.

INT. JULIETTE ADAM'S "SALON" - FOYER - NIGHT

OPEN ON a table with twenty or thirty men's hats; every taste from formal silk operas, to English bowlers, to flowing velvet berets.

ADJUST to see that Alfred and Bertha have just arrived.

MADAME JULIETTE ADAM hurries toward them, kisses both Alfred's cheeks, then beams at Bertha:

JULIETTE

Alfred! My dear! And with a guest!

ALFRED

Countess Bertha von Kinsky, may I present *Madame* Juliette Adam?

The women "*enchanté*."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JULIETTE

Everyone asks for you, Alfred. And now you arrive with a beautiful Countess on your arm. Is this significant?

ALFRED

Countess von Kinsky has kindly agreed to help straighten out my cluttered life, Juliette. You know I am not a *roué*.

JULIETTE

Don't let him fool you, he flirts like an Italian.

Alfred swells to protest, but the women laugh and he realizes they are teasing him and smiles sarcastically instead. All this as Juliette guides them into:

INT. JULIETTE ADAM'S DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

which is crowded with guests, who are crushed together, arguing, laughing, sipping wine. Juliette gestures dramatically to the plinths, busts, marble columns and bas-reliefs:

JULIETTE

I've made my home a plea for the return to beauty, harmony and democratic ideals!

HUGO

That life has been over for two thousand years, *Madame*! This is the machine age! Everything is in revolution! Politics, religion, poetry, art...!

JULIETTE

But why must it all be so ugly?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR HUGO is a big, broad-featured man in his seventies. Bertha, who can't help but be thrilled, widens her eyes at Alfred and mouths, "Victor Hugo?"

HUGO

What you call ugly is true beauty,  
for it is real! There are slums  
behind the palaces, *Madame!* Hello,  
Alfred.

(bends over Bertha's hand)

Victor Hugo, your servant, my  
dear...

(into her eyes)

Did you know Barbey d'Aureville  
protests the bourgeois poodle-  
walkers by strolling the Grand  
Boulevards with a lobster on a  
leash?

BERTHA

Should he stroll behind the  
palaces, his art might become both  
protest and dinner.

Hugo raises his eyebrows at her menacingly.

ALFRED

Victor has the largest and most  
important head in France. We must  
be careful not to deflate it.

Hugo stares, then roars his laughter. In fact the whole room,  
pauses for a moment to glance at him. Hugo takes Bertha's  
arm, leading her across the room:

HUGO

One day the world will be like this  
salon, full of exchange, debate,  
ideas. And the only battlefields  
left will be those of the spirit.  
Ask Alfred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

World peace will come about through technology, not talk... if it comes at all. First you must convince the kings and generals, who would much rather blow up a bridge than build one.

It may be cynical, but there is a murmur of agreement. Bertha, however, has been intrigued by the thought of:

BERTHA

World peace...

HUGO

A splendid aspiration, my dear, yet upsetting, yes? Not just to kings and generals, but to industrialists and their politicians...

(a sly smile at Alfred)

... and especially to inventors of things that go bang.

ALFRED

Victor, I would like to invent a bang so big, that everyone, even the politicians, would recoil from the very thought of using it.

(to Bertha)

Do I shock you?

BERTHA

I think you make me hopeful. I've never heard anyone of influence speak of even the possibility of a world without warfare.

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - ENTRY - DAY

Bertha is crossing to the study, sending a wary smile toward the three INVENTORS waiting their turns. They all look a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

little mad, with their contraptions on their laps (one is flapping the wings on a kind of iron football).

INT. STUDY - DAY

as Bertha ENTERS, Alfred makes room on the desk and they begin to sort the mail into three stacks.

BERTHA

...Business... business...

(sets one aside)

Your mother...

(re: the third pile)

Begging...begging...begging... this is always the biggest pile.

ALFRED

A reputation for charity has its drawbacks.

BERTHA

Hm. You will no doubt help those three crackpots out there. Really, some of them are shameless...  
You're smiling.

Alfred hesitates. He is smiling.

ALFRED

I even enjoy your scolding.

BERTHA

If you keep talking about inventing more terrible weapons, I will scold you indeed.

ALFRED

I've never wanted to be associated with weapons, but a good scare might make the world do something constructive for a change...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He trails off, because she has unconsciously begun to straighten the handkerchief in his breast pocket. Now they are both realizing how natural, and intimate, the gesture is. It might go farther. It should go farther. But he hesitates a fraction too long and something happens inside Bertha, something is remembered. Then quickly:

BERTHA

It is time for your crackpots.  
Later I will scold you again - for  
your bad taste in art.

EXT. PLACE DES ARTISTES - DAY

Bertha leads Alfred through the colorful Left Bank square where dozens of "Impressionist" painters offer their work.

BERTHA

...I have no desire to turn your  
house into a social protest, but  
these new artists offer color and  
life and even humor...

ALFRED

But they don't look real.

BERTHA

Don't view them like an engineer.  
See them as a child might, or a  
lover, someone who hasn't been  
contaminated by rules.

She widens her eyes at him, do you understand? He does.

ALFRED

I like this one... Monét... Ten  
Franks. Shall we buy it?

She squints and eyes the small colorful canvass critically:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

Coffee first. Then we come back.  
And if we still like it...

She takes Alfred's arm and CAMERA TRACKS them through the haphazard exhibition of what one day will be prized masters, toward:

EXT. A SMALL SIDEWALK CAFE - CONTINUOUS

The waiter offers them a table, but Alfred's attention is only on Bertha.

BERTHA

No scolding and still you smile.

ALFRED

I've never been so happy.

He touches her face. The paintings are all around. She realizes he is going to kiss her. She almost lets him. But suddenly she takes a chair and, with forced gaiety:

BERTHA

May we have *café au lait*?

Puzzled, perhaps a little put off, Alfred nods to the waiter and sits down. Bertha's smile waivers, then suddenly her eyes fill and tears spill down. He is horrified:

ALFRED

I've offended you...!

She shakes her head back and forth violently. Embarrassed. Trying to control herself. Reaching for his handkerchief. He gives it to her instantly. He would give her his arm.

ALFRED

Please, let me apologize...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

You've done nothing, Alfred. Except touch me. You are the best man I have known ever. You do not deserve my shadows and secrets...

His eyes are on her, questioning. She takes a breath:

BERTHA

My father was a great general. He died before I was born. He was eighty.

(she makes a tiny shrug)

My mother was in her twenties, rich. I had a very good beginning. But she became addicted to the casinos. The money dwindled. Finally down to her last asset, me, she set out to make a match... someone rich of course, and old. Too old it seems. They kept dying before a wedding could happen. Finally I took a job as governess to the daughters of Baron von Suttner...

ALFRED

The Baroness gave you good references.

BERTHA

Especially when she heard I would move to Paris.

(moment, then quickly)

The girls had an older brother. We fell in love, had a rapturous affair and were eventually caught. It was terrible.

ALFRED

Terrible? You are hardly some hired girl...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

BERTHA

(ironically)

In fact my family is of a more  
exalted rank. But I am penniless.  
And seven years older.

ALFRED

(the hardest question)

And you love him still?

She looks away. He is jealous, hurt, angry... still he cannot  
stand to see her so and takes her hand:

ALFRED

The wound is fresh. It will heal.  
All one needs is patience. Come,  
let's buy that painting.

She smiles hesitantly. They rise. The coffee comes. He puts a  
coin on the table and they walk away together.

INT. PARIS RAILWAY STATION - DAY

Alfred, accompanied by Bertha, watches as his coachman hands  
his luggage to a porter on the train. Their mood is light.

ALFRED

I don't like leaving you.

BERTHA

One cannot very well ignore a  
summons from the King of Sweden.

ALFRED

It is only a factory opening...  
Bertha, come with me. Be part of  
this. Meet my family...

BERTHA

(moment, smiles)

Next time, I promise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He might argue more, but the train is beginning to move. She kisses his mouth, briefly, but definitely. He steps up into his compartment, feeling the soft print of her lips.

BERTHA

(waving)

When you get home, don't be  
surprised if the house is full of  
shocking paintings!

He laughs, waves back and the train takes him away.

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - STUDY - MORNING

Bertha comes in, carrying a large cup of coffee, crosses to the windows, opens the drapes letting in the light. Her eyes fall on the small painting they bought, the Monét. It is on the desk, still wrapped. She pulls the paper off and is smiling at it, when Henri comes in, bearing a pair of telegrams on a silver tray:

HENRI

Good morning, Madame. Telegrams  
came for you in the night.

She leans the painting in a chair, takes the wires and deftly slits the first open with a letter knife.

BERTHA

Good. Monsieur Nobel arrived safely  
and returns in a week...

(the other wire now)

Vienna?

She claws it open. CAMERA MOVES CLOSE. The words are huge, filling the screen:

"CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT YOU  
ARTHUR"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

leans against the desk for support. Henri is almost at the door, when he turns at the sound she makes. She is hurrying toward the door.

BERTHA

Send me a maid! I must pack!

She rushes past him and OUT.

INT. PARIS TRAIN STATION - DAY

A slightly anxious-looking Paul Barbe is hurrying through the crush of porters and passengers toward Alfred, who is just stepping down from his compartment.

PAUL

I thought when you bought the house, I might find you at home now and then.

ALFRED

I'll be there often from now on.

PAUL

Oh?... Do I know her?

ALFRED

You will soon.

As they walk toward the exit, Paul gestures for his man to collect Alfred's luggage

PAUL

You know of the American, Rockefeller? Oil.

(Alfred does)

He has devised a legal miracle, called a "trust".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

An odd word for a buccaneer like  
Mister Rockefeller.

PAUL

With a trust, a private monopoly  
can capture an entire business  
market, fix prices and virtually  
eliminate competition!

Alfred looks very dubious.

EXT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - ENTRY HALL - DAY

Henri opens the front door, admitting Alfred and Barbe.  
Keeping his expression neutral, he relieves the gentlemen of  
their hats, coats and canes.

PAUL

Clearly, there is a community of  
interests between the great arms  
manufacturers, like Krupp, the  
steel interests, and the explosives  
business.

ALFRED

I don't know, Paul, there's  
something sinister about this...  
Crush competition and you crush the  
entrepreneur. Hello, Henri. Is the  
Countess in the study?

Without waiting for a reply, he begins to cross the entry.

ALFRED

(to Paul)

We've managed to keep the munitions  
makers at arm's length, cash and  
carry. Anything else seems like a  
kind of approval.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRI

The Countess is not here, sir...

PAUL

Alfred, you're not facing facts. We are, by definition, already part of a very select group. We control the prime requisite of world politics: the tools of war. Do you understand what that means?

ALFRED

Of course.

(to Henri)

Where did she go?

Henri steps to a side table, hands an envelops to Alfred.

HENRI

She left a note, sir.

PAUL

Alfred, this is critical. If we accept our position with the arms manufacturers, we control our destiny. Deny it, and their politicians will pass laws and simply take us over.

Alfred is not listening. He has torn open the envelope. His eyes slash back and forth across the page. Though Paul can see the note has upset him:

PAUL

Alfred, please, you must decide.

ALFRED

Do what you think best.

A curt nod and Alfred hurries into the study, the letter crushed in his fist. Henri exchanges a concerned look with *Monsieur Barbe*. Paul reflects a moment, shrugs to himself; considering everything, he is not displeased.

INT. STUDY - DAY

Alfred stands leaning on his desk. The pain comes. Grimacing, he fights it. Turns away. His eye falls on:

THE MONÉT

still in the chair where Bertha left it. In a sudden, rushing rage, Alfred snatches it up, whirls to throw it into the fire. At the last instant he stops. Making himself breathe. Deeply. Think. This is not what he wants. Then a decision. Striding to the doors he calls:

ALFRED

Henri! Do not unpack my bags, I am  
leaving at once!

EXT. THE AUSTRIAN COUNTRYSIDE - THE VON SUTTNER ESTATE - DAY

FAR FROM CAMERA, led by a LIVERIED SERVANT, Alfred strides purposefully across the lawns toward the gazebo in the rose garden. He is presented to the Baroness and BARON VON SUTTNER, who are taking tea.

CLOSER

The Baron inspects Alfred's card, hands it to his wife. She is nervous, but says nothing. The Baron views Alfred like a tradesman, but is not intimidated.

BARON

Herr Nobel makes explosives.

ALFRED

I'm looking for the Countess von  
Kinsky.

BARONESS

She worked for him in Paris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Do you know where she is?

BARONESS

Somewhere in the Caucasus we're told.

ALFRED

With your son.

BARON

She thinks to have his fortune. She will not. We have disowned him. Now, please excuse us...

ALFRED

You did nothing to stop them?

BARONESS

How could we? As soon as she crept back to Vienna, they were married.

It is like a physical blow. Alfred totters. The Baroness is not unmoved. But she does nothing. A nod from the Baron and the Liveried Servant touches Alfred's arm. Alfred turns woodenly starts away. Then stops and turns back.

ALFRED

If you think she married for money, you misjudge her. She could have had mine. All of it.

CAMERA MOVES with Alfred and the Servant as they re-cross the lawns. The Servant glances at the visitor. He is unsteady and short of breath:

LIVERIED SERVANT

*Mine Herr* is not well?

Alfred gestures that he is all right. But a moment or two later the Servant has to take his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LIVERIED SERVANT

Perhaps a rest.

ALFRED

A rest... Yes. But not here. Ask my driver to take me to the spa at Baden. I know the doctor there.

INT. SPA - MUD ROOM - BADEN, AUSTRIA - DAY

Seeking health, several muck-covered men wallow in a large, tiled pool of mud. CAMERA TURNS to find Alfred, wrapped in a sheet, sitting in a chair to one side. Taking his pulse, is DOCTOR ERNST GRABER, a youthful man, with kind eyes and competent hands.

DR. GRABER

Good. Your pulse rate has dropped from 'Deadly' to merely 'Alarming.'

ALFRED

Three weeks of sulfur, mud and physical torture has had some effect, after all.

DR. GRABER

I want you for another week at least. Take a good walk this morning, come back and have lunch with Edda and me... There are some very attractive women here, Alfred. Ask one to go along.

ALFRED

I've had enough of the ladies.

DR. GRABER

As your Doctor, I tell you it is not healthy to be so much alone.

The Doctor moves off. Alfred decides not to give in to the melancholy. As he gets up, begin to HEAR the first simple

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

measures of a BACH FUGUE. Let them PLAY against Alfred walking away with a bemused glance at the muddy men in the pool. Then, as the fugue arrives at the first ROUND:

EXT. BADEN BEI WEIN, AUSTRIA - DAY

Another fairy tale castle FILLS THE SCREEN. This one, however, is made of sugar and frosting. CAMERA DRAWS BACK as the NEXT ROUND begins, revealing the confectioner's fantasy standing in the window of one of Austria's famous pastry shops. Alfred, dressed for walking, is peering in.

He smiles as the door jingles open and, in time to the FUGUE, out march a FAT BURGHER, HIS FAT WIFE, and their FOUR PLUMP CHILDREN, cheeks bulging with cream puffs and sticky fruit torte.

As Alfred continues his walk, the source of Herr Bach's Fugue is revealed: a barrel organ on wheels, the GRINDER winding merrily while his MONKEY ASSISTANT doffs a Tyrolean cap at Alfred's approach. Dropping a coin in the little hand, Alfred sees:

A FLORIST'S SHOP

a few doors beyond. Banks of flowers flow from the entrance onto the sidewalk. Seeing movement behind them:

ALFRED

May I buy some flowers, please?

His breath stops at the sight of her:

SOFIE HESS

rises from behind a great pile of snap dragons. Young - eighteen - with an exquisite face and a petite, voluptuous figure, she is absolutely delicious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Used to men staring at her, Sofie cannot know that the intensity in Alfred's gaze is because of her amazing resemblance to Daphne du Poitou, the girl he loved so long ago in Paris. Nevertheless, there is such power in his eyes, that she lowers her lashes.

SOFIE

What kind would please you, *mein herr*?

He struggles to recover himself.

ALFRED

I thought to bring something to Doctor Graber's wife. But I don't know what is appropriate.

SOFIE

Is the doctor a friend, or is this a professional visit?

ALFRED

Oh... Well both, I suppose. I'm a guest at the spa, but lunch is at his home.

SOFIE

Is *Frau* Graber youthful, or a woman of years?

ALFRED

Older than you, but not so antique as me.

SOFIE

Since you are not old, the lady must be youthful as well. I recommend color!

ALFRED

Spring flowers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIE

Yes. A basket-full.

ALFRED

Excellent. Choose as though for yourself.

SOFIE

*Mein Herr...*

ALFRED

Please, I must know your name.

With this, he gives her his card. She holds it a moment, looks at him with frank speculation. Then, apparently pleased with what she sees:

SOFIE

...Sofie Hess... *Herr Alfred Nobel...*

...and she has captured his heart.

ALFRED

After lunch, I was planning a carriage ride in the country... Will you join me?

She is about to answer, with an enthusiastic yes, when:

HER MOTHER

a blowzy woman of fifty, arrows into view. FRAU HESS assumes airs and wardrobe beyond her station and her taste. Her avaricious eyes are at full calculation when:

FRAU HESS

For a girl of eighteen to be invited sightseeing with Alfred Nobel is an honor indeed, sir! I'm Sofie's mother, *Frau Hess*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALFRED

My God.

FRAU HESS

Naturally you understand my  
daughter has no experience of the  
world.

ALFRED

Naturally.

A glance at Sofie, who rolls her eyes uncomfortably.

FRAU HESS

(without pause)

I would act as chaperon myself, but  
as you can see...

(gestures to the shop)

... of course I know Sofie's purity  
will be respected... and valued...  
by a great man such as yourself.

SOFIE

Are you a great man?

ALFRED

Only an inventor.

SOFIE

What do you invent?

ALFRED

Things that explode.

SOFIE

Do they kill people?

ALFRED

It was not my intention, but  
sometimes they do.

SOFIE

On purpose?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ALFRED

I suppose so.

SOFIE

Then you must be very rich!

He laughs. A wonderful feeling. Sofie laughs, too, glad she has pleased him. *Frau Hess* is ecstatic.

EXT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - DAY

A carriage pulls in through the iron gates and stops at the portico. In the back is Andriette Nobel, who at seventy-seven, remains a handsome, vital woman. Dressed in the very latest Paris fashions and judging from the piles of boxes around her, she been on a shopping spree.

PARIS

MAY, 1877

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - LABORATORY - DAY

Alfred is at a bench, carefully pouring nitroglycerine into a small beaker. His face shows a little more strain, a little more age. ANGLE WIDENS to include his brother Ludvig, in his middle-forties now, a big, handsome, broad-featured man in his prime.

LUDVIG

... Robert and I have designed special tanker ships to carry the oil products from Southern Russia to our markets.

ALFRED

Is that why you were in Sweden?

LUDVIG

They are still the best ship builders. And I thought Mother  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUDVIG (cont'd)  
would enjoy a trip...  
(then)  
We've become big fish, Alfred, and  
the sharks are circling:  
Rockefeller, Rothchilde, Bismark...  
We need an investor, but one we can  
trust.

ALFRED  
Why not keep it in the family?

LUDVIG  
(relieved, but)  
We could use your brains too. I  
mean there on the spot.

ALFRED  
I'm a city man, Ludvig. The wilds  
of Russia do not call to me.

LUDVIG  
If you are thinking of your  
mistress, she would be welcome.

ALFRED  
What mistress?

LUDVIG  
The young pretty one. The one  
everybody knows about.

ALFRED  
No, Sofie is my... *protégé*. She  
lives in Austria...

LUDVIG  
But you are bringing her to Paris,  
yes? A discreet little apartment on  
the Avenue Victor Hugo.

ALFRED  
My God, you know these things?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUDVIG

The servants are full of the news.  
Don't be angry. They are French.  
They see nothing wrong... Neither  
do I.

ANDRIETTE

Except she is eighteen years old!  
Really, Alfred. Eighteen. And low  
born at that.

Startled, Alfred turns so fast the bottle of nitroglycerine  
is knocked off the bench and shatters on the floor. Alfred  
quickly stoops to pick up the shards. Andriette is not angry  
exactly, but she still has a mother's concerns.

ALFRED

We are low born.

ANDRIETTE

What happened to that nice Countess  
you were so keen on?

LUDVIG

(laughing)  
Mother, he's bleeding!  
(going OUT)  
I'll fetch a bandage.

With his mother's nurselike supervision, Alfred washes the  
finger in the lab sink. Then he remembers:

ALFRED

I have some collodion.  
(steps to a shelf)  
It's a form of nitrocellulose.  
(dabs some on)  
Dries quickly and makes a kind of  
second skin, see?

ANDRIETTE

"Incandescent," you called her.  
(at his look)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANDRIETTE (cont'd)  
The Countess. "Beautiful,  
educated..." What happened?

ALFRED  
She married somebody else.

He bends to wipe up the nitroglycerine with a rag.

ANDRIETTE  
Oh, Alfred. I am sorry.

ALFRED  
We've exchanged a letter or two.  
They're in the Caucuses now, living  
at the court of some Princess or  
other.

ANDRIETTE  
You said she was interested in  
world peace. I thought, "What an  
aspiration!"

ALFRED  
She can test her aspirations soon  
enough. I hear war is eminent in  
the Caucuses.  
(pointedly changes  
subject)  
Tell me about your shopping.

ANDRIETTE  
Alfred, I only mean to say there  
are other fine women...

ALFRED  
Rather than some eighteen-year-old  
baggage!

ANDRIETTE  
But what do you talk about?  
(then)  
Oh. I don't suppose that's  
important, is it...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (4)

He laughs, rises, puts the wet cloth on the bench.

ALFRED

Sofie is sweet, vital and joyous.  
I've hired tutors and...

ANDRIETTE

What is it?

He is looking at his collodion-covered finger. It has become gummy.

ALFRED

The collodion seems to have  
combined with the nitroglycerine.

He goes to the table, pours a little nitroglycerine in a petri dish, then adds a bit of collodion to it. In a moment it forms a kind of gelatin. Andriette can see he is excited, but has no idea why.

LUDVIG

returns with a roll of gauze and some scissors. He looks questioningly at Andriette. She shrugs:

ANDRIETTE

(dryly)

He's combining collodion with  
nitroglycerine.

LUDVIG

(instant fascination)

He is?

(steps to Alfred's side)

Collodion is a form of  
nitrocellulose, like guncotton.

She widens her eyes, as though it means something to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ALFRED

If this proves out, we can increase  
the power of Dynamite.

(to Ludvig)

See, it forms a gel.

Andriette looks at them a long moment. Her boys. Then turns  
and EXITS with:

ANDRIETTE

I bought hats.

EXT. PARIS - AVENUE VICTOR HUGO - DAY

CAMERA SLIDES DOWN the ornate façade of a small and charming  
apartment building, then ADJUSTS to FIND Alfred standing  
impatiently at the curb.

PARIS

JUNE, 1877

A carriage draws to a stop. Sofie is in the back, but from  
this vantage, all one can see are satins and a wide-brimmed  
hat trailing roses. He whisks her into the building.

INT. SOFIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alfred watches her spinning about the small, but luxurious  
living room, singing a single happy note:

SOFIE

I love it!

ALFRED

And we are close to my house.

SOFIE

The carriage took me past it! So  
big and important.

(then into his arms)

But for me it is this place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOFIE (cont'd)  
(chuckles)  
Small and expensive.  
(bites him)  
What did you pay for me?

ALFRED  
Pay?

SOFIE  
My wicked mother. I know you have  
an arrangement. How much for my  
virtue?

ALFRED  
Five franks.

SOFIE  
Oh!

ALFRED  
More than you're worth!

SOFIE  
(swipes at him)  
Oh! Oh!

ALFRED  
(holds her still)  
Everything.

She melts. Tears threaten.

ALFRED  
But you must learn things, little  
troll. It is important to me. I  
have hired tutors to teach you  
languages, literature and at least  
enough science to know what I do  
for a living...

SOFIE  
Stop!  
(a fierce kiss)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIE (cont'd)  
 I have waited and waited and  
waited!  
 (kiss, kiss, kiss)  
 Now, take me to bed!

He laughs and lifts her in his arms, marvels at her face a moment, then carries her toward the bedroom. As she clings to his neck, see her boldness disappear...

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - STUDY - DAY

Outside the window it is gray and raining. Alfred is at his desk, sorting the mail. Three stacks, as always.

PARIS  
MARCH, 1878

One of the letters catches his eye. He lifts it, holds it at a distance, looks at the writing on the envelope, then brings it close to smell the familiar fragrance.

CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY toward the envelope. As he breaks the seal and unfolds the paper...

INT. FIELD HOSPITAL TENT - NIGHT

CAMERA DRAWS BACK from Bertha (von Kinsky) von Suttner's face, as though she is emerging from the letter itself.

BERTHA'S VOICE  
 My dear Alfred, if my hand is  
 trembling, it is because I am so  
 exhausted...

Smudged, dirty, wearing a grimy Red Cross habit, there is fear in her eyes, but also a fierce determination. ANGLE WIDENS to see why.

It is no wonder. With her husband, ARTHUR VON SUTTNER, also in Red Cross uniform, she is helping hold down a wild-eyed BOY, while a DOCTOR prepares to cut off his mutilated leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA'S VOICE

We have been taking in wounded  
since early this morning, whether  
Russian or Turkish I do not know.

The boy begins screaming. Bertha holds him, soothing him,  
weeping, because it does no good.

BERTHA'S VOICE

As soon as the war started, Arthur  
and I joined the Red Cross with  
high, naive spirits. It has not  
been what we thought it would be.

INT. NOBEL BOARD ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON AN OIL PAINTING. In contrast to the horror above,  
this depicts a beautiful young man, lying in the arms of his  
valorous comrades. Despite the mortal wound on his breast,  
one arm is upflung as he declaims his last words.

BERTHA'S VOICE

I was raised to see warfare as a  
noble thing, bringing out the  
finest qualities of men...

During the following, CAMERA WILL MOVE AMONG A COLLECTION OF  
HEROIC BATTLE PAINTINGS: pristine troops, officers,  
battlefields, all conceived to show the grandeur of war.

BERTHA'S VOICE

It may be true, but I have not seen  
it. I see only pain, filth and  
stupidity...

At last CAMERA DRAWS BACK to reveal that these paintings  
decorate the walls of Alfred's boardroom. He is sitting alone  
at one end of the long, polished table, staring grimly at  
them, recalling Bertha's letter:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA'S VOICE

No last brave smiles, no inspiring words. Here they die cursing, or pleading with God, or crying for their mothers.

INT. FIELD HOSPITAL TENT - NIGHT

as the first boy is lifted off the table and another takes his place. Just as frightened, just as hurt. Bertha does what she can to calm him, again to no avail.

BERTHA'S VOICE

You were the first who spoke to me of the need to banish war. But only my intellect was convinced. Now it is my whole heart, my very being. And I swear to you, Alfred, in the name of these dying, blasted, bodies, that I will devote all of my life to the cause of peace.

INT. NOBEL BOARDROOM - DAY

The table is ringed with substantial-looking Members of the Board. Paul Barbe is addressing them.

PAUL

France has never truly accepted her defeat at Bismark's hands. I'm afraid a war of retaliation is no longer idle talk...

ALFRED

And therefore, imminently good for business!

PAUL

Alfred, no one here wants such a war. But the situation is so dangerous, I have been thinking of  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (cont'd)  
entering politics myself to help  
restore reason.

ALFRED  
You?

PAUL  
Apart from serving France, I would  
be in an excellent position to  
advance our company.

ALFRED  
No.  
(to the others)  
Any man who goes into government -  
I want you all to note this - must  
put the public good above his  
business interests.

PAUL  
Alfred, you are too puritan! A  
government favoring business is in  
the public interest!

ALFRED  
Not if the business is warfare!

PAUL  
You think I have a preference for  
war?

ALFRED  
I think you have a preference for  
money and power, Paul. And if you  
pursue politics, I will insist you  
sever all ties with the Nobel  
companies.

With a quick glance toward the curious board members, Paul  
smiles, spreads his hands:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL

Look at what a fool I am, upsetting  
my closest friend. Forgive me, *mon*  
*ami*.

ALFRED

Of course.

(a breath)

I have one more request.

PAUL

Anything.

ALFRED

Have these battle scenes removed.

PAUL

They are masterworks...

Gathering his things, Alfred smiles privately:

ALFRED

Yes, well, I have a preference for  
more up-to-date painters. Try this  
fellow Monet.

With a brief nod toward the disconcerted Board Members,  
Alfred makes his EXIT.

INT. SOFIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

CAMERA IS MOVING with Sofie as she dashes to the door and  
flings it open. Alfred is there. She screams with delight and  
leaps into his arms.

SOFIE

(many kisses)

Terrible man! Days and days without  
you!

She spins away, showing off her gown:

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

SOFIE

Is this not pretty? And look,  
*liebchen*, the brooch just so...

ALFRED

Thousands die in the Caucasus and  
your only interest is shopping!

SOFIE

How can I help that? I am in this  
foreign city, surrounded by the  
French...!

ALFRED

They are cultured...!

SOFIE

They are unpleasant! And who do I  
turn to for joy? You, who are  
always, always away!

(the tears come)

And when you are home you are more  
cruel than the French!

He is furious, but the tears drown him in guilt. He stomps  
about the room, raising and lowering one arm, in an idiotic  
effort to dispel the rage. Then:

ALFRED

We shall go to a spa together.

SOFIE

A spa? Old sick people? You do hate  
me!

ALFRED

Spas have become the playpens of  
the wealthy. Didn't you know? All  
the fashionable people attend.

SOFIE

Is there dancing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED  
Every night.

SOFIE  
Grumbly bear.

ALFRED  
Troll.

With the residue of tears in her eyes, she is irresistible.  
He pulls her into his arms.

EXT. SEVERAN TEST RANGE - DAY

Paul Barbe aims a rifle down range and fires, with the usual  
gout of black smoke. Alfred steps to his side and hands him a  
cartridge. Some years have passed. Paul is simply  
distinguished. But Alfred looks gray and sick.

SEVERAN, FRANCE  
1887

Chambering the round, Paul fires again. This time:

PAUL  
No smoke!

ALFRED  
More power too. I call it  
ballistite...

He staggers. Alarmed, Paul leads him to a bench.

ALFRED  
Thank you... Technically, the idea  
of a smokeless powder has  
fascinated me for a long time...

PAUL  
This is not good, *mon ami*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

General decrepitude only...

PAUL

You need a holiday. Where is the little Austrian?

ALFRED

Karlsbad... No, this month it's Baden. To be near her mother. We've been together eight years and I think she's spent six of them in spas.

PAUL

No wonder she doesn't age. Go to her, Alfred. Relax. Don't think of business for a month.

ALFRED

I suppose you're right... And there's a book I'd like to read.

He nods to his open satchel. CAMERA MOVES CLOSE as Paul glances down. The spine of the book can be seen: "LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS" - by Bertha von Suttner.

EXT. THE SPA AT BADEN - DAY

Paul was right, Sofie does not age. The eight years have only made her more delicious. In a lovely day dress, she is seated prettily in a big wicker chair on the veranda, delighting in the attentions of the THREE GENTLEMEN, who hover and compete for her favor.

However *Frau* Hess has sailed into view, in a cloud of alarming pastels and cloying perfume.

FRAU HESS

Gentlemen, gentlemen! Off with you now. At once!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The instant they are gone, she hisses savagely:

FRAU HESS

He's here!

Sofie shrugs, petulantly, horrifying her mother:

FRAU HESS

Go to him, you fool! Show him he is missed!

A dashing young CAVALRY OFFICER interrupts.

CAVALRY OFFICER

After the dancing this evening...

(holds her eyes)

...you will not avoid me, Sofie.

On the verge of panic, *Frau Hess* shoves the Officer aside, while sending a blinding smile toward:

THE VERANDAH STAIRS

where Alfred has paused to watch the tableau. Without a word, he turns on his heel and strides into the lobby.

INT. SPA LOBBY - DAY

*Frau Hess*, pulling Sofie by the wrist, pushes through the doors. But they are too late. Alfred is just disappearing through a doorway, discreetly labeled: "Dr. Graber."

INT. DR. GRABER'S OFFICE - DAY

Alfred is sitting in his shirt-sleeves on the edge of an examining table, desperately tired. Dr. Graber lays an ear against his back.

ALFRED

I seem to have developed a shortness of breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. GRABER

Breath deeply. I haven't examined you in what, two years? Another.

ALFRED

(deep inhale)

Is there deadly deterioration?

DR. GRABER

Once more... Your lungs are never good, but the deterioration is in the heart.

ALFRED

I could have told you that.

DR. GRABER

This is not a joke. You must stop. Now. Retire. Go to the sun, my friend. Ease and tranquillity are essential.

Alfred listens with a grim smile, because:

INT. ALFRED'S SUITE - NIGHT

There is no tranquillity in this place.

SOFIE

My intellect? My intellect?

ALFRED

Your lack of it!

Stalking around in her dressing gown, she snatches up Bertha's book, gestures with it:

SOFIE

We are together for how many years and now you lash me for not reading this... "Lay Down Your Arms!"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Because it was written by a woman  
who has committed herself to  
something more than her wardrobe!

SOFIE

Now you will tell me I am an  
incontinent spender!

ALFRED

Good. You admit it! Perhaps you can  
say a few words on how one endures  
your conniving mother!

SOFIE

I cannot help my mother!

ALFRED

But you could do something about  
your all-encompassing vanity!

She tears her robe away, revealing herself to him, posing  
mockingly.

SOFIE

Do you object to this, Alfred? Do  
you really object?

ALFRED

Can't you understand I want my mind  
aroused as well!

SOFIE

Ah! At last I know why the great  
Alfred Nobel travels so much! He is  
searching village flower shops for  
mental arousal!

ALFRED

All I want from you is a little  
peace!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIE

You could have it! Any time! A  
hearth, a fire, an old dog to pet  
and Sofie's body to touch whenever  
you like!

(sobbing now)

But who can match your mind? Not  
me, Alfred! Not anyone!

She is clinging to him and before long the tears turn into  
something else. He can't help but respond; the making-up more  
powerful because of the fight.

ALFRED

All right, all right, *liebchen*,  
shhh. We will have a house  
together, Sofiechen. Would you like  
that?

SOFIE

You mean it? Together? Openly?

ALFRED

The doctor told me to retire...

SOFIE

But not in France, please...

(excited, kisses)

Could it be here? In Austria? The  
Ischl Valley?

ALFRED

(teasing her)

Where the Emperor Franz Josef keeps  
an estate? And a mistress?

SOFIE

So it would be a good investment!  
See, I do think of your money! And  
my mother won't come, I promise!

They kiss deeply. A SHARP KNOCK at the door. She watches him  
cross to the door, open it slightly, a brief word, then he is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

crossing back to her, absently opening the telegram he has been given, eyes only for her:

ALFRED

We will have dinner in the room  
tonight...

SOFIE

(grins wickedly)  
And breakfast too?

He smiles at her, yes, then reads the telegram. His face fills with confusion.

ALFRED

Paul Barbe is running for political  
office...

SOFIE

Is that so terrible?

ALFRED

It is betrayal, Sofie. And I cannot  
allow it... I must go to Paris at  
once.

SOFIE

Now? Now?

Sofie is past explanations. Whirling, she rushes out of the room. Past explanations too, Alfred does not follow her.

INT. SPA LOBBY - NIGHT

A pair of elderly women twitter together as they covertly watch Alfred, who is following his luggage across the lobby and OUT. A moment later, they twitter again, because a seductively dressed Sofie Hess stalks through the lobby and disappears into a hallway on the other side.



INT. DASHING CAVALRY OFFICER'S ROOM - NIGHT

The young Officer opens his door and is surprised to discover Sofie there. Before he can speak, she moves deliberately into his arms and places her mouth on his.

INT. NOBEL BOARDROOM - DAY

A group of Board Members, including Paul Barbe, stand at the edge of an elaborate sand table mock-up. (NOTE: the heroic battle paintings are gone, replaced by enlarged photographs of Nobel's far-flung empire - No Monéts.)

All eyes turn as the tall mahogany doors are pushed open and Alfred ENTERS scanning the room with icy eyes..

PAUL'S EXPRESSION

changes, very rapidly, from concern, to a broad and charming smile. He steps toward Alfred:

PAUL

I thought you were in Austria...

ALFRED

I know. You waited until I left to announce the news.

PAUL

Gentlemen, may we resume later?

The Board Members withdraw. The moment they are gone, Paul raises a reasonable hand toward Alfred. But:

ALFRED

I have spoken very plainly, Paul.  
For years. You can have business,  
or politics, but not both.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

This is hypocrisy! My God, you  
complain about weapons, then invent  
a smokeless gunpowder, that is even  
more powerful than...!

ALFRED

I am a scientist! Smokeless  
gunpowder is a scientific  
development...!

He is too angry. It has made him dizzy. He staggers backward  
and supports himself against the sand table.

PAUL

Sit. I'll get a doctor...

Alfred gulps air, trying to remain conscious.

ALFRED

No... A brandy might help.  
(wryly)  
I'm afraid to move.

Paul hurries to the sideboard, pours an Armagnac:

PAUL

*Mon Dieu*, quarreling at our age!

ALFRED

(still gasping)  
It's my fault. You called me  
'hypocrite' and my brain exploded.

PAUL

It was a stupid thing to say.

ALFRED

No, it was the truth. Why do you  
think it upset me so? Thank you.

He takes the brandy, sips, a breath, then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

I became so involved with the science of this thing that I forgot - ignored might be the honest word - the application. More bodies. More death.

PAUL

I know that was not your intention. Drink all of it.

ALFRED

You are a gentler critic than I.

PAUL

Alfred, my entering politics has nothing to do with the armaments business. Look behind you.

Alfred turns around now and regards:

THE SAND TABLE

It is a representation of a tropical isthmus, with lakes, rivers, jungles and trails marked on the land between the ocean borders.

PAUL

This is the Isthmus of Panama, in Central America.

ALFRED

The canal? Someone is finally constructing it?

PAUL

A French company, headed by the man who built the one at Suez.

ALFRED

DeLesseps, I know him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PAUL

He refused to consider the job  
without Nobel explosives.

ALFRED

Joining the oceans, Paul. There's  
redemption in that.

(smiles)

Perhaps now I can look Bertha von  
Suttner in the eye.

(then)

You are determined to join the  
government?

PAUL

I am experienced. I have influence.  
I feel it is a duty.

ALFRED

Even if it means resigning from the  
business?

PAUL

Yes, if you insist. It would mean  
more work for you, I'm afraid.

ALFRED

The doctors have ordered me to  
lighten the load, not double it.

PAUL

After what I have just seen, I must  
agree with them...

ALFRED

(a long moment)

You are irreplaceable. Panama is  
irresistible... I wish I didn't  
feel so... compromised.

EXT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - DAY

An elegant lady is stepping down from a cab: Bertha von Suttner. As she moves toward the entrance the doors open.

PARIS  
1887

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - ENTRY - DAY

Alfred is there to welcome her. It has been many years. He bends over her hand.

ALFRED

Time has been kind to you...  
Baroness now, isn't it?

BERTHA

After ten years of exile, Arthur's family restored full honors. It was quite Biblical. I'm so pleased to see you, Alfred.

ALFRED

But time has not been so generous with me... This way. The lunch will be ready soon. I thought your husband was with you.

He ushers her into:

INT. THE STUDY - CONTINUOUS

where she walks about, re-acquainting herself with the room:

BERTHA

You'll meet him this evening, that is if the invitation to Juliette Adam's still stands. Oh, you kept the little painting... I'm anxious  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA (cont'd)  
for Arthur to meet her - all the  
brilliant minds...

Maybe it is her casual glance at the Monét, maybe it is the way her husband almost seems to be in the room with them, but Alfred has become edgy, almost hostile.

ALFRED  
These days all those brilliant  
minds are mad to fight Germany  
again. They will lose of course.  
They always lose.

BERTHA  
But they are so intelligent!

ALFRED  
The French have a recurring  
disease, like malaria. Every few  
years they go to war with Germany.

BERTHA  
Alfred! Such cynicism!

ALFRED  
Which is my recurring disease.

She is disturbed by his bitterness. He has changed. God knows he is older. She has to ask:

BERTHA  
Alfred, do you still believe there  
can be peace in the world?

ALFRED  
Perhaps. Eventually. Through  
technology.

BERTHA  
I think it is possible now. A  
movement has begun...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

Is that why you've come? To recruit me?

BERTHA

Naturally we want your support...

ALFRED

We. You and your husband.

Finally she understands.

BERTHA

Oh Alfred, it was all so long ago.  
So brief. And my life has turned  
out so...

ALFRED

Happily.

BERTHA

It makes you angry?

ALFRED

Yes! Dear God, I'm behaving badly!

BERTHA

Should I go?

ALFRED

No. Please.

(deep breath)

I rejoice that you are happy... At  
least I hope I do... But seeing you  
has made me realize again how  
different my life could have been.

A TAP on the door and Henri opens it, discreetly:

HENRI

Luncheon, *Monsieur*...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He withdraws. With a gesture, Alfred suggests they go, but Bertha puts a hand on his arm.

BERTHA

Alfred... I treasure your  
friendship.

ALFRED

Second prize.

BERTHA

There is much friends can  
accomplish.

ALFRED

You are recruiting me.

BERTHA

Because I believe if you help the  
world achieve peace, you will find  
peace for yourself.

ALFRED

That sounds to these cynical ears  
like a well-meaning platitude.

(before she can object)

Bertha, I'm a technical man. I need  
to know if there is a practical way  
for you to succeed.

BERTHA

I will tell you all of our plans.

ALFRED

I'll need my cheque book no doubt.

BERTHA

We'll get to that.

They EXIT, arm in arm. Friends at least.



EXT. SEVERAN TESTING GROUNDS - DAY

Alfred's young Swedish assistant, RAGNAR SOHLMAN, is running hard toward the small laboratory building, his white smock flapping behind. He reaches the door and rushes inside.

SEVERAN, FRANCE

1887

A moment later, Sohlman emerges with Alfred. Both are upset, because:

A SQUAD OF ARMED POLICE

are marching resolutely into the testing area. The OFFICER confronts Alfred at once:

OFFICER

*Monsieur Nobel?*

ALFRED

What is all this?

OFFICER

I have orders from the Minister of Armament to confiscate the cannon and all supplies of smokeless powder.

ALFRED

This is absurd!

OFFICER

*Monsieur*, charges of treason are being prepared against you.

SOHLMAN

Treason? How can this be? *Monsieur Nobel* is not even French!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

They are French, Mister Sohlman.  
And even history will not provide a  
better reason.

INT. NOBEL ET CIE - BOARDROOM - DAY

OPEN CLOSE on Paul Barbe's face. He is speaking with the accustomed smooth confidence, but it is belied by his appearance. The handsome face is ravaged with strain. The eyes dart, the hands have a tremor.

PAUL

The Minister of War, with notable  
shortsightedness, refused to buy  
our smokeless powder. Of course, we  
have been selling it to other  
nations all along, but this he now  
calls treason.

The ANGLE IS OPENED TO INCLUDE Alfred, standing at one end of the long conference table. At the other end is the elaborate model of the Panama Canal.

Alfred, concerned for Paul's appearance (his own is not good), is nevertheless watching him narrowly because:

ALFRED

None of this makes sense.

PAUL

The Minister is vindictive.

ALFRED

Why?

PAUL

Our confrontation took place in  
front of the Chamber of Deputies. I  
lost my temper and called him  
"fool," now he calls me traitor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

At least you are the right  
nationality.

PAUL

He attacks you to get at me. Even  
now he looks for mud in my past.

ALFRED

Will he find it, Paul?

PAUL

If he does, every Minister in  
France will see prison.

Alfred stares at his partner, demandingly, knowing there is  
more. Paul hesitates, turns abruptly, gestures toward the  
Canal model at the other end of the table and, with a bad  
attempt at joviality:

PAUL

The Canal project is on the verge  
of bankruptcy. They would love to  
have someone to blame. It means  
nothing.

ALFRED

I have never seen you frightened  
before, Paul.

PAUL

(moment, a breath)  
What will you do?

Alfred steps back to the end of the table and begins to pack  
up his briefcase.

ALFRED

I will take my doctor's advice and  
go to the sun.

Paul looks at him, then away, unable to meet Alfred's eyes.

EXT. SPA - BADEN, AUSTRIA - MORNING

A Dispatch Messenger on horseback dismounts and carries his leather pouch inside.

INT. SPA - ALFRED'S SUITE - MORNING

Alfred and Sofie are in bed. She is just waking up, tousled, adorable, reaches to touch him:

SOFIE

You slept well? No, I can see you  
didn't.

Alfred is haggard, sick-looking, but he manages to tease her a little.

ALFRED

Your snoring kept me awake.

She snuggles after him, threatening a tickle. He prevents her with a kiss, which becomes long and deep and meaningful, and leaves her with the hint of tears in the corners of her eyes. She holds him close, dearly.

SOFIE

I will tell you the woman's secret.  
If you kiss her when she wakes, she  
will love you all day.

ALFRED

Do you know why I did not sleep,  
*Liebchen*? It is because I am sick.  
My heart.

She puts her hand on his chest:

SOFIE

Now that you're leaving Paris and  
those terrible French, I will make  
your heart strong and happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

It cannot be in Austria, *Liebchen*.

SOFIE

Don't argue. Of course, here. Here you will have your laboratory friends, parties and if you kiss me enough in the morning, I will bring you a child.

ALFRED

Sofie, you don't understand. My health requires that I live in a warm climate. I've chosen Italy.

SOFIE

I don't want Italy! I want my home!

ALFRED

I bought a villa in San Remo, a beautiful...

SOFIE

When does this stop? I have spent my life waiting for you. In places where I don't speak the language! You send me letters -- my God, the letters! Saying you are lonely! What of me? I am lonely too!

He pushes himself out of the bed, with acid fury.

ALFRED

You don't seem to lack for companions!

SOFIE

Do I turn into wood until you remember I exist?

ALFRED

You could turn into a lady!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOFIE

No! I cannot! And you do not want me to! You want exactly what you have. To be the great inventor, who never found a woman to fit his station... Oh yes, he has this silly little mistress, but take no notice of her!

It is too much. He starts toward her, face ugly with rage. It frightens her back into a corner. As he nears, she opens her mouth to scream. But there is a sharp RAP at the door:

AN OLD PORTER

ENTERS with their breakfast on a tray, as well as several telegrams and the papers from Paris.

PORTER

Good morning, Sir! Good morning,  
Madam! Your breakfast!

ALFRED

Get out.

Which offends the old man, who is now torn between pride and duty. He decides on the latter and stands his ground.

PORTER

I have the newspapers from Paris,  
Sir. They concern you. There are  
also telegrams.

Alfred, too emotional to speak an apology, does touch the old Porter's shoulder to let him know that the anger is not about him. He takes a paper, snaps it open.

THE HEADLINE:

"MINISTER DIES! SCANDAL REVEALED!"

ALFRED

stunned, reading snatches of the story aloud:

ALFRED

Paul Barbe is dead.

(reading)

...suddenly... revelations of  
fraud... bribery... He was right,  
ministers will see prison...

The old man leaves as Alfred tears into the telegrams:

ALFRED

The French are demanding  
reparations. They want me to pay  
for their bankrupt Canal!

SOFIE

I am pregnant.

His mind already dizzy, she has sent it reeling. Then he  
closes his eyes. When he opens them he is cold:

ALFRED

Not by me.

SOFIE

You cannot know.

ALFRED

If the child is sickly, morose,  
with a liking for science, we might  
speak of it again. In the meantime,  
I recommend you find someone,  
perhaps even the father. You are  
still young. You will not want for  
money.

He goes into the next room and closes the door. Sofie sits on  
the bed, angry, miserable, then slowly realizes this is not  
just another row. She begins to cry.

INT. #53 AVE. MALAKOFF - STUDY - NIGHT

Frost on the windows. Alfred, in shirt-sleeves, is at his desk, surrounded by cartons of papers, ledgers and books. He is writing notes rapidly by hand.

Ludvig, also jacketless, comes in, bearing a wooden box of documents. He is fifty-seven and there is a heavy rasp to his voice:

LUDVIG

This is the last of Paul's personal records.

ALFRED

(rising)

Want something to eat?

LUDVIG

No. I thought when I retired to Nice, I'd get some good meals, but with this damned throat, it's syrup and gruel.

ALFRED

When I began digging through this mess, I thought it would be bread and water for me.

LUDVIG

Now at least you understand what it was like for father to lose decades of work in a moment.

ALFRED

I could hear his ghost laughing at me. It's what drove me back here to fight.

LUDVIG

Well, you've saved your empire, little brother. Though the depth of Paul's corruption would make a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

LUDVIG (cont'd)  
gangster blush!  
(clears throat)  
Now we can both go back to the  
sunshine and dread our ills.

ALFRED  
You know, Ludvig, I've always  
thought, "As soon as I get through  
this crisis, I'll be happy."

LUDVIG  
Then along came another crisis.

ALFRED  
Like endless chains of Alps! My  
life has not been about creating  
things that will bring the world  
together, but mountaineering!

LUDVIG  
(stops him)  
Alfred. Thanks in part to you, the  
world is coming together.

ALFRED  
Which is convenient for the  
generals. The roads built by  
Dynamite move armies, not culture!

LUDVIG  
You blame yourself for warfare?

ALFRED  
Only for doing nothing about it.

LUDVIG  
What about this peace movement of  
yours?

ALFRED  
It's not mine, Ludvig. They are  
believers. Passionate... And so  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED (cont'd)  
naive. I can give them money,  
cheerfully, but not commitment.

LUDVIG  
You're the inventor, little  
brother. Invent something that will  
make your dreams come true.

He finally gets a smile from Alfred.

ALFRED  
I'm glad you're here, Ludvig. It  
feels good to be known, and not  
taken too seriously!  
(takes his arm)  
Let's get you some gruel.

Arm in arm, the brothers start for the door.

EXT. SHORELINE - SAN REMO, ITALY - DAY

CAMERA PANS across the facades of the great estates facing  
the sea. It comes at last to the villa of Alfred Nobel.

Looking older than his fifty-six years, Alfred stands on one  
of the paths, giving gestured instructions to a gardener.

SAN REMO, ITALY  
1888

In the background, DOCTOR FALCONI, a middle-aged physician  
with intelligent eyes and a smile for the ladies, comes out  
of the house. Spying Alfred, he dodges through the line of  
crates and boxes being carried into the house and crosses the  
garden to join him:

DOCTOR FALCONI  
Still not settled, I see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Hello, Doctor. Do you have a verdict? My French physicians tell me the news is bad.

DOCTOR FALCONI

French law says you are guilty until proven innocent. Their medicine is the same: one is dead until proven alive!

ALFRED

What's the Italian verdict?

DOCTOR FALCONI

We are not so quick to condemn here.

He leads Alfred to a stone bench beneath an arbor, takes his pulse, palpates his neck, etc., while:

ALFRED

I think I need more than optimism.

DOCTOR FALCONI

You could use a new heart, I can tell you. At least some new arteries. It means slowing down.

ALFRED

How much?

DOCTOR FALCONI

How long do you want to live? I'm prescribing Trinktin for the angina pain...

ALFRED

Trinktin?

DOCTOR FALCONI

You know the drug?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

It is the medical version of  
nitroglycerine.

The Doctor laughs, remembering Alfred's connection.

RAGNAR SOHLMAN

Alfred's assistant, arrives with some newspapers in hand.

ALFRED

Ah, Ragnar, shake hands with Doctor  
Falconi. We are discussing French  
law and Italian optimism. Something  
has happened?

Judging by the young man's face it is not good.

RAGNAR

There is a message from Nice, sir.

Alfred knows before the young man can tell him. He sags back  
releasing a long, sad, sigh:

ALFRED

Ludvig...

RAGNAR

Yes, but...

ALFRED

(to the Doctor)

My brother. The good bear... My  
protector as a boy... and man...

(to Ragnar)

It was that business with his  
throat?

RAGNAR

Yes, sir. I think you had better  
see the papers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Puzzled Alfred takes the newspaper from Sohlman's hand. He glances at the headline. Doesn't understand. Reads it again. Sohlman explains to Falconi:

RAGNAR

There has been a mistake. The newspapers thought it was our Mister Nobel who died...

THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE:

"MERCHANT OF DEATH SUCCUMBS"

And in smaller type below:

"Alfred Nobel, having amassed a huge fortune with the instruments of destruction, died today..."

ALFRED

turns his puzzled eyes to the two men:

ALFRED

"Merchant of Death?" Is this how I am known?

His face fills with revulsion as it begins to sink in.

EXT. ANDRIETTE NOBEL'S GARDEN - STOCKHOLM - DAY

OPEN CLOSE ON the black silk armband circling Alfred's sleeve. ANGLE WIDENS revealing Andriette's pleasant garden behind her pretty house. It is a warm afternoon. She is having tea with Alfred.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

1888

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Though in her mid-eighties, Andriette has remained a robust, quick-minded woman. Alfred is feeling both the death of his brother and the reports in the newspapers.

ANDRIETTE (V.O.)

"Merchant of Death!" How unfair!  
Your intentions were always  
peaceful!

ALFRED (V.O.)

Well we all know what the road to  
hell is paved with. My inventions  
are praised by murderers the world  
over, from the kings and presidents  
who assassinate nations, to the  
madmen and radicals who assassinate  
them!

ANDRIETTE

Please, Alfred...!

ALFRED

The world wants to commit suicide,  
Mother. And I, obviously, provide  
the ammunition.

ANDRIETTE

Stop it! You sound like your  
father!

He stares at her as though she had slapped him.

ANDRIETTE

Whenever his pride was hurt he  
railed against the world. You heard  
it often enough.

ALFRED

You think I'm such an egoist?

ANDRIETTE

Oh, I think you have your share.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He raises a hand. She is probably right.

ANDRIETTE

You have wealth and influence,  
Alfred, use it to let the world  
know your true beliefs. Fight.

ALFRED

I'm tired!

ANDRIETTE

Tired is an excuse for self pity!

Again he is brought up short. He glares, but must admit:

ALFRED

You are a formidable adversary.

ANDRIETTE

I am your ally. You are your own  
adversary.

ALFRED

Bertha von Suttner wants me to  
throw myself into the peace  
movement.

ANDRIETTE

I'm not sure what they do, except  
congratulate each other for being  
on the side of the angels.

ALFRED

I have to do something.

ANDRIETTE

Yes, you do. And I'll be interested  
to know what it is... if you don't  
take too long.

ALFRED

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANDRIETTE

I've overstayed myself, my dear.  
Being a widow is one thing, but  
Emile, Robert, and now Ludvig are  
gone... It is not only painful to  
outlive one's children, it is  
unseemly.

He might argue with her, but there is no morbidity in her words, no lack of affection. She pours more tea, smiles at him. It is a beautiful day in the garden.

EXT. A LARGE HOTEL - BERNE, SWITZERLAND - DAY

A discreet placard near the door announces:

LAST DAY  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE

It is quiet. A horse rattles its harness.

BERNE, SWITZERLAND  
JUNE, 1892

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

CLOSE ON THE AUDITORIUM DOORS bursting open. A ROAR OF VOICES, excited people cascade through the door into the lobby. They are cheering their champion:

THE BARONESS VON SUTTNER

who is beaming, beautiful, accepting accolades.

Pushing toward her is the HOTEL CONCIERGE, an impeccable Swiss with a Van Dyke beard and a polished bald head. He hands her a note. She pauses to read it, then:



EXT. HOTEL VERANDAH

Wicker furniture, white-jacketed waiters and, discreetly in a corner, sits a very tired and gray Alfred Nobel. Still, the eyes are lively, and seeing Bertha, he rises.

ALFRED

Baroness, you are a gifted and  
impassioned orator.

BERTHA

And you are naughty, Alfred, not  
telling us you were here.

ALFRED

I was in the gallery.  
(mysteriously)  
Incognito. You really must do  
something with those people who  
drone on about statistics.

Bertha laughs, and takes the chair he holds for her.

ALFRED

Your speech was worth everything.

BERTHA

I'm so glad you came. Does it mean  
you will join us?

ALFRED

Honestly? I have reservations.

BERTHA

I'm sorry you feel that way...

ALFRED

Convince me otherwise. Please.

BERTHA

We've had great success so far...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Banquets and long speeches will not end wars, Bertha. To ask even a well-intentioned government to disarm is fantasy...

BERTHA

President Harrison supports us fully. He sent a cable...

ALFRED

Did he say America would disarm?

(she cannot answer)

Bertha, I've amassed a fortune. And fought to keep it. I want it used well.

BERTHA

What could be better than peace?

ALFRED

Nothing. But I don't want it dwindled away renting halls and sending letters.

BERTHA

You seem to want some kind of formula that can be proven in a test-tube. Peace must appeal to the conscience and heart.

ALFRED

I've seen too many consciences and hearts, including my own, slide into disuse when money and power are at stake.

BERTHA

Your recurring disease is showing again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED

Cynicism. I don't want to die with  
it.

He takes her hand, holds it tightly and she knows he truly  
fears it.

EXT. VIENNA - A MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The houses are small, but well-kept and pretty. Alfred shrugs  
off the cab driver's helping hand and slowly walks down the  
flower-lined path to the front door of one of the little  
cottages.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

AUGUST, 1894

He raps at the door. A moment, then it swings open revealing  
an astonished Sofie.

SOFIE

Alfred...

ALFRED

Hello, Sofie. May I come in?

She steps back warily, admitting him to:

INT. SOFIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Like Sofie, everything is small and tidy. She is older,  
heavier in the hips. It is not unnatural and certainly not  
unattractive. It is Alfred who is deteriorating. He looks so  
gray and frail, she moves to take his arm, but hesitates,  
still worried about why he is here:

SOFIE

I didn't overspend this month,  
Alfred...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED

I have not come to upbraid you.

(blows out a breath)

I suppose you have come to expect  
it. What a sad way for us to end.

She is off balance anyway and this is an ominous word:

SOFIE

End?

But if she wants an explanation, he does not give it. Only:

ALFRED

No upbraiding. No recriminations.  
We have shared too many years, too  
many intimacies, for that.

SOFIE

I have become fat.

ALFRED

You are lush.

Pleased that he will still flatter her, she takes his hand:

SOFIE

Come and sit down.

(suddenly)

Would you like to see her?

And just as suddenly she realizes how charged this might be.  
But he smiles at her confusion, touches her face to show he  
doesn't mind. In fact:

ALFRED

I would very much like to see her.

She leads him to the back where windows overlook the garden,  
which she has made inviting with flowers and shade trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A LITTLE GIRL

romps on the garden path with an apple-cheeked nanny.

ALFRED AND SOFIE

watch her for a long moment.

ALFRED

She is like you.

Sofie knows this is a complement. Nevertheless she is worried for Alfred and leads him to a comfortable chair. But he does not sit. Instead:

ALFRED

There is a trust account in your name, so the allowance will continue when I die.

SOFIE

You have talked about dying since the day we met.

ALFRED

It is not talk now, Sofie.

SOFIE

You need more rest, that's all...

ALFRED

It is time to make amends.

SOFIE

Oh silly, there's...

ALFRED

You were right about me. I want you to know that. I demanded, cruelly, incessantly, that you be someone you could not be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SOFIE

I don't like this, Alfred...!

ALFRED

I never really allowed you to know  
how much your joy and sweetness  
meant to me.

SOFIE

I looked up to you so, Alfred. I do  
still. I know I was young and  
stupid and a terrible spender, but  
I loved you always.

They look into each other's faces for such a long time. Then  
with reluctance, Alfred turns and goes to the door. She  
rushes to open it for him, then clings to his frail  
shoulders. He wants to say something. Everything. He kisses  
her. Good-bye.

ALFRED

Little troll.

...and he is walking painfully up the path toward the waiting  
cab. Both know they will not see each other again.

EXT. SAN REMO ESTATE - NIGHT

It is late. A light burns in the laboratory window.

SAN REMO, ITALY

JANUARY, 1895

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Alfred is standing by a wide rack which is draped with a bolt  
of shiny material. He is making some notes, when Sohlman  
ENTERS:

ALFRED

It is late?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAGNAR

Past three.

Sohlman says nothing, but Alfred understands that it is time for sleep. He starts toward the door, gesturing at the cloth, smiling:

ALFRED

You know we will soon have an artificial silk.

RAGNAR

This is amusing?

ALFRED

It is made from the same material as smokeless powder and...

The sudden pain in his left chest and arm is so violent, it almost knocks him down. Sohlman rushes to support him.

ALFRED

(when he can)

My pocket...

Sohlman, one arm around Alfred's shoulders, thrusts the other into his side jacket pocket, withdraws a box of small pills. Alfred fumbles one out and puts it beneath his tongue. He is gasping with the pain.

RAGNAR

I'll call the doctor...

ALFRED

No, the pill will do it.

As his breathing eases, he nods and Sohlman helps him rise. As they move toward the door:

ALFRED

Would you fetch my writing case, please? I want to send a letter to the Baroness. Right away.

EXT. SAN REMO ESTATE - GARDEN - DAY

Sohlman leads Bertha down to the arbor by the shore. In its shade Alfred sits at a table, wrapped in a blanket, obviously very ill. She is shocked at his appearance. But he is delighted to see her, and though he cannot stand, he takes her hands in his:

ALFRED

Be truthful, you have discovered  
some youth elixir.

(and)

Thank you for coming.

BERTHA

(kissing his cheek)

Your letter seemed so urgent...

ALFRED

There is work to do. I am writing  
my will.

BERTHA

I think you need a lawyer, not a  
peace advocate.

ALFRED

I need an intelligent friend.

(hands her some papers)

I think I've found a way at last.

ALFRED AND BERTHA - LATER

She is scanning the papers. Now reads:

BERTHA

"For those who have done the most  
for the cause of peace, yearly  
prizes will be awarded..."

(looks up)

Prizes?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ALFRED

Not as inducements, Bertha,  
acknowledgments, tangible  
recognition, telling the world of  
the good these people do.

BERTHA

Yes, I see... It's good, Alfred.  
Very good. But what happens when  
the estate is spent?

ALFRED

It won't be. Apart from personal  
bequests, the money will be held in  
trust and the prizes paid from the  
interest.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alfred, Bertha and Sohlman at the table, food forgotten as:

BERTHA

No, no, this is your will, Alfred.  
Your testament. I think it must go  
farther and reflect as much of you  
as possible, not just peace, but  
all the things you value.

EXT. THE GARDENS - DAY

A lusty young Gardener and a pretty Maid are about to slip  
behind some greenery, when the girl looks across to see:

THE ARBOR

where Alfred and Bertha are deep in conversation. She has  
made a list:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

Chemistry, Physics, Medicine,  
Literature...

ALFRED

Are you sure prizes in these fields  
won't dilute the central idea?

BERTHA

I don't think so. You're offering  
recognition, not just for peace,  
but to all those who have vision.

EXT. THE SHORE - DAY

Alfred and Bertha are walking together along the beach,  
silhouetted against the glitter of the water:

ALFRED

Sweden and Norway are stable  
governments, which is saying  
something these days. Executing the  
will, prize selection, everything  
should be handled there.

BERTHA

Are you sure you want Mister  
Sohlman to be the executor? He's  
very young...

ALFRED

He's very bright.

EXT. THE ESTATE - VERANDAH - TWILIGHT

They are sitting on the comfortable chairs. Relaxed. The  
document is before them, hand written, annotated, ready for a  
final draft. She smiles at him:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERTHA

It is a beautiful document, Alfred.  
Are you satisfied?

ALFRED

Relieved.

BERTHA

And what now?

ALFRED

I'll spend as much time as my  
health allows in the laboratory.

BERTHA

Are there friends nearby?

ALFRED

Sohlman is good company and the  
servants are kind.

BERTHA

Are you lonely?

ALFRED

I am used to it.

There is no self pity in it. He has become an accepting man.  
Bertha takes his hand. There is a contentment about them now.  
Old friends.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

Alfred ENTERS, pulls up a chair and reaches for a mechanical  
drawing of a machine part.

SAN REMO, ITALY  
DECEMBER 10, 1896

Alfred is beginning to study the drawing, when he turns his  
head slightly, blinks his eyes, hard, as though trying to  
clear them. His hand goes to his temple, massaging it almost

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

absently. Then the pain explodes in his head, stunning him. He starts to rise, but his legs won't hold him. He sits in the chair, his eyes are puzzled. Then he seems to realize what is happening. He lets it come.

Slowly he puts his head on the blotter, as though to sleep.

HOLD THIS SCENE A LONG MOMENT, THEN:

LOGO:

ALFRED NOBEL IS NO LONGER REMEMBERED AS "THE MERCHANT OF DEATH." TODAY HIS NAME IS USED IN EVERY LANGUAGE AS A SYNONYM FOR THE BEST THAT WE ARE; FOR OUR ASPIRATIONS TOWARD EXCELLENCE, VISION, SERVICE AND, MOST OF ALL, PEACE.

UNDER CREDITS, we see the long list of Nobel Prize winners, beginning in 1899 with the award to the RED CROSS.

CAMERA will note and HOLD the name of BERTHA VON SUTTNER, who received the Peace Prize in 1905.

Among the other Nobel Laureates are many we will recognize:

JIMMY CARTER	ALBERT EINSTEIN
UNICEF	RUDYARD KIPLING
MARTIN LUTHER KING	WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
LINUS PAULING	MARIE CURIE
SAMUEL BECKETT	JOHN STEINBECK
ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN	WILLIAM FAULKNER
ANATOLE FRANCE	GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL	JEAN-PAUL SARTE
ANWAR SADAT	WOODROW WILSON
MENACHEM BEGIN	ALBERT SCHWEITZER
MOTHER TERESA	THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THE LIST GOES ON AND ON, A REMINDER FROM A LONELY MAN THAT DESPITE THE MADNESS IN THE WORLD, THERE IS PROGRESS AND THERE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IS HOPE.

FADE OUT:

THE END