

**"LIBERTY"**

by

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# LIBERTY

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EXT. COLMAR, FRENCH BORDER - DAY

A forest overlooking rutted fields, and the distant sleepy village of Colmar. A morning mist hangs over the whole scene.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The year is 1870. Here we are in the sleepy French border village of Colmar, famous for absolutely nothing. Not even a cheese. France has declared War on Germany over some bullshit or other. Nobody really remembers.

Two KIDS hunt RABBITS with CATAPULTS. We'll call them PATRICE and THIERRY but these names have no historical accuracy.

BAM! Patrice kills a rabbit. Hoists it up by its hind legs. Really happy with himself for a whole second. Then -

He sees movement at the treeline of the forest. And the smile leaves his face. His friend Thierry, doing nothing to dispel our assumptions about French bravery, is already RUNNING back to the village.

We turn to see what is making Patrice look so horrified.

A LINE of GERMAN CAVALRY appears at the treeline. Over a hundred Hussars with LANCES and SWORDS and fantastic uniforms, astride huge Hanoverian war-horses.

An ARTILLERY TEAM brings forward a GUN CARRIAGE and prepares the terrifying weapon for imminent use.

Patrice looks at the ARTILLERY CANNON. Then back to his sleepy little village of Colmar that never did anything wrong except being built right here on the damned border. He drops the rabbit. And RACES back home, screaming...

PATRICE

Maman! Maman! The Germans! The Germans are here!

We hold on the German OFFICER IN CHARGE, grim faced, confident. He lights a cigar. Looks over to his gun crew.

## OFFICER IN CHARGE

Wake them up.

BOOM! Patrice hits the dirt as a CANNON SHELL hurtles overhead and KABLAM! - destroys a CHICKEN COOP. Really annihilates that thing. Feathers, beaks, eggs. SPLAT.

EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE, COLMAR - DAY

Mist cloaked streets. A definite sense of DREAD. Men gather with whatever WEAPONS they possess.

These are no soldiers. They are farmers, butchers, builders, accountants - armed with rifles, pistols, scythes, meat cleavers, garlic breath.

All are MOUNTED on a range of ragtag horses of various provenance and size. The best of them is tired old nag.

Riding down this line of unimpressive "military" might is BERTRAND, leader of the LOCAL MILITIA.

## BERTRAND

Gentlemen, the enemy is upon us. Let us show these German invaders what we are made of: steel, determination, passion. You ride to glory. Farewell.

A BUTCHER with a heavy moustache and heavier belly asks -

## BUTCHER

Farewell? Are you not coming with us?

## BERTRAND

I must take important information on the enemy to the Militia Headquarters in the next town, 20 miles away. I put you under the command of...

He looks down the line and his gaze alights upon a TALL MAN in a greatcoat with a rifle over his shoulder and a SWORD in his hand.

Handsome, he carries himself with the bravado of a man who has yet to face a speeding cannonball. This is...

## BERTRAND (CONT'D)

Frederic Bartholdi.

## NARRATOR (V.O.)

Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. History will not record his military exploits.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But this is his story, nonetheless. And it is absolutely incredible.

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS, COLMAR - DAY

The Horsemen Militia rides through narrow cobbled streets.

Elderly women shutter their windows. A PRIEST crosses himself. Frederic leads the militia with a mixture of pride, determination, and abject terror.

FREDERIC

When they see we mean business, they will run all the way back to Berlin.

BUTCHER

I don't think so.

FREDERIC

Frankfurt then.

BUTCHER

Rumor is the Germans are winning.

FREDERIC

Strasbourg. They will definitely run as far as Strasbourg. If not further.

Unknown to Frederic, as the militia ride through the village, several of the men PEEL OFF down alleyways in the mist and ABANDON the unit.

By the time Frederic leads them to the remains of the Chicken Coop on the edge of town -

It's just him and the Butcher.

BUTCHER

We should surrender.

FREDERIC

Never. My father's motto was never give up, no matter what the obstacle. Never underestimate the power of the human spirit. We have freedom, liberty, and fraternity on our side.

BUTCHER

They have a cannon.

FREDERIC

Are you with me?

BUTCHER

You're an artist. A sculptor. You don't know how to fight.

FREDERIC

I said are you with me?

BUTCHER

No. You're on your own.

(A beat)

Your mother always says what a fool you are. She wishes you could be smart. Like your brother. So long, Frederic.

He turns and rides back into the village. The mist swallows him.

Frederic sees the rutted field before him. Then the forest. And the line of German Hussars. The morning sun glints off their swords.

Frederic raises his own sword. Kicks his horse onwards. And bellows like a madman...

FREDERIC

ATTACK!!! ATTACK!!!

Alone, Frederic CHARGES towards the German line, where -

The German Officer In Charge turns to his Gun Crew. They share a look. He shrugs.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

Fire.

They adjust the aim of the Cannon. And fire. BOOM!

The shell SCREEEEEAMS towards Frederic and -

EXPLODES ten yards IN FRONT. His horse STUMBLES and THROWS Frederic from the saddle.

He FLIES through the cloud of MUD and dirt kicked up by the exploding shell and LANDS face down in a pool of filthy water. Dead.

The German Officer In Charge LAUGHS. And all his men laugh with him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This would not be the most humiliating moment of Frederic's life. Far worse had already happened.

EXT. PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Establishing. The silvery swathe of the Seine, choked with river traffic, cuts through the city just like it has for the past 12,000 years.

The city is much the same as we know it now except for the lack of its most famous monument. It will be another 29 years till Monsieur EIFFEL builds his tower.

We drop down to the bustle of street level merchants and carters. Here, we find...

Frederic driving a cart. Sitting beside him is his much older friend and assistant, SIMON (56).

Simon has the air of a human Bassett Hound. Grey hair, grey clothes, grey skin; he would probably drink grey brandy if he could find it.

They have a SCULPTURE draped in a TARP standing upright on the back of the cart. Over twelve feet tall, it draws the attention of everyone they pass.

SIMON

This is the most important exhibition in Paris. It's an honor just to be invited.

FREDERIC

I'm not going there to just make up the numbers. The critics will marvel at my sculpture, and award me the Medal of Excellence.

SIMON

Best just to treat it as a showcase, it being your first time.

FREDERIC

I won't hear that defeatist talk, Simon. It's glory or goodbye.

SIMON

I'd rather get a buyer than a medal. All your money is tied up in this statue.

FREDERIC

No. No. No. Artistic validation and appreciation first. Money second.

SIMON

I'm just a humble, somewhat cynical, artist's assistant. I can't buy a bottle of brandy with appreciation.

FREDERIC

Appreciation will attract a higher level of client, richer commissions, and buy you a whole barrel of brandy.

He gestures over his shoulder to their cargo.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

When they see my bronze of General Rapp, everything will fall into place. Trust me. I have invested everything in a future I have planned with a very high degree of precision.

EXT. SALON DES ARTS, PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A wooden CRANE and PULLEY system LOWERS the covered statue onto a LOW TROLLEY for transport INTO the EXHIBITION HALL.

A crowd surrounds Frederic, eager to see his work. Critics and fellow artists gather, hoping they will have something to ridicule. They will not be disappointed.

FREDERIC

Ladies and Gentlemen, please be patient. My patriotic masterpiece will be revealed inside.

The PORTERS haul the heavy covered statue, on its plinth, on the low trolley - to the massive double doors of the Exhibition Hall where -

A gasp rises from the crowd.

Frederic looks up at his creation, and the doorway, with growing horror.

SIMON

Planned with a very high degree of precision, you said?

The twelve foot statue is TOO TALL to fit through the ten foot doorway. Two feet too tall.

CRITIC

What a pity that nobody will see your work, Bartholdi. It's probably a blessing. I hear your style is unoriginal, predictable and populist.

Simon turns to Frederic. In urgent whispers...

SIMON

I can take it back to the workshop and  
cut two feet off the plinth.

FREDERIC

Then it won't be a plinth. It'll be a  
coaster. I'm dying here, Simon.

SIMON

You're not. But your career is.

Frederic heads to the Crane operators...

FREDERIC

I need you to lift it back onto the cart.

CRANE OPERATOR

I need you to pay me.

FREDERIC

I don't have the money right now.

CRANE OPERATOR

Then you don't have the crane right now.

FREDERIC

I didn't expect to be taking the statue  
away today. I can pay tomorrow.

CRANE OPERATOR

Sounds good. I'll move it tomorrow.

As the crowd and critics LAUGH at Frederic's disaster,  
the Porters demand an answer...

PORTERS

Where do you want it?

Frederic reluctantly points to a spot in the Square.

EXT. SALON DES ARTS, PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

No crowd. No critics. Nobody at all.

Frederic sits at the bottom of his statue, drinking the  
last of the brandy with Simon.

Frederic looks up at his tarp covered statue. Then has an  
idea. He UNTIES the ropes that secure the tarp and -

REVEALS his BRONZE SCULPTURE of Napoleonic War Hero  
General Rapp. It's really rather good. Not spectacular.  
But certainly not awful. He salutes the statue.

FREDERIC

There you are, a hero of France, a hero of the Revolution. And here I am, the idiot who didn't measure the size of the doorway. You fought for liberty. I fight for a decent review in the newspaper. Someone to like my work. To like me.

A stray dog arrives. And takes a leak on the statue.

SIMON

Everyone's a bloody critic.

Frederic gathers the tarpaulin, hoists it over his shoulder, and heads off into the night with Simon.

EXT. VICTOR HUGO'S HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

An elegant row of imposing Townhouses.

Frederic pauses.

SIMON

You can't knock on his door. This is home of the Victor Hugo. The greatest writer in France. The Hunchback of Notre Dame. He'll have you arrested.

FREDERIC

If he says he likes the statue, I'm golden.

SIMON

He's a miserable old misery. His face is miserable. His life is miserable. His books are miserable. He won't like your statue because he doesn't like anything.

Frederic has STUFFED the tarpaulin up the back of his jacket to create a HUNCHBACK. He lopes up the steps to Victor Hugo's door. And rings the doorbell.

Frederic turns to Simon and pretends to be the monster. In a "Hunchback" voice -

FREDERIC

The bells! The bells!

Off Simon's aghast look... Frederic turns. The door is open. A very small and miserable Victor Hugo stands there in his dressing gown. Frederic offers his hand...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Frederic Bartholdi, artist, sculptor, big  
big fan. I wondered if you might...

VICTOR HUGO

No. I absolutely won't. But if you come  
near me or my home again I will have you  
arrested, and shot.

He slams the door in Frederic's face.

EXT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A rundown old building. One side is the studio, one side  
is an attached house. He works in the studio, lives in  
the house with his long-widowed, long-suffering MOTHER.

Simon opens the door for Frederic. Pushes him inside.  
Then continues down the street.

We hold on the building as night turns to day.

EXT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A very dapper gentleman arrives carrying breakfast. This  
is CHARLES BARTHOLDI, older brother, successful lawyer,  
definitely not the fuck-up of the family.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We follow Charles through the chaos of the studio - a  
large open space divided by curtains into separate areas.  
Sunlight streams in through skylight windows.

Charles pauses to admire sketches pinned to the wall -  
NUDES of beautiful women. He takes one. Rolls it up. And  
slips it into his jacket pocket.

He follows the sound of snoring to where Frederic has  
collapsed on a divan, one shoe on, one shoe off.

He pushes drawing materials and clay aside and lays out  
breakfast on a long work-table. Then sprinkles PEPPER on  
Frederic's sleeping face. Frederic wakes - sneezing.

FREDERIC

Charles? Charles!

CHARLES

You missed breakfast. By half a day.

FREDERIC

If you've come to tell me I'm a disaster  
I am already aware. Has Mother heard?

CHARLES

Unfortunately.

Frederic groans.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

There's probably a limit to how much  
disappointment she can take, Frederic.

FREDERIC

Did you bring Brandy?

CHARLES

Baguettes. And a reluctant offer.

Frederic sits up with his head in his hands.

FREDERIC

My head hurts.

CHARLES

Your finances are in a good deal more  
pain, little brother. Everything Father  
left you is gone.

(A beat...)

There's a position, at my law practice. A  
very junior position with a minuscule  
salary. Think about it.

LATER...

Frederic sits huddled in the bath, smoking, drinking. He  
lowers his head UNDER the water. And keeps it there. Eyes  
open. Watching SMOKE bubbles leave his mouth.

A shadowy figure appears above him. A hand reaches down  
into the water, GRABS him by his beard, and yanks him up.

It's Simon.

SIMON

Get dressed.

EXT. SALON DES ARTS, PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Simon leads Frederic through the crowd. They PASS the  
open doors to the Salon, and head to the Square where -

Hundreds of people are gathered around Frederic's grand new bronze statue of General Rapp. The crowd sings patriotic songs.

SIMON

Here he is. Here's the artist. Here's Bartholdi.

The crowd turns to welcome Frederic and switches its chant to -

CROWD

Bartholdi! Bartholdi!

Frederic is scooped up onto the shoulders of men and taken on a short tour around General Rapp.

A very distinguished older gentleman approaches Frederic.

Lowered to the ground amid more congratulations, the older man offers his hand. This is LABOULAYE.

LABOULAYE

Monsieur Bartholdi?

FREDERIC

Please, Frederic.

LABOULAYE

I am Laboulaye. A lawyer, and Government Advisor. I knew your father. This is a fine work, Frederic.

FREDERIC

Thank you.

LABOULAYE

In hard times, people need a symbol of something good, something great. An ideal. A rallying point. There will never be a Frenchman as great as General Rapp.

FREDERIC

If only the Arts Commission gave medals for works outside of the Salon.

LABOULAYE

You don't need a medal. You have this.

He hands Frederic an envelope sealed with wax.

LABOULAYE (CONT'D)

I'll see you at seven.

Laboulaye leaves. Frederic OPENS the envelope. INSIDE, it's an INVITATION to...

FREDERIC  
A Dinner for Artists and Intellectuals.

SIMON  
And you.

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Frederic smartens the line of his clothes, and takes the steps up to the front door of this imposing villa. A BUTLER ushers him inside.

INT. PARLOUR, LABOULAYE MANSION - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Patriotic paintings adorn the walls. Sombre portraits.

Cigar smoke hangs heavy around a table laid with canapes and fine wines. A centerpiece of roses is decorated with the FLAGS of France and the USA.

There are twenty or more men gathered here in LOUD and animated conversation. Laboulaye welcomes Frederic to the gathering and makes introductions.

Frederic joins a card table where Laboulaye holds court with intellectuals including the US AMBASSADOR to FRANCE.

LABOULAYE  
Mr. Ambassador, we are impressed with how your Civil War has brought an end to oppression in your country.

US AMBASSADOR  
Now we can look forward to a long period of stability, growth, and prosperity.

LABOULAYE  
France has much to learn from the success of your great Republic.

US AMBASSADOR  
We owe our nationhood to France. We held firm against the British. But it was our Gallic ally who pushed us on to victory.

LABOULAYE  
The Government has asked me to find ways to bring our nations closer together again.

US AMBASSADOR  
What do you have in mind?

LABOULAYE  
I open it to the table for suggestions.

INTELLECTUAL #1  
Perhaps a Parade of French Culture in  
Washington?

INTELLECTUAL #2  
Or a special flag for public buildings,  
where one side is the Stars and Stripes,  
and the other side is the Tricolor?

INTELLECTUAL #3  
We could commission a new symphony from  
Bizet, or Berlioz, or Chopin?

INTELLECTUAL #1  
Chopin is Polish.

INTELLECTUAL #3  
He sounds French and so does his music.

FREDERIC  
The greater challenge is that Chopin is  
dead. I think we should build a statue, a  
lasting monument to our long friendship,  
mutual admiration, and freedom.

Everyone turns to him, and considers the proposal for the  
most fleeting of moments before...

ALL  
That's a terrible idea.

US AMBASSADOR  
Agreed. It'll never take off.  
(A beat...)  
But the flag could work.

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Frederic uses his artist charm on a SERVANT GIRL on the  
rear terrace. He strokes her face, tracing the light from  
the parlor window on her skin.

FREDERIC  
You have a wonderful profile. You must  
sit for me. Soon. Tonight.

LABOULAYE (O.S.)

Run along, Emilie.

Frederic and the Servant Girl, EMILIE, turn to see Laboulaye exit the Parlor French Windows.

She curtsies and scurries away. Frederic pours himself another glass of wine, all the way to the brim.

LABOULAYE (CONT'D)

You may want to cast your eye somewhere other than Emilie. She has a history.

FREDERIC

What would be the fun if she didn't?

LABOULAYE

She has been arrested. She's an activist in the Women's Movement. She is literally unemployable. Only here as a favor to her poor father, an old friend.

FREDERIC

I like strong women. They can catch me when I fall, from drink or boredom.

LABOULAYE

They're still discussing ideas. Each one progressively worse than the last.

FREDERIC

Perhaps a new Symphony from a dead Chopin is the best of them after all.

LABOULAYE

No. Your monument is the best. It has gravitas, presence, longevity.

FREDERIC

It has no chance of getting funded. Who am I? So new to the scene. So lacking in weight and commissions.

LABOULAYE

This will change. I have a proposal.

We hold on Frederic's intrigue...

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

In the garden, Frederic sketches the portrait of Laboulaye as he sits stoic and composed.

In the background, Frederic is amused by the flirtatious to and fro of the servant girl Emilie. She waves. He waves. Laboulaye turns but...

FREDERIC

Eyes front, sir, please. You must not break the pose.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, BACK STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We move past a BUST of Laboulaye, carved from clay, and fairly expertly at that. Pinned to boards around the bust are many sketches of the man made by Frederic.

Beyond this bust...

Emilie, the Servant Girl, poses on the divan, loosely draped in velvet. Frederic stands at an easel, sketching, drinking, smoking, and striking heroic artist poses. He's having FUN.

EMILIE

Can I see?

FREDERIC

Not yet. I'm working on the nose. It's the hardest part. A nose completes the face like no other detail.

EMILIE

They say I have a pretty nose.

FREDERIC

They say a lot of things about you.

EMILIE

It's no shame to be arrested for what you believe is right. Laws are often wrong.

FREDERIC

Not surprising when they're written by men.

She smiles. She likes this artist.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

And you do have a pretty nose, fine lips, intoxicating eyes, and splendid tits. I can't wait to play with them.

EMILIE

You're a very naughty boy.

An ice-cold sobering female VOICE from the shadows wipes the smile from Frederic's face. This is his MOTHER...

MOTHER

Oh, he's much more than that, dear. He's debauched, a drunk, a debtor, and a drain on his Mother's spirits and finances.

Emilie blushes and covers herself.

FREDERIC

Emilie, might I introduce my dear Mother. Mother, this is Emilie, my muse.

MOTHER

Goodbye, dear.

Emilie gathers her clothes and bustles out. Frederic's Mother replaces her on the divan. Perched. Not sprawled. She carries a small paper bag of pastries.

FREDERIC

They smell wonderful.

MOTHER

Madelines, for your brother.

FREDERIC

I love Madelines.

MOTHER

You love Madelines, and Virginies, and Clarices, and Emilies, and oh, I lose track of all your... muses.

FREDERIC

Have you seen my General Rapp?

MOTHER

I saw him in real life. Charles tells me you have earned some commissions from it?

FREDERIC

Starting with a bust of Laboulaye. He's a very important Government Advisor.

MOTHER

I hope you'll be responsible with your earnings, like your brother Charles.

FREDERIC

I will spend my good fortune on fine wine and fine women. The rest, I admit, I will probably squander.

MOTHER

This is no time for jokes. There's talk of War with Germany.

FREDERIC

There's always talk of War with Germany.

MOTHER

I forbid you to enlist. You are not suited to a fight, Frederic. You lack the necessary backbone.

EXT. COLMAR, FRENCH BORDER - DAY (NOW)

We're back in that field outside the village.

Frederic is FACE DOWN in MUD, dead. His horse BOLTS back to the village. At the treeline, the German Hussars are still laughing. Then...

Frederic lifts himself from death, from the mud, from the humiliation of his disastrous solo battle charge. He stands on unsteady feet, retrieves his BROKEN SWORD from the dirt, and sets off towards the Germans.

Defiant. Delusional. He stops, exhausted, smack bang in front of the German Field Cannon.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

What the Hell are you doing?

FREDERIC

I've come to accept your surrender.

The Gun Crew look to their Officer, smirking. He gives them the nod. They LIGHT THE FUSE on the cannon. This is going to get very messy, very soon.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Leave now and I will not pursue you.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

You won't chase us away?

FREDERIC

You have my word.

OFFICER IN CHARGE

Why do you risk your life like this? What are you fighting for?

The cannon fuse burns lower. The end is nigh.

FREDERIC

For my village. For Liberty, Fraternity, and the other one. For the weak against the strong. For my awful friend Claude, the Butcher. For my perfect brother, Charles. For my Mother, in our summer cottage, baking Madelines.

The Officer In Charge steps forward on his horse, and SLASHES down with his sword -

Cutting the fuse just before it can light the gunpowder. There's visible disappointment from the Gun Crew.

EXT. COLMAR, FRENCH BORDER - DAY

The morning mist rises to reveal a village wrapped in silent terror.

Frederic, wrists tied before him, marches at the head of the German Hussars. Frightened villagers watch from behind closed shutters, too scared to show their faces.

Frederic KNOCKS on the door of a quaint painted cottage. His Mother's stern face appears as it opens.

FREDERIC

I made a deal with the Germans.

MOTHER

What kind of deal?

FREDERIC

They won't kill anybody and they won't destroy our village. However...

INT. BARTHOLDI COTTAGE, COLMAR - DAY

The German Officer In Charge sits at the kitchen table with Frederic. His Mother brings a plate of freshly baked Madelines. The German savors the sweet vanilla cake.

Frederic reaches for one too, but his Mother SLAPS his hand away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The War ends quickly with an absolute German victory. They kick French ass. Eat French cakes. Steal French cash. And take French land. This little French village becomes a little German village. France plunges into economic crisis.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A new Republic is formed. And Frederic returns to Paris to continue his unspectacular sculptor career.

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - DAY

A loud and passionate debate spills out of an open window. We enter into...

INT. PARLOUR, LABOULAYE MANSION - DAY

The same gathering of artists and intellectuals. Only now they all have drawings and plans of their various ridiculous ideas.

LABOULAYE

France is on its knees. Now, more than ever, we need American support, American friendship, American trade.

INTELLECTUAL #1

Except the Americans are back in bed with the stinking British.

INTELLECTUAL #2

They kiss the backside of the Industrial Revolution, they adore all those British inventions, British machines, and those filthy British factories.

INTELLECTUAL #3

We need to invent something. Americans go crazy for new things.

INTELLECTUAL #1

We invent many things. Photography, pasteurization, the Metric System...

LABOULAYE

They hate the Metric System.

FREDERIC

We need to excite them in French way, with passion, with spirit, with elan. We need a symbol of...

INTELLECTUAL #1

If you suggest a bloody statue again I will punch you in the face.

LABOULAYE

I liked the idea.

INTELLECTUAL #2

The only thing a little statue will  
excite is the pigeon who shits on it.

FREDERIC

I don't want to build a little statue.  
(A beat)  
I want to build a big one.

INTELLECTUAL #3

How big?

FREDERIC

Twenty or maybe even thirty feet high.

INTELLECTUAL #2

And who will this statue be of? George  
Washington, I presume?

INTELLECTUAL #1

It should be Lafayette. Without  
Lafayette, there would be no America.

INTELLECTUAL #2

Washington AND Lafayette together.

INTELLECTUAL #3

Shaking hands.

INTELLECTUAL #2

A symbol of French and American unity.

INTELLECTUAL #3

Thirty feet high.

INTELLECTUAL #1

We should make Lafayette taller. Thirty  
one feet high.

INTELLECTUAL #3

Lafayette was not a tall man.

INTELLECTUAL #1

It's a symbol. Accuracy is not important.

LABOULAYE

Frederic? You are the sculptor.

FREDERIC

I have a better idea.

He lays out some sketches from a portfolio. The sketches  
show a SLAVE WOMAN with one hand outstretched above her,  
and RAYS OF LIGHT coming out of her TIARA.

INTELLECTUAL #1

What in God's name is this excremental mess?

FREDERIC

It's a Fellah, an Egyptian slave. It was a proposal I designed for Egypt, to place at the head of the Suez Canal.

INTELLECTUAL #2

And what has an Egyptian slave got to do with France, with America?

INTELLECTUAL #1

More to the point, what the actual heck is coming out of her face?

FREDERIC

Light. It's a lighthouse AND a statue. She's a symbol of the oppressed who...

LABOULAYE

Slaves are not a good symbol for America.

INTELLECTUAL #3

They want to forget they had slaves and did terrible terrible things to them for hundreds of years.

INTELLECTUAL #1

Yes. How is a thirty foot high reminder of American slavery ever a good idea?

FREDERIC

It needs some work, I admit.

INTELLECTUAL #2

It needs throwing on the fire.

INTELLECTUAL #3

A statue, a monument, is a shit idea.

INTELLECTUAL #1

An expensive shit idea.

INTELLECTUAL #2

How would you pay for this giant turd of a statue?

FREDERIC

The usual way, with donations from wealthy patrons.

## INTELLECTUAL #1

We chopped most of their heads off a hundred years ago. The wealthy are broke. The whole country is broke. We can't afford bread, never mind statues.

## FREDERIC

I'll make drawings. I'll inspire people.

The group mulls over his words, considering the options. Lots of meaningful looks, then...

## INTELLECTUAL #2

I still like the flag idea.

## INTELLECTUAL #3

Flags are cheap.

## INTELLECTUAL #1

I have a cousin with a sewing factory.

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - DAY

Alone on the back terrace, Frederic downs his wine in one. Laboulaye joins him.

## FREDERIC

A novelty flag? That's the best we can come up with?

Laboulaye holds one of Frederic's sketches.

## LABOULAYE

How much will this statue cost to build?

## FREDERIC

A hundred thousand Francs. Maybe more. Probably more. It's usually more.

## LABOULAYE

I'll make the first donation. 100 Francs.

## FREDERIC

Great. We have enough to build a very impressive gnome.

## LABOULAYE

The great Parisians will believe in the power of this monument. It will bring America closer to France. And bring her wealth with it.

INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS, PARIS - DAY

Frederic visits influential men and women to rustle up donations for his statue. He gets the same answer...

RICH AND FAMOUS

Non. Non. Non. Non. Non.

EXT. VICTOR HUGO'S HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic KNOCKS on Victor Hugo's door. The future author of *Les Miserables* watches him from an upstairs window.

A BURLY MAN answers the door.

BURLY MAN

Yes?

FREDERIC

Frederic Bartholdi, here to discuss important business with Mr. Hugo.

He hands the Burly Man a card.

BURLY MAN

He's not at home.

Frederic looks up at a second floor window, where Victor Hugo stares imperiously down upon him. Their eyes meet. Victor Hugo turns away first.

FREDERIC

He's upstairs. I just saw him.

BURLY MAN

He's not at home to you. Good night, sir.

FREDERIC

Would you pass on a message. Tell Mr. Hugo that his books are very overrated.

The Burly Man closes the door in Frederic's face.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic heads back to the studio, deflated.

He passes a ONE ARMED MAN, with no legs, perched in a wheelchair, and rattling a COLLECTION BUCKET.

ONE ARMED MAN

Coins for heroes. Help the veterans.  
Coins for heroes.

Frederic tosses a coin in his bucket and walks on. Then stops in his tracks. And heads back to the One Armed Man.

FREDERIC

How long have you been collecting coins?

ONE ARMED MAN

Since I got my legs shot off by a cannonball.

FREDERIC

Today.

ONE ARMED MAN

Six hours.

His Collection Bucket is a quarter full of small change.

FREDERIC

Is that a good amount?

ONE ARMED MAN

A bad day, I get five Francs. A good day, ten.

FREDERIC

And if I wanted to collect money, like this, what would I need?

ONE ARMED MAN

Some sort of injury or disfigurement helps. Other than that, there's only three basic requirements: a slogan, a bucket, and another part of town to rattle the bucket in. Don't want you stepping on my toes.

FREDERIC

A slogan. Like Francs for Freedom?

ONE ARMED MAN

No. Not like Francs for Freedom. Too vague. You get nothing for being vague.

FREDERIC

Francs for France.

## ONE ARMED MAN

We've got France. It's all around us. And nobody gives Francs. It's coins, mate. Coins for this. Coins for that.

Frederic gives him another coin.

## EXT. PARIS - NEXT DAY

Various shots around the city with attractive female COLLECTORS who we recognize as models from Frederic's studio. They call out the mantra...

## COLLECTORS

Coins for victory. Help France Beat the British. Coins for victory.

Frederic and Simon watch as a DISTINGUISHED OLDER MAN approaches the pretty YOUNG LADY Collector.

## DISTINGUISHED OLDER MAN

Are we at war again?

## YOUNG LADY

Sort of. A trade war. Fighting for American business. Winner takes all.

He drops several coins in her collection bucket. She makes his day with a smile.

With Frederic...

## FREDERIC

Imagine this happening, all over Paris, all over France.

## SIMON

I admit, I never had you down as the patriotic hero of our times.

## FREDERIC

I'm not. This isn't for France. It's for Frederic Bartholdi. Think of the commissions I'll get if I pull this off?

## SIMON

Ah, order is restored. Back to good old self-centred delusion. You work on the statue. I'll get to work on the buckets.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY

Frederic sketches several different NUDE MODELS in a range of classical poses. Each drawing is a variation on the idea of a woman holding aloft a LIGHT.

We see Emilie pose several times, clearly his favorite.

EMILIE

What are you going to call this statue?

FREDERIC

Liberty Enlightening the World.

She screws up her face.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

EMILIE

The thought is right, a woman bringing understanding and reason to the chaos of men. But I prefer short names.

FREDERIC

A big statue needs a big name.

EMILIE

I'd go with Liberty. Just Liberty. And you might want to rethink the nudity.

Off his look...

EMILIE (CONT'D)

America is a land of Puritans. The men don't like sex. They fear breasts. Especially big naked ones.

FREDERIC

I have an idea. And I absolutely hate it.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

We move down from the torch, held aloft by Emilie, to her head ringed by a spiked crown, to her face and that ever so pretty nose, down to the naked sweep of her shoulder, and lower to her breasts...

Now DRAPED in a Roman-style toga of flowing fabric.

EMILIE

Better?

FREDERIC

It's a sacrilege to cover you in anything  
but kisses.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic and Emilie sprawl naked, drunk and asleep,  
across the studio divan.

We approach Frederic from the perspective of his Mother's  
shoes, walking up to the divan.

She walks on early drawings of the Statue Of Liberty.

She plucks the burning cigar from his fingers. Then taps  
the still glowing end against his hand. He JOLTS awake.

FREDERIC

Maman!

She curls a finger to beckon him. He wraps a sheet around  
himself, covers the sleeping Emilie, and follows his  
Mother OUT of the Studio - into the ATTACHED HOUSE.

INT. ATTACHED HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic's Mother stands by the fireplace and gazes up at  
a stern family portrait.

In it, she poses with her late husband, her older son  
Charles as a 4 yr old, and an infant Frederic in her  
arms. She's happy in the picture. Happy and loving.

MOTHER

That's how you spend your Laboulaye  
commission? On debauchery? Drunken  
debauchery?

FREDERIC

Is there any other kind?

Frederic takes a seat at the table.

MOTHER

Why can't you be more like your brother?

FREDERIC

Don't be greedy Mother. You are only  
allowed one perfect son. Besides, I  
wasn't born to be a lawyer.

MOTHER

You weren't born to be a failure.

FREDERIC

When my Statue of Liberty is built...

MOTHER

When. If. Big plans. Big ideas. Meanwhile  
your brother builds his fortune with  
diligence, sobriety, reality, hard work.

FREDERIC

I work hard.

MOTHER

You drink hard.

FREDERIC

Because it helps me sculpt all the  
beauty, bravery, and love into shape.

MOTHER

I had high hopes for you, Frederic. Your  
father and I had such very high hopes.

The anger sags from her little body. She heads to the  
stairs with an oil lamp. Pauses at the bottom step...

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Today's dreams are just tomorrow's  
disappointments.

Frederic looks at the painting, at his Mother holding him  
as a baby, at how happy she is in the picture.

FREDERIC

Look how much you loved me as a baby.

MOTHER

That isn't you. Good night, Frederic.

Frederic watches her climb the stairs, her lamp  
disappearing into darkness. He's hurting inside.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic, dressed, marches along swigging the dregs of a  
brandy bottle. Emilie scurries behind, trying to keep up.

EMILIE

Where are we going?

FREDERIC  
To see my brother.

EMILIE  
But Charles lives in the other direction,  
with all the other rich bourgeoisie  
fools.

FREDERIC  
Not that brother.

Frederic enters a GRAVEYARD. A fog closes in.

EXT. GRAVEYARD, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic weaves between the headstones. Emilie LOSES him  
in the fog. We stay with Emilie - searching.

EMILIE  
Frederic? Wait. You'll get scared on your  
own in here.

She finds him lying down on top of an ornate SARCOPHAGUS.

EMILIE (CONT'D)  
You know it's bad luck to lie on someone  
else's grave.

FREDERIC  
Then I'm the luckiest man alive.

He rolls off. She sees the NAME carved onto the top...

EMILIE  
Frederic Auguste Bartholdi?

FREDERIC  
The critics accuse me of not being  
original and they're right. I'm not.  
Everyone else is unique. Except me. I  
have already been here.

EMILIE  
I don't understand.

FREDERIC  
I have two older brothers. Charles the  
prodigy. And Frederic, the tragedy. He  
died aged one. When I was born the next  
year, Mother gave me his name. She wanted  
me to be everything she hoped the first  
Frederic would be. Such very high hopes.

Emilie wraps her arms around Frederic. Silent tears fall down his face.

EMILIE

That's just really creepy. And unfair.  
It's like she gave you a curse.

FREDERIC

No, Emilie. Don't you see?

He strokes the carved letters of his brother's name...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

I'll be the best of two men. Two  
Frederics. It's not a curse. It's a  
blessing. I've already died. What's the  
worst that can happen now? Nothing can  
keep Frederic Bartholdi from success.

He locks Emilie in a long and passionate embrace. We rise  
from the foggy graveyard...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As usual, Frederic was about to discover  
how very very wrong he could be.

EXT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - DAY

Frederic, washed, groomed, and in a clean suit, springs  
up the steps and raps on the door.

INT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - DAY

Laboulaye pours two glasses of wine. As they drink...

LABOULAYE

I hear the coin collection is going well.  
That you have expanded all across Paris?

FREDERIC

Well. But not well enough. Thirty Francs  
a day has become twenty, has become ten.  
Simon calculates it will take seventeen  
years to raise all the money.

LABOULAYE

I sense you may have a new plan?

FREDERIC

America. It's rich. It's the land of big  
ideas. I'll use the money we've collected  
to buy passage to America.

(MORE)

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

There, I'll find our rich donors. There, our dream of Liberty will rise. In weeks, not years.

LABOULAYE

Frederic, you have all the daring I sorely wish I could muster. I like this plan. I know many wealthy Americans. I shall write you a letter of introduction.

EXT. CROSS-ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP - DAY

Frederic and Simon on board a SHIP bound for America. It's RAINING. And cold. And miserable.

SIMON

I hope this weather isn't an omen.

FREDERIC

Of course it's an omen. It's a sign we are sailing to a better place, where the sun glitters on streets paved with gold.

Simon does not share Frederic's enthusiasm. Not one bit.

INT. CABIN, CROSS-ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP - DAY

Frederic continues to draft new versions of his Liberty design. He's not happy with them.

EXT. CROSS-ATLANTIC STEAMSHIP - DUSK

Frederic tosses the drawings into the ocean, one by one. Simon approaches...

SIMON

Land.

Frederic gets his first glimpse of America. He holds his remaining drawing up to the setting sun on the horizon.

He sees a woman holding her baby in the crook of her arm.

He sees the little islands in the harbor as they approach New York - the abandoned fort on Bedloe's Island - the tall church spires of Manhattan.

FREDERIC

Look at all this space. Look at the size of it, this America. This... This is where you dream the biggest of all.

He turns over a drawing, and starts to sketch on the reverse. Even with these rough lines, we recognize the unforgettable future outline of -

Liberty.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Frederic and Simon exit a CHEAP HOTEL, buy pretzels, and join the bustle of the street.

FREDERIC

Can you smell it?

SIMON

I can smell a lot of things.

FREDERIC

Inhale, my friend. Breathe deep. Today, we fill our lungs with success.

Simon consults a list of wealthy New Yorkers drafted by Laboulaye.

SIMON

First on Laboulaye's list: JP Morgan.

INT. JP MORGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Distinguished. Wealthy.

JP MORGAN casts his millionaire eyes over the letter from Laboulaye, and Frederic's latest sketch of Liberty.

JP MORGAN

Love it. How tall did you say?

FREDERIC

Forty feet.

JP MORGAN

Could she be fifty?

FREDERIC

Oh yes.

JP MORGAN

Love it even more. Make it a fifty foot statue and you'll get a buyer. No doubt about it. Plenty of rich fellas here.

FREDERIC  
What about you, sir?

JP MORGAN  
Don't love it that much. If I'm going to build a fifty foot statue, it better have my face on it. Good luck.

Frederic looks at the next name on the list: WILLIAM BUCKHOUSE ASTOR.

INT. ASTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Distinguished. Wealthier.

WILLIAM ASTOR nods approvingly at the introductory letter and the drawing.

WILLIAM ASTOR  
I think you should aim higher.

FREDERIC  
Sixty feet?

WILLIAM ASTOR  
Exactly. That kind of ambition gets you noticed. What's she holding in the air?

FREDERIC  
A torch. A symbol of hope.

WILLIAM ASTOR  
Hope? Hope's not what this country's about. I don't hope things will turn out well. I fight like Hell. Astor idea. What if, picture this, and I think it's a significant improvement, what if she's holding aloft a musket?

Off Frederic's look...

WILLIAM ASTOR (CONT'D)  
A musket, you're seeing it too, I can tell. And here, another Astor idea. She's not got a book in her arm.

FREDERIC  
It's a tablet. Like Moses.

WILLIAM ASTOR  
Book, tablet. Picture instead, she's got a chokehold on an Indian. Suddenly, you get the idea of America.

(MORE)

WILLIAM ASTOR (CONT'D)

We see what we want, we take it. We take it all. That's a statue. Draw me that, you sonofabitch, and I'll write you a sixty foot check.

Frederic looks at his list.

We see Astor's name being crossed out, along with EVERY other NAME on the list, one by one, until he comes to the final name - VANDERBILT.

INT. VANDERBILT'S OFFICE - DAY

Distinguished. Wealthiest.

VANDERBILT

Fine idea. Fine fine idea. Fine idea. Financial disaster. I don't get richer by investing in disasters. Tell you what I'll do. I'll give you exactly the same donation as JP Morgan, not a cent more.

FREDERIC

You couldn't give a cent less.

VANDERBILT

As I suspected. It's the phobia of the super-rich. When you have nothing, you risk everything. When you have it all, you risk nothing. This is a fine drawing, sir. A fine fine drawing.

Vanderbilt peels forty dollars from his billfold and slides them across the table to Frederic.

VANDERBILT (CONT'D)

Come back tomorrow and draw my darling granddaughter's portrait. That's how you make money here. Vanity. Follow the rainbow of a rich man's vanity and you'll always find gold.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Frederic meets Simon in Union Square. He's feeding the pigeons. Frederic eats some of the pigeon food.

SIMON

That good?

FREDERIC

America is a beautiful woman. But she's chewing tobacco.

SIMON

How many fancy people left to see?

FREDERIC

Grover Cleveland, Governor of New York.  
I have a good feeling about this man.

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, MANHATTAN - DAY

GROVER CLEVELAND grooms his huge moustache whilst he dines at his desk.

GROVER CLEVELAND

Not a hope.

FREDERIC

Sir, Liberty will grace your harbor.  
She'll be seen by everyone who comes to your beautiful city. She will be a symbol of the great bond between our nations.

GROVER CLEVELAND

She would be a symbol of gross stupidity if I gave you a dime of State funds. If it's a bond between nations you want to symbolize, go shake a tree in Washington for Federal money. Pass the salt.

EXT. VANDERBILT MANSION - DAY

A carriage deposits Frederic and his drawing materials at the steps. A BUTLER ushers him inside.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

On the plus side, the wives, daughters and assorted granddaughters of New York's elite were only too happy to welcome the dashing French artist into their parlors.

INT. PARLOR, VANDERBILT MANSION - DAY

The SOUND of a Young Lady in the throes of a passionate embrace. We move from an easel that carries her portrait - To a sofa where she enthusiastically RIDES Frederic raw. Sated, she collapses against his chest.

YOUNG LADY  
Did you finish?

FREDERIC  
Yes.

YOUNG LADY  
No. You need to come again tomorrow.

EXT. HOTEL, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

An undeserving 3 star. Establishing.

INT. FREDERIC'S ROOM, HOTEL - NIGHT

Twin beds. A wardrobe. An open window where Simon smokes a pipe. And a desk.

There's something LARGE, about three feet high, on the desk that Simon has covered with a sheet.

Frederic enters with his drawing materials, and a handful of cash.

FREDERIC  
Another forty dollars.

SIMON  
Excellent. Just another 2,493 high society ladies to lay and you'll have the money to build the statue.

Frederic dumps his gear and the cash on the bed.

FREDERIC  
I can't do any more. It's like they have never had their portrait drawn before.

SIMON  
Your poor pencil must be exhausted.

FREDERIC  
It is being worn into a tiny stub.

SIMON  
You know New York isn't the only rich city. There's Boston, Philadelphia, Washington. There's San Francisco.

FREDERIC  
And everywhere I show my drawing of Liberty the rich will say "No".

SIMON

You're not going to show them a drawing.

Simon goes to the "something" on the desk, and removes the sheet to reveal -

A 3 foot high LUMP OF CLAY.

INT. FREDERIC'S ROOM, HOTEL - DAY

Frederic works night and day, carving Liberty in clay.

The face is a perfect likeness of Emilie.

SIMON

She's beautiful.

FREDERIC

The most beautiful.

EXT. STEAM TRAIN, MOVING - DAY

We move in on a First Class carriage where -

INT. FIRST CLASS CARRIAGE, STEAM TRAIN - DAY

The Statue SITS next to Simon, wrapped in a sheet. He has his arm around it.

Across the table, Frederic writes a letter...

FREDERIC (V.O.)

My dear Emilie, How I miss you more each day. Liberty takes shape. The people of America are very generous with donations. I go now to Boston, where I think we will meet even greater success. Your loving Frederic.

SIMON

Who are you writing to?

FREDERIC

My Mother.

SIMON

You should write to Laboulaye.

Frederic seals his letter to Emilie in an envelope with wax and a stamp. Then begins another...

FREDERIC (V.O.)

Dear Laboulaye, How I miss you more each day. Liberty takes shape. The people of America are very generous with donations.

EXT. MERCHANT HOUSE, BOSTON - DAY

Establishing.

FREDERIC (V.O.)

The Statue of Liberty will stand sixty feet high.

INT. MERCHANT HOUSE, BOSTON - DAY

We're in the office of RICHARD BUTLER, prominent RUBBER BARON. The walls are adorned with enlarged ADVERTISEMENTS for the WONDERS of rubber.

Shelves heave under his collection of rubber products. This is a proud man. Proud as fuck of rubber.

But pride of place right now goes to the CLAY MAQUETTE of Liberty standing upon his desk.

SIMON

With a pedestal in proportion, Liberty will be perhaps as much as one hundred feet tall in total.

Butler circles the model.

RICHARD BUTLER

She's magnificent. I have several pieces by French artists in my collection. Not all the connoisseurs live on Park Avenue, you know. You say the New Yorkers are going crazy for this?

FREDERIC

They have shown great enthusiasm.

RICHARD BUTLER

They should. It's a work of genius, is what it is. Artistic genius. You're a talented man, sir. I bet your Momma is proud to have a son like you.

FREDERIC

Thank you.

RICHARD BUTLER

I don't piss around the pot, Frederic. I piss in the pot. I want in on this art, this monument.

FREDERIC

Pardon me? What exactly are you saying?

RICHARD BUTLER

I'm saying it clear as can be. I want in. I want to invest. I'll put money in. Did JP put in? Vanderbilt? How much did that old dog pony up? Five hundred dollars? A thousand? I'll give you two.

FREDERIC

Two thousand dollars? That's the most generous offer we have received so far.

RICHARD BUTLER

I knew I'd beat JP. Goddam tightwad is what he is. And don't get me started on Astor. Sixty feet high. Goddam. I have one question, Frederic, sir.

Frederic shudders to think what it might be...

RICHARD BUTLER (CONT'D)

Have you considered what material you're going to make it out of.

Butler, Frederic, and Simon glance around the room at the overwhelming display of RUBBER...

RICHARD BUTLER (CONT'D)

I'm thinking bronze.

Relief floods Frederic's face. Butler laughs LOUD and hard. Slaps Frederic on the back.

RICHARD BUTLER (CONT'D)

You should have seen your face. A picture is what it was.

He hands out cigars.

RICHARD BUTLER (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, we're in business. My money is good. You go challenge the rest of this great nation to beat it. You'll get every damn dollar you need for this beauty. As God is my witness.

EXT. STEAM TRAIN, MOVING - NIGHT

We see CHECKS of various amounts overlaid across the landscape, forming great plains, clouds, and mountains.

But not many checks. Only eight, to be exact.

\$100, \$200, \$50. And nothing to match the \$2,000 check from Richard Butler, Rubber Baron of Boston.

INT. DINING CAR, STEAM TRAIN - DAY

Frederic and Simon dine and drink fine wine. They are overawed by the incredible splendor of America passing by their window.

FREDERIC

Everything about America is bigger than I imagined. The distances. The prairies. The trees. The mountains.

He looks down at his plate...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Even the peas are bigger.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO BAY - DAY

A GOLD BARON points out across a harbor awash with boats, and stabs his finger at an island. His fingers are covered in GOLD RINGS. His waistcoat has GOLD BUTTONS. His teeth are capped in GOLD. He is the Donald Trump of his time.

GOLD BARON

That's Alcatraz Island. Nothing on it 'cept birds and bird shit. I look at your little model of Liberty, and all I see is grey. I'm not a lover of grey. This is the city of gold. I make money out of the desire of poor stupid men to dig my dirt and search for gold. I'll build your statue. I pay for the whole damn thing. You can give your Boston cheapskate his money back. I don't want it. You build your statue there, on Alcatraz. And you build it bigger. I want it 75 feet high. And I want it plated in gold from top to toe. This statue will be the golden gate to San Francisco, a symbol of how goddam rich your life can be if you think like me and do like me.

SIMON

So many people coming to San Francisco.

GOLD BARON

We got all creeds here. We got a ship loaded with hookers from Paris pulled in just yesterday. You're going to love it here. Love it.

FREDERIC

A golden statue?

GOLD BARON

Top to toe. No other way. Nothing says success like a giant golden goddess.

INT. STEAM TRAIN, MOVING - DAY

Passing the Rockies again, but in the opposite direction.

Frederic stares across the table at Simon. Simon stares at Frederic.

FREDERIC

Hit me. Slap me. Hard. I want to feel something.

SIMON

I can't do it.

FREDERIC

Please.

WHAM!

Simon hits him, hard. Then again with a left. Right, left. Right, left, left.

Then leans over the table and really starts to PUMMEL Frederic.

The TICKET INSPECTOR appears by their table and coughs politely for their attention.

INSPECTOR

Tickets please.

Simon stops hitting Frederic. They both straighten their clothing, and show their tickets.

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

Thank you, gentlemen.

He continues down the train. To the unspoken gesture of another passenger he replies...

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

French.

WITH FREDERIC:

FREDERIC

Thank you.

SIMON

I enjoyed it.

FREDERIC

How much have we raised?

SIMON

Minus expenses, \$3,216.

FREDERIC

Governor Cleveland said the Federal Government has money for monuments such as Liberty.

SIMON

Who do you know in the American Government?

FREDERIC

President Grant. Not personally. I know he's the President.

A beat.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

You want to hit me again, don't you?

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON - DAY

Rain. Lots of rain.

Frederic runs through the rain to the GUARD HOUSE.

Soaked, he knocks on the door.

A reluctant GUARD slides a panel open.

FREDERIC

I have a letter for The President.

GUARD

Leave it with me.

FREDERIC

Not a letter letter, a letter of introduction. So that I can talk to him. I have important news from France.

GUARD

He's not here. You'll have to come back.

FREDERIC

I can wait.

GUARD

Very well, sir. It's the 19th of July now, and The President is due back on the 1st of September.

He slides the panel shut.

Frederic knocks again. The guard slides the panel open.

FREDERIC

Where did he go?

EXT. VIRGINIA COAST - DAY

An idyllic SUMMER HOUSE sits high on a bluff overlooking the ocean. A white picket fence surrounds the property.

On the covered porch, PRESIDENT ULYSSES S GRANT sits in a rocker wearing a fine summer suit and smoking a cigar.

Several MILITARY MEN keep him company. A SERVANT pours lemonade. There's laughter and anecdotes. One man has a cherished RIFLE. There are NICKS along the barrel.

MILITARY MAN

Every mark is a Johnny Reb, whistling Dixie in Hell.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Now now, sir. The dead on both sides gave their lives for the greater glory of God and the United States.

MILITARY MAN

Amen, Mr. President.

Something catches President Grant's eye - a MAN climbing the fence at the bottom of the bluff, and waving his HAT.

It's Frederic.

SERVANT

Are you expecting visitors, sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

None that don't know how to use a gate.

The Military Man lines up a shot...

MILITARY MAN

Permission to wish him a warm welcome, sir?

PRESIDENT GRANT

Permission granted.

The Military Man SHOOTS. The HAT flies out of Frederic's grasp. He retrieves it. Puts it on his head. And advances, hands HELD HIGH.

As he nears the covered porch...

MILITARY MAN

That's close enough. State your name and your business, sir.

FREDERIC

Frederic Bartholdi, artist, sculptor, Ambassador of France. I come with an important message for President Grant.

PRESIDENT GRANT

Are you carrying a weapon?

FREDERIC

My only weapons are determination, and an incredible idea.

PRESIDENT GRANT

The determination I've seen. What's this idea?

LATER...

Cigar ASH drops onto the drawing of Liberty. Grant brushes it off.

Wider, President Grant and Frederic drink brandy together on the porch.

PRESIDENT GRANT (CONT'D)

Passing a Bill to pay for this will take a sight more than determination. Years will go by. Presidents will go by. Stand.

Frederic stands with the President. Grant SALUTES a passing SHIP. The ship returns the salute by FIRING a cannon.

PRESIDENT GRANT (CONT'D)

I like a house that faces the ships as they go by. Coffee from Brazil. Lumber from Panama. Cotton from Georgia.

They sit back down.

PRESIDENT GRANT (CONT'D)

Here's what I can do for you...

EXT. DOCKS, NEW YORK - DAY

Frederic and Simon SHAKE HANDS with Rubber Baron Richard Butler, and a new character - architect RICHARD HUNT.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's 1871. The United States has over 40 million people. And how many of these wonderful Americans have donated towards the Statue of Liberty? Eight. Eight people in the entire United States.

Frederic and Simon head on up the gangplank to their waiting cross-atlantic Steam Ship.

RICHARD BUTLER

Bon voyage, mes amis!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's Richard Butler, aka Mr. Rubber, saying goodbye, with society architect Dick Hunt. Not a made up name. Dick has agreed to design the plinth that Liberty will stand on. And Butler will collect donations to pay for said plinth. Yes. Good luck with that.

EXT. LABOULEY MANSION, PARIS - NIGHT

Laboulaye greets Frederic on the steps like a long lost son. They embrace warmly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Any sane person would describe Frederic's fund-raising trip to America as a disaster. Frederic, however, has a different spin on events.

FREDERIC

Big success!

LABOULAYE

How big?

FREDERIC

Bigger than you can imagine.

INT. LABOULAYE MANSION, PARIS - NIGHT

Over dinner, Frederic recounts his biggest victory...

FREDERIC

That's when it came to me. We don't just build a big statue. We build the biggest. The biggest statue in the World.

LABOULAYE

What did he say?

FREDERIC

He said fantastic. He gave his personal approval to my designs - and this...

Frederic hands Laboulaye a letter...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

The official support of The United States Government. And the use of an island in New York Harbor. The perfect location. Perfect. I went to find benefactors in America, I return with President Ulysses S. Grant, Bedloe's Island, and thousands of dollars.

Off Laboulaye's inquiring look...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Well, three and a bit thousand dollars.

LABOULAYE

We have far more than that. We have been collecting coins from Calais to Cannes. The tide turns, my visionary friend.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, BACK STREET, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic and Simon light oil lamps to reveal -

BUCKETS FULL OF COINS all over his studio floor.

SIMON

How much do we have?

FREDERIC

Enough to begin.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

A dour factory in an industrialized area, by the river.

FREDERIC (PRELAP)

Gentlemen of Gaget Gauthier...

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

A VAST hangar-like space. There are casts for BELLS, church steeples, bridge pieces, a park fountain, and huge municipal ornaments. Big stuff. Big heavy stuff.

FREDERIC

I'm proud to contract this esteemed company to build the greatest statue ever conceived.

Frederic paces before a gathering of tough-looking artisans. Craftsmen with gnarled faces, gnarled hands, and biceps of steel. These men eat nails for breakfast. They could not be less impressed.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Yes, Liberty stands just three feet tall at the moment.

His only props are enthusiasm, and his clay maquette of Liberty. The model looks like an insignificant miniature.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

But when we are done, she will rise above the rooftops. She will gaze proudly from her full height of 111 feet, with her torch held aloft a further 40 feet.

The craftsmen seem more like a line of rugby players. Their foreman is HENRI LEBOEUF.

HENRI LEBOEUF

150 feet of bronze?

He starts to laugh. And his men laugh with him.

It's the same ridicule Frederic got in that muddy field, facing down the German War Machine alone with nothing more than a broken sword.

FREDERIC

We'll use a repoussé technique. Thin copper sheets riveted onto a skeletal frame of iron. I predict we will need three or four interim scale models to work from. Eventually creating a full scale plaster mould, from which we can shape the copper skin. This will then be riveted onto a rigid iron support skeleton, strong enough to withstand the force of a hurricane.

The laughing has been replaced by a modicum of respect.

HENRI LEBOEUF

There's only one man capable of designing such an iron skeleton.

FREDERIC

Yes, Eugene Viollet-Du-Lac.

Frederic produces a ROLLED UP BLUEPRINT of Liberty AND its iron skeleton which he lays out - a highly developed design for the framework.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

As you can see, he has included an ingenious pier in his initial design. The arm is proving a challenge, wind pressure, load bearing, compression and expansion in heat and cold. But Mr. Du Lac assures me he will have the solution within days.

Now the craftsmen are impressed.

HENRI LEBOEUF

You seem to have thought of everything.

FREDERIC

Concerning the construction of Liberty, there is nothing I have not considered.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

You're probably noticing a recurring theme in this story. Just when Frederic appears to have the whole thing worked out...

INT. DU-LAC'S BEDROOM, PARIS - DAY

Complex technical drawings cover the walls.

A PRIEST and some DOUR FAMILY MEMBERS stand by the bed, mournful. DU-LAC lies on the bed, eyes closed. Pale. Very pale. And not breathing.

We HEAR the SOUND of FEET RUSHING UP THE STAIRS. Frederic enters, out of breath. Off his look...

FREDERIC

Is he asleep?

PRIEST

No. Mr Du-Lac is dead.

FREDERIC

Are you sure?

A Dour Family Member offers Frederic a DRAWING.

DOUR FAMILY MEMBER

He left you this.

Frederic checks the drawing, eager for good news.

The drawing has a BLANK SPACE and a QUESTION MARK where the framework for the raised arm of Liberty should be.

FREDERIC

Thank you. My deepest condolences.

He exits. Through the closed door, the Priest and the Dour Family Members HEAR Frederic YELL to vent his pain.

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Frederic admires the first "upscaled" maquette of Liberty the artisans have crafted. It stands eight feet tall.

FREDERIC

She's beautiful.

HENRI LEBOEUF

Yes. Every man here wants to fuck her.

FREDERIC

What? Wait. This is Liberty. You can't fuck Liberty.

HENRI LEBOEUF

But that face. She looks like she just  
got fucked. Very sexy.

His artisans murmur their approval.

FREDERIC

Sexy is a problem.

HENRI LEBOEUF

Sexy is not the problem. No engineering  
plans for the framework is the problem.  
Bad enough you want to build the biggest  
monument in the world. Worse that you  
have her with this arm - all out of  
balance.

On cue, the ARM of the 8ft maquette - FALLS OFF. Simon  
raises an eyebrow. Nothing need be said.

A small EARNEST YOUNG MAN circles the maquette. Frederic  
and Henri share a look - who is this? He introduces  
himself in a very socially awkward manner. He exudes  
incompetence.

EIFFEL

Gustave Eiffel. I heard you were looking  
for an engineer.

Shakes hands in a limp and unsettling way with Frederic.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

I design bridges.

EXT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Gaslamps. Fog.

Lights on inside a rooftop GARRET - Eiffel's Studio.

Simon stands on the street outside, smoking a pipe,  
reading a newspaper.

INT. EIFFEL'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic admires some of Eiffel's SPEC designs pinned to  
the walls. Intricate and highly detailed drawings with  
all kinds of measurements scribbled around them to  
explain various load bearing abilities and pressures.

FREDERIC

What's this?

He's looking at a drawing of what will one day become THE EIFFEL TOWER.

EIFFEL

An idea. A monument for Paris. I can build it. I just have to convince everybody else it's possible.

FREDERIC

And what of Liberty, holding her torch aloft to enlighten the world. Every other engineer in Paris says it's impossible.

EIFFEL

That's what they all say about my Tower. And they're right. Till I make it possible. Then they're wrong.

He smiles. Frederic smiles. A kindred spirit.

EIFFEL (CONT'D)

The question isn't how so much as why? Why put yourself through the pain, the negativity, the ridicule? Why subject yourself to the constant judgement and dismissal of others? It starts off as ego, I know. I've been through that. But now it's at another stage. Are you OK with heights? You're building a 150ft statue, of course you're OK with heights. Come on.

Eiffel leads Frederic to rickety STAIRS, and climbs up through a skylight to...

EXT. ROOF, EIFFEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A far reaching view of the blanket of fog.

EIFFEL

I come up here and imagine it's like heaven. And what do we see of the work of all those men and women below? Nothing. My Tower is just the beginning. A proof of concept. One day, all buildings will be built this way. Upwards. To heaven. But first, I must show how to do it. How to reach heaven. Some men want to get there with prayers. We, my friend, will get there with our monuments.

They embrace.

FREDERIC

I leave the arm of Liberty in your trusted hands. I must save her face.

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - NIGHT

By moonlight, Frederic stands atop a step-ladder and uses a CHEESEWIRE to SEVER the head from the 8ft maquette of Liberty. He DROPS the incredibly heavy head. It face-plants into the floor. Simon raises another eyebrow.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic resculpts the head of Liberty.

But he's struggling for inspiration.

Simon brings drawings Frederic has made of various models. But they all have one thing in common - beauty.

Frederic tears the drawings into pieces and throws them in the air.

FREDERIC

No. No. No. No. No. No to Marie. No to Virginie. No to Colette, to Agnes, to Agathe, to all the beautiful girls I have known. No. No. No.

The paper pieces fall like snow. And reveal his Mother, standing in the darkened doorway. She shakes her head, judging him, and finding him wanting. She leaves.

And Frederic has his inspiration...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Liberty is freedom. And freedom comes at a price, with sacrifice, with pain. She's not a lover. Freedom is a bitch.

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Angle from behind Frederic at the top of the ladder as he SECURES the new HEAD of Liberty in place.

The artisans gather below, and murmur their disapproval of the new design.

HENRI LEBOEUF

No way do I want sex with her.

FREDERIC

Good. Then she is perfect.

We reveal that Liberty now has the face of Frederic's MOTHER.

We HOLD on this 8ft model with Frederic alongside it as it becomes a 30ft model -

Then a 60ft model -

Then a FULL SIZED FOOT of Liberty.

The foot is made of PLASTER, with a wooden frame for support.

EXT. RIVER SEINE, PARIS - DAY

Summer. Frederic sails a little boat with Emilie as his delighted passenger. They picnic on the water: wine, grapes, bread, cheese, kisses, and more.

NARRATOR

Of course, all this took time. All the coins being collected around the country went to a building fund to pay for construction. And Frederic earned his own crust with commissions. Many from American admirers.

INSERT SHOT: FOUNTAIN, Bartholdi Park, Washington DC.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A nice fountain in Washington DC.

INSERT SHOT: STATUE, Union Square, Manhattan.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A statue of Lafayette, not as tall in real life as this would have you believe. Usually covered in pigeons. And shit.

INSERT SHOT: SANDSTONE LION, Belfort, France.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A magnificent monument to the one and only time France didn't surrender to the Germans.

## INT. GAGET GAUTHIER &amp; CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

The ENTIRE vast workshop is filled with FULL-SIZE PIECES of Liberty, each with a group of artisans crafting her shape according to Frederic's design and direction.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Building the World's biggest statue takes a lot of money, a lot time, a lot of people, and a lot of money. Did I mention the money? You need a lot of it.

The torch over here.

The tablet over there.

Giants fold of Liberty's dress.

And over in the corner...

Liberty's HEAD - huge and regal and utterly magnificent.

We note that everyone is covered in white plaster. Frederic and the artisans look like GHOSTS.

Emilie WHEELS a trolley through the workshop, piled with PIES and bottles of BEER. She is an angel of respite.

Frederic PHOTOGRAPHS her with different sections of the statue. She enters an office and exits in workman's overalls.

She helps Frederic carving a finger, her finger made the size of a giant's.

## EXT. COURTYARD, GAGET GAUTHIER &amp; CO - DAY

Frederic and Emilie exit the workshop and head into the open courtyard behind.

This backs onto the river. The city crowds around on all sides with tenement blocks of four or five floors.

The Courtyard is strewn with IRON GIRDERS.

Where the artisans inside are uniformly WHITE, out here, the men are black from grease and iron dust.

Under the direction of the awkward Eiffel, they are bolting together the incredible internal iron skeleton of Liberty.

Already, the framework rises over 60 feet high -

Higher than any surrounding rooftop.

EMILIE

Have you reached Heaven yet?

EIFFEL

Half way.

Together, they CLIMB the skeleton of Liberty, and stand on the highest crossbeam for a spectacular view of the industrial area below.

Frederic realizes he can see one house in particular.

FREDERIC

Look, over there. Follow my finger. The third window from the end. Do you know whose window that is?

INT. ROOF WINDOW, VICTOR HUGO'S HOUSE - DAY

Victor Hugo looks out towards the river, and the workshops beyond it. He sees the strange iron-girder framework rising above the rooftops.

And three figures upon the crossbeam.

He reaches for his TELESCOPE.

HIS POV: Through the telescope...

Of Frederic and Emilie and Eiffel bending over - BARING THEIR BACKSIDES at him.

BACK TO THE SCENE:

Hugo snaps his telescope shut. And draws the curtains.

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Frederic and Simon inspect all the work in progress. The workshop is a hive of activity with almost 100 men busy building some aspect of the full-size model.

Plaster mixers, gauze wrappers, bucket haulers, master plasterers, buffers, carpenters, riggers.

A calendar marks off the weeks, the months, the years of toil and craft. Laboulaye has a little table with a CASH BOX and pays the workers' wages.

We see Frederic astride the HAND of Liberty, giving her a giant manicure. Even when everyone else has gone home, Frederic stays. And mostly, Simon stays too.

Drinking with the workmen in the local tavern. Singing songs around the piano.

Carving the detail of an EYE.

Laboulaye pays the wages.

Frederic works on a high scaffold - carving the SPIKES of Liberty's crown. The scaffold COLLAPSES. Frederic crashes to the workshop floor.

Frederic sits in a clawfoot bath whilst Emilie bathes the cuts and bruises of his hands and body. Liberty is taking her toll upon him, her pound of flesh.

Bandaged, he helps the men chisel the inscription on Liberty's tablet.

Forming a CHAIN on her foot. Emilie poses for some ankle details. Frederic presents her with a bouquet of delicate PLASTER ROSES.

The mood is buoyant and happy. So happy. A palpable sense they are making something VERY SIGNIFICANT.

Frederic tours the various pieces - now all fully formed and PERFECT in every way. Henri wraps a big bear arm around his shoulders.

HENRI LEBOEUF

The crazy dream comes true my friend. The craziest dream comes true.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

CAN CAN DANCERS on stage, bawdy atmosphere, beer and wine, music and song, Frederic and Simon and all these amazing artisans at the end of another great week.

Everybody LOVES Frederic.

He wants to stay and bask in this moment forever but -

Laboulaye wants a word. Hard to read his expression. Somewhere between concern and dread would be a good guess. He follows Laboulaye and Simon outside...

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Away from the music...

FREDERIC

I know that face. My uncle wore it when he told me my father had died. Is it my Mother?

LABOULAYE

No. Your Mother is fine.

FREDERIC

Then what?

LABOULAYE

We have a problem. A cash-flow problem.

Off Frederic's look...

SIMON

The cash has stopped flowing.

LABOULAYE

Donations towards the build costs have dropped, considerably.

SIMON

Stopped would be more accurate.

FREDERIC

But we've finished the full-scale model. And Eiffel has completed the frame. We only have to add the copper skin.

LABOULAYE

It's the most expensive part.

SIMON

One hundred tons of copper.

LABOULAYE

At a thousand Francs per ton.

SIMON

A hundred thousand Francs.

FREDERIC

How much do we have left?

LABOULAYE

Twenty thousand Francs.

SIMON

We could take her as far as the knees, I  
would think.

LABOULAYE

I hoped we wouldn't fall quite so short.

FREDERIC

Such high hopes.

LABOULAYE

It's difficult to maintain public  
interest when there was so little to  
begin with.

FREDERIC

What do we do?

LABOULAYE

There is nothing more we can do.

SIMON

You dreamed big, Frederic. Perhaps too  
big.

FREDERIC

If you don't dream big, there's no point  
in dreaming.

Frederic, covered in white plaster, a ghost of a man -  
slowly walks away into the night.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

We watch Frederic walk home in a daze of disappointment.

He is a spectral figure. Alone, and broken.

EXT. VICTOR HUGO'S HOUSE, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic pauses in front of Victor Hugo's house.

He sees the old man pacing in his parlor, to and fro, to  
and fro.

Hugo, inside, senses Frederic, outside.

He turns. And their eyes meet.

Exhausted, Frederic just stands there holding Hugo's gaze  
as it starts to rain.

The rain washes the plaster away from Frederic's face and hair and clothes.

Hugo closes his drapes. Frederic continues home...

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic takes a walking stick and ATTACKS the 8ft clay maquette of Liberty.

He SCREAMS abuse at her, vents his rage and frustration.

FREDERIC

Four years! Four years! Four years! I give you everything! I want it back! You kill me.

The clay maquette is blitzed to pieces.

Frederic collapses in the debris.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

You kill me.

In the doorway, his Mother watches. Impassive. Unmoved.

She turns from his pain. It's enough to break a heart of stone. But not hers.

INT. MOTHER'S PRIVATE QUARTERS, ATTACHED HOUSE - NIGHT

His Mother composes a letter. We hear her thoughts and concerns as she writes...

MOTHER (V.O.)

My darling Charles, I fear for the sanity of your brother. This ridiculous statue he builds drains his finances, his time, his chances of finding a decent wife, and his mental stability. As I write, he lies drunk in his studio, crying like a baby, and wailing to a broken statue. It might be time to have the doctors commit him to the asylum. Lord knows it would be a blessed relief to the poor tortured man. Of course, there will be social embarrassment. But we shall endure. We have that strength. I shouldn't burden you. I know you are busy. You continue to be the only sunshine in my life. Your devoted Mother.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY

Frederic sleeps on the floor amid the debris of his attack on the 8ft maquette of Liberty.

Wider, we see his brother Charles, looking down on him. Charles seems unwell. Dark eyes. Gaunt. He prods Frederic with his boot.

Frederic wakes. He sees the dismembered HAND of Liberty before him, holding the torch.

CHARLES

Mother's worried about you.

FREDERIC

She hides it well.

CHARLES

I'm worried about you.

FREDERIC

You don't look so good.

CHARLES

Too much work. Too little sleep.

He reaches down to help Frederic up from the floor.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Here. Take my hand.

Frederic stares at that dismembered hand of Liberty. And takes a hold of that instead.

FREDERIC

No. I won't take your hand. I'll take hers.

He gets up. And RUSHES for the door.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

I'll take hers.

Charles turns to the darkened door that leads to the Attached House, where their Mother watches from the shadows, as is her creepy modus operandi.

CHARLES

Mad as a brush.

MOTHER

Oh Charles, he is lost to us.

EXT. ST GERMAIN, PARIS - DAY

A poorer district. Row houses. This is where the workers and immigrants live.

Frederic RAPS on a door. Henri Leboeuf, the foreman of the artisans who were building Liberty, answers.

His face has the scowl of thunder. A small child hugs his legs. Small and hungry.

FREDERIC

I have an idea.

HENRI LEBOEUF

Your last one didn't work out so good.

He shows Henri the severed hand of Liberty holding the torch.

FREDERIC

What do you think?

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Henri has gathered a core group of artisans. Laboulaye, Simon, and Emilie watch Frederic explain his idea.

FREDERIC

We cannot afford to build Liberty without more donations. We cannot get more donations without igniting public excitement once again. We have enough money left to build her as far as the knees, but the lower half of a lady's dress is hardly the stuff of dreams, of imagination, of inspiration. If we can only afford to build one part, let it be this.

He holds the hand of Liberty aloft.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

And it will be a beacon of what is to come.

Simon whispers to Emilie...

SIMON

I think his Mother might be right.

Emilie kicks him in the ankle.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP, ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

A massive tarpaulin shrouded shape sits on deck amid container crates and other goods.

EXT. EXPO GARDENS, PHILADELPHIA - DAY

A morning mist across the Expo Gardens.

Exhibitors prepare their stalls and displays.

But most of the attention is being drawn by the remarkable and surreal object seemingly thrusting from the very lawns of the park -

A HUGE COPPER HAND - almost 30ft high.

The hand of Liberty, holding her beacon of light proudly aloft for all to see, far and wide.

We move closer and see Frederic is INSIDE the torch, high above the gathering crowd.

FREDERIC

Ladies and Gentlemen, the opportunity of a lifetime, your chance to view the wonders of this Philadelphia Expo from the privileged perch of Liberty's torch. All for the very reasonable admission price of just 50 cents.

An increasing flurry of hands deposit COINS into the slot of a collection bucket. We follow one hand onwards and -

INTO Liberty's hand -

Up a dark spiral staircase with other paying customers -

Higher, higher, higher -

Then OUT to the light of the VIEWING GALLERY at the top of the torch to see -

The huge crowds pushing to climb up to this place -

The SUN climbing over the Expo Gardens -

The SMILE widening across Frederic's face.

## INT. GAGET GAUTHIER &amp; CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Frederic opens a suitcase of CASH to LOUD APPLAUSE from all the artisans. Emilie throws wads of bank notes in the air and makes it rain cash.

Laboulaye claps him on the back. Henri shakes his hand. Simon nods, knowing he was wrong to doubt his friend.

LATER...

The craftsmen create the HEAD of Liberty.

## EXT. EXPO, PARIS - DAY

We now move in through the ENTRANCE for the Paris Expo - Following excited children as they run to where -

The GIANT COPPER HEAD of Liberty rises from the lawns - Surrounded by amazed patrons to the Expo.

A PHOTOGRAPHER, covered by a black cloth, takes pictures of members of the public standing and smiling, dwarfed by Liberty's unsmiling face.

His SIGN offers a photograph for TEN FRANCS. There is an ENDLESS LINE of people waiting for their shot.

The FLASH-BULB pops. The photographer throws back the black cloth and ushers the next paying poser forward.

We reveal that the Photographer is Frederic.

More shots. Even his brother Charles has his picture taken. Then Frederic takes the Ten Franc note from another man we recognize...

The now former President Grant.

Grant ADMIRES the incredible Head of Liberty, the pristine copper construction gleaming in the sunlight.

## PRESIDENT GRANT

I thought you were crazy before. Now that I see how big this lady is going to be, I have to admit - I was wrong. You are much crazier than I could ever have imagined.

## FREDERIC

Thank you, I think.

PRESIDENT GRANT  
This is quite the memorial.

FREDERIC  
I don't make a memorial, sir. I make an unforgettable.

Frederic hands over photography duties to Simon.

LATER...

At an outdoor cafe with a view of Liberty's head...

Frederic wines and dines with Laboulaye. Nearby, Emilie mixes with friends, and STOUT MAN.

LABOULAYE  
Do you know Emilie's friends? I hear they are political. Some, I have heard, are prostitutes.

FREDERIC  
You've heard, or you know for sure?

LABOULAYE  
Frederic, please, at my age? The only part of my body with any rigidity is my walking stick.

FREDERIC  
They want to vote. They want equal pay. They want the right to decide their own future, not men.

LABOULAYE  
It must be difficult, having two such beautiful strong ladies in your life.

FREDERIC  
You can say what you're thinking.

LABOULAYE  
You've been together many years. A woman thinks of marriage after much less time.

FREDERIC  
Not this one. She has bigger things on her mind than bouquets. Besides, I'm trying to find the right moment to discuss it with my Mother.

LABOULAYE  
When would be the right moment?

FREDERIC

When she's dead, would make sense. I have enough money saved to rent a nice house, or buy more copper.

LABOULAYE

Emilie gives. Liberty takes.

FREDERIC

We'll raise the money. We'll finish this. Then Emilie will have me all to herself.

LABOULAYE

By the end of the Expo we will have enough to complete over half of Liberty.

FREDERIC

And there's another Expo in London next month. Then Brussels. And...

They are interrupted by Emilie as she brings over the STOUT and serious man. He has a bulldog face and a too-tight collar. He's carrying a small, but heavy, BOX.

EMILIE

Frederic, might I introduce Mr Eugene Secretan. He's a "friend" of a friend.

Laboulaye and Frederic share a look.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

We were just discussing business and it seems Mr Secretan has a very interesting surplus to discuss.

SECRETAN

I'm not a fancy man, Mr Bartholdi. Not one for Paris Balls or haute cuisine. I buy nice things with my money. Paintings. I like paintings. And I like what you've made, over there, Liberty.

FREDERIC

Partially made.

SECRETAN

Yes. Partially. So I'll get to the point.

He opens the box to reveal a CUBE of SOLID COPPER.

SECRETAN (CONT'D)

I came here looking for you. I make copper. I make money making copper. A lot of copper. A lot of money.

(MORE)

SECRETAN (CONT'D)

That's a kilo there. It's yours. But it's not much good for building the rest of your Ladyship, is it? No. So where that kilo came from, there's another 60,000.

FREDERIC

We don't have the money to buy 60,000 kilos of your copper, sir.

SECRETAN

I don't want your money.

Off Frederic's stunned look...

SECRETAN (CONT'D)

I want your address.

EMILIE

You can kiss him. I'll allow it.

Frederic showers kisses upon Mr Secretan. So very happy.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Delivery carts pulled by huge Drayhorses arrive at the yard hauling carts heavy laden with COPPER.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Never underestimate the potential of a Fairy Godmother to suddenly appear...

The sides of the carts bear the name of SECRETAN. Frederic kisses each and every Drayhorse on the muzzle.

In the b/g, we can see the towering internal iron skeleton of Liberty, built by Eiffel.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And get you that new dress you always wanted for the party.

INT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

We see the thin copper SKIN of Liberty being shaped against all those incredible full-size plaster molds.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Time-lapse of those copper skin pieces being attached to the iron skeleton over the course of the next few weeks.

Slowly, the shape and figure of Liberty becomes clear as the copper skin rises from her feet -

Up the folds of her dress to her waist -

And beyond to her arm that cradles the tablet -

All the way up to shoulder height.

She's already TALLER than any building in Paris.

And as day turns to night, little lights form a PATH through the yard to the foot of Liberty.

WAITERS carry silver trays of food and wine to where -

A doorway leads INSIDE the statue.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY, PARIS - NIGHT

We can HEAR a PARTY in progress.

We climb with the waiter up hundreds of steps to a WIDE PLATFORM where there's a long dining table with forty seated GUESTS, food, wine and laughter.

Frederic and Emilie hold court. Many of her "female friends" mingle with the wealthy male guests.

The views of Paris from this astonishing height are to die for. Those lucky enough to have been invited gaze out over the incomplete shoulders of Liberty.

We recognize several of the guests as men who rebuffed the initial request for donations from Frederic many years ago, several of the intellectuals who mocked his idea, and many of the MODELS who graced his studio.

Simon feels fifty years younger thanks to the gorgeous young lady adorning his lap.

There are entertainers, musicians, a lady on stilts dressed as Liberty. Frederic knows how to throw a party.

Emilie taps her knife against her glass for attention...

EMILIE

Gentlemen, we gather here to celebrate this great achievement so far, and ensure its completion. Yes, this is the part of the evening where you realize there is no such thing as a free dinner.

INTELLECTUAL #1  
They hold us to ransom.

FREDERIC  
We cannot hold you to ransom. Instead, we offer two ways down from the party.

Emilie points to the stairs...

EMILIE  
The expensive interior route.

Frederic points over the side of Liberty's shoulders...

FREDERIC  
Or the cheap way down, on the exterior.

Laughter from their guests.

EMILIE  
Not joking. We need 50,000 more.

A Waiter approaches Frederic and whispers in his ear.

Emilie sees the concern spread over Frederic's face.

Frederic rushes to the stairs. Emilie runs after him.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic races to a waiting carriage. Calls up to the driver...

FREDERIC  
Place du Libertine.

And jumps into the cabin. The driver whips the horses. The carriage speeds off. Frederic hauls Emilie inside the moving carriage.

EXT. PLACE DU LIBERTINE, PARIS - NIGHT

Charles is dragged from his house by a pair of burly hospital PORTERS. He's naked apart from the rouge on his cheeks, a corset, and a pair of ladies' stockings.

A Porter covers Charles' man-parts with his CAP. His poor WIFE sobs on the step. His children sob into her dress.

A carriage arrives. Frederic and Emilie jump out...

FREDERIC

Charles!

CHARLES

Let them eat cake! Let them eat cake!

FREDERIC

Stop!

EMILIE

What are you doing with him?

The Porters bustle Charles towards an AMBULANCE

PORTERS

Doctor's orders, Miss. It's the Asylum  
for Mr Bartholdi. And don't worry sir,  
plenty of room for you too.

The laughing Porters bundle Charles into shackles and a  
straight-jacket, then into the ambulance.

Frederic and Emilie follow Charles' wife indoors.

INT. CHARLES' HOUSE, PLACE DU LIBERTINE - NIGHT

Frederic and Emilie pause at the threshold. It's dark  
inside. Dark and uninviting.

EMILIE

I thought it would be much nicer.

FREDERIC

The last time I came here it was.

EMILIE

How long ago?

FREDERIC

Ten years.

As they are drawn slowly to the sound of sobbing inside,  
they find the house is almost completely EMPTY of  
material possessions. No carpets. No paintings. No  
furniture. No ornaments. Nothing.

EMILIE

Isn't he supposed to be rich and  
successful?

FREDERIC

I don't understand it.

They find Charles' wife huddled by the fire in the back parlor. This is a scene of despair.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

What happened?

WIFE

Opium happened. And whores. Lots of whores. And gambling. There's nothing left. It's all gone. God help us.

INT. ATTACHED HOUSE, PARIS - DAY

Frederic sits with his Mother, Emilie, and two BAILIFFS at the kitchen table.

BAILIFF

Charles owes tens of thousands of Francs in gambling debts. Though he's been locked in an asylum, those debts don't just disappear. They remain with the family. They're all yours. And you have thirty days to pay.

FREDERIC

That's insane.

BAILIFF

That's the Law.

FREDERIC

Then put the Law in an asylum too.

The Bailiffs leave a sheaf of official documents on the table and exit.

MOTHER

I don't have the money to pay.

Emilie urges Frederic to speak up...

FREDERIC

Unfortunately, I do. I've saved enough from my commissions. I was going to buy a small house for Emilie and I.

Emilie reaches for his hand. Comforts him.

MOTHER

You save the family name, and honor. Your father would be proud.

He gets up and stands before the family portrait hanging above the fire.

FREDERIC

My father didn't know me. He died when I was two. I'm not part of the picture, remember. That's not me. I don't exist.

EMILIE

Who would have thought crazy Frederic would turn out to be the great achiever in the family?

Frederic takes the painting down.

And SMASHES it over a chair.

FREDERIC

Let's try to remember which of your darling sons has managed to stay clear of the whorehouses and opium dens and racetracks, shall we?

With a charred lump of wood, he SKETCHES his own portrait on the wall above the fire - with a "Liberty" spiked crown on his head.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

And by the way, Mother, I intend to marry Emilie at my earliest opportunity. I trust you have no reservations?

His Mother scowls at Emilie.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - NIGHT

Lying naked in each others' arms on the studio divan...

EMILIE

Do you really want to marry me?

FREDERIC

With all my heart and several other parts of my anatomy. Alas, thanks to Charles, I no longer have money for a house, or a ring, or much of anything.

EMILIE

I don't need fancy things. I need you to finish with this other woman. I can't share you forever.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

History will record that the greatest woman in Frederic's life stood over 300ft tall. In truth, though, she stood a little over 5 foot, on her tiptoes.

The sun rises. Daylight floods into the studio from the skylights above.

EMILIE

Go to work, Frederic.

He kisses her. So in love. And leaves.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

Time-lapse of the REST OF LIBERTY being built.

Her shoulders -

Her head -

And every section of that defiantly raised arm until the torch itself is complete.

EXT. PARIS - DAY

We see views of Liberty standing tall above the rooftops from many different streets.

Crowds gather to gaze in AWE.

Gently pushing to the front of one group of admirers -

Frederic's Mother.

All the regrets she ever had slowly fade from her face.

And she smiles. A small but significant smile.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - NIGHT

Eiffel, Simon, and Henri, drunk, bid farewell to Frederic. He sits himself on a crate, and basks in the moonlit beauty of his behemoth creation.

Brandy. Cigar.

And Liberty.

Finished.

A towering copper goddess.

There's a tear in his eye.

We notice an old man has entered the yard behind him, a visitor, an admirer.

He coughs politely to gain Frederic's attention. Without turning to see who it is...

FREDERIC

Come, join me. Have a drink. It's too cold to be out without Brandy.

The old man sits next to Frederic on the crate. Still, Frederic can't take his eyes off Liberty. He hands the old man the brandy. He drinks. And drinks. And drinks.

Now Frederic turns.

The old man is Victor Hugo.

VICTOR HUGO

I can only see the back of her head from my window.

FREDERIC

It's her prettiest side.

VICTOR HUGO

My daughter died in the river. Just beyond your statue. She drowned. Her heavy dress dragged her down. Whenever I see the river, I'm sad. I should live somewhere else. But the house has happier memories inside. I wanted to thank you, Mr. Bartholdi, for giving the river some meaning other than her death. When I look at Liberty, I see hope.

He shakes hands with Frederic. And embraces him. Then unfolds a piece of paper from his pocket...

VICTOR HUGO (CONT'D)

It's just a couple of lines. I wrote them for you. And for Liberty. They don't congratulate your achievement. They don't speak to what is outside you. They speak to what is inside.

He gives the lines to an overwhelmed Frederic, tips his hat, and pauses before he leaves...

VICTOR HUGO (CONT'D)

I'm writing a new novel, *Les Miserables*.  
My publisher loves it. I worry it might  
be over-rated. Perhaps you could give it  
a review?

FREDERIC

I have high hopes.

They smile. Hugo leaves. Frederic reads the lines.

But we don't see them. Or hear them.

Snow FALLS.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

Frederic walks home through the snow.

It's a long and laborious journey thanks to every  
Parisian he meets insisting on shaking his hand, and  
pointing to Liberty, over the rooftops, with her snow  
dusted crown.

PARISIAN #1

You have made Paris even more magical.

PARISIAN #2

You make us so proud.

PARISIAN #3

We love you.

PARISIAN #4

You can't take her away. She is Paris.

PARISIAN #5

The Americans don't deserve her.

PARISIAN #6

Promise she will stay.

Mostly, people just hug him. And love him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Paris fell in love with Liberty and  
Frederic but the love affair was doomed  
from the start.

EXT. PARIS - DAY

Spring. People crying. Public mourning. It's the 1885 version of the Beatles breaking up.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Winter turned to Spring, and despite the protests and broken hearts of Parisians, Lady Liberty had to places to go.

EXT. GAGET GAUTHIER & CO WORKSHOP, PARIS - DAY

A huge Merchant Ship pulls into the dock behind Liberty.

Big grown men cry as they disassemble Liberty, number each piece, wrap it, crate it, and transfer it to the ship.

EXT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY

A crowd gathers outside.

The One Armed Man is making a killing selling little flags for them all to wave. One side is the Tricolor, the other side is the Stars & Stripes.

They sing patriotic songs.

There's a waiting carriage.

INT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY

Frederic and Emilie watch Porters carry out their LUGGAGE. Simon embraces his boss.

SIMON

You knew nothing when we started working together.

FREDERIC

Alas, there has been so little improvement on my part.

SIMON

America is a long journey for my old bones. I'll rest them here till you return. I'm sure you'll have plenty of help over there.

As ever, his Mother lingers in the doorway that leads to the Attached House.

FREDERIC

Come into the light, Mother. Let me say  
goodbye with the sun on your face.

She comes to him. She's crying.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

No tears, Mama. The work is almost done.  
When we return, I think we'll move back  
to the countryside. The air will be  
better for you.

He kisses her. Emilie kisses her.

MOTHER

You are lucky to have a woman who  
understands who you are. I would love to  
have a daughter, one day, soon.

She gives Frederic a small PAPER BAG.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

For the journey.

He looks inside - freshly baked Madelines.

FREDERIC

The journey? These won't last as far as  
the front door.

He EATS one right away. Fuck that tastes good.

MOTHER

Go. Your other woman is waiting.

EXT. FREDERIC'S STUDIO, PARIS - DAY

Frederic and Emilie push through the CHEERING CROWD to  
the waiting carriage.

INT. CARRIAGE, PARIS - DAY

Closing the door to the crowd, they settle back into  
their seats, and the carriage sets off.

FREDERIC

It's all plain sailing now.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Do I actually need to comment by this  
point?

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP, ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

A HORRIFIC raging STORM -

LASHES the ship from every angle.

Crashing fifty foot waves. Thunder and lightning.

Torrential rain. Wrath of the Gods stuff.

INT. CABIN, MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Cramped. Basic.

There are sounds of SHOUTING and PANIC from other parts of the ship. The constant POUNDING of the waves and CRASHING of things on board creates a cacophony like the middle of a battlefield.

The weak light comes from a storm lantern hung from the ceiling. It mostly illuminates TERROR on the faces of Emilie and Frederic.

EMILIE

We're going to die. We're going to sink, and drown, and die.

FREDERIC

These ships are designed for worse weather than this. I'll talk to the crew.

INT. CORRIDOR, MERCHANT SHIP - NIGHT

Frederic stumbles out -

Lurches past a CRYING CREWMAN -

And stops by the GALLEY.

Inside, he can HEAR the CREW discuss SURVIVAL.

CREWMAN#1

We're sailing too low. We need to lighten the ship.

CREWMAN#2

Throw that damned statue overboard, or we're all going down.

Frederic's world shifts with the sudden realization that his GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT is about to be LOST.

He heads away from the Galley, braves the downpour coming through a hatch, and climbs the steps to -

EXT. OPEN DECK, MERCHANT SHIP - DAY

Frederic enters the MAELSTROM of a Mid-Atlantic storm.

SEA SPRAY smashes into his face like a block of ice.

The wind WHIPS his body. The ship PLUNGES into a trough between the waves.

And up ahead, he can see huge CRATES marked LIBERTY, straining at the ROPES that lash them to the deck.

The NOISE is off the scale.

A CREWMAN tries to push past him. The Crewman has a MACHETE. Frederic knows this is the end for Liberty. Unless...

He grabs the Crewman, and pulls him back. Frederic FIGHTS him for the machete. This is a guy who never gives up. A man possessed. He grapples the machete off the Crewman.

Holding onto a rope rail that runs alongside the outer cabins, he HAULS himself to the crates.

Then uses loose ropes to SECURE himself to Liberty's crates. He has tied himself to her fate.

He looks back towards the hatch, where the crewmen have gathered to look at this crazy guy waving a machete at the raging thunderstorm.

FREDERIC

You're fighting the wrong man. I am Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. I have died once already. And I'm still here. So come on. Give me all you've got. And when you're done, let's see who's still here.

The crewmen cross themselves, retreat, and secure the hatch. Frederic is locked out.

And as the STORM GETS WORSE - he laughs in its face. Laughs hard. Till he sees the wave gathering to the starboard side of the ship.

A wave that's a hundred feet tall -

Rolling, cresting, and crashing down upon him with the force of a toppling skyscraper.

Frederic, the crates, and the ship -

Disappear beneath the wave.

The wave clears.

The ship surges upwards.

We hold on Frederic - still lashed to the crates.

But he's not laughing now. He's hanging, tethered by his wrist. He has the look of the drowned - the dead.

EXT. MID-ATLANTIC - DAY

Calm sea. Clear sky.

The Merchant Ship has survived the storm.

EXT. MERCHANT SHIP, ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

The hatch door opens.

A crewman ushers Emilie out onto the deck.

She sees the body of Frederic, slumped against the crates, exhausted, battered, drenched, and rushes to him.

She wipes the sodden hair from his face.

EMILIE

Frederic? My love. My crazy love.

He blinks awake.

The sun is behind her and creates a halo of light - the rays of Liberty's crown. She's smiling. She looks so beautiful, so perfect.

FREDERIC

My angel. I was wrong. I should have kept your face.

She kisses him. The crewman CUTS him free.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Have I missed breakfast?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Chances are he didn't say anything so flippant.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And we might be stretching the absolute truth with the whole lashing himself to the crates thing. Who knows? I wasn't there. You weren't there. Just trying to sell a story here. Go with it.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DAY

The Merchant Ship docks at Bedloe's Island, the proposed site for the Statue Of Liberty.

Frederic jumps down onto dry land, and is greeted by workmen and the plinth architect, DICK HUNT, a nervous man, with good reason.

DICK HUNT

Richard Hunt, Dick, architect, designer of the plinth for Lady Liberty. How was your journey?

FREDERIC

It passed without incident. However, I cannot promise the same for the next five minutes. Let me ask you this, because I'm a little confused.

Frederic makes a show of scanning the tiny island.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Where is the plinth?

DICK HUNT

Ah, yes, I was coming to that. Certain, assumptions have been made that have delayed progress beyond excavating the foundations.

FREDERIC

Wait. Wait there. I have built the world's tallest and greatest statue, by far, and correct me if I didn't quite hear you - you have dug a hole?

DICK HUNT

Let me explain.

FREDERIC

No. Let me kill you.

Frederic takes a SWING at Hunt.

Hunt DUCKS and RUNS.

His workmen GRAB Frederic but he squirms free and CHASES AFTER Smith.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

It's a tiny island. You can't get away.

WITH EMILIE:

Being helped from the ship.

EMILIE

Frederic? Frederic?

We see he cresting a small hill on the island to find Frederic sitting astride Hunt, STRANGLING him.

EMILIE (CONT'D)

Frederic! Unhand that man immediately.

Hunt's workmen rush over to pull Frederic away.

Frederic falls back onto the grass next to a distraught Hunt, and stares up at a blue and empty sky.

FREDERIC

They've done nothing. We have nothing to put her on. All this time.

EMILIE

Mr. Smith, explain yourself.

DICK HUNT

I was trying to do just that.

EMILIE

Then try harder.

DICK HUNT

We never thought you'd raise the money for the statue, never mind build her. It all seemed so, expensive. And impossible. So we're running behind schedule.

EMILIE

How far behind?

DICK HUNT

Six months. Perhaps more. Depends how quickly we can get the money to continue.

EMILIE

Exactly how much have you raised here in America for this magnificent gift from the people of France?

DICK HUNT

Just enough...  
(A beat)  
...to dig the hole.

Emilie shares a look with Frederic.

Then she KICKS Dick Hunt in the ribs. Oof.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

Later, all of the crates containing the numbered parts of Liberty have been UNLOADED from the ship and stand idly stacked by the dock.

The ship casts off. Frederic and Emilie wave it goodbye.

A sheepish and bruised Dick Hunt offers them a ride to the city in his boat.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Frederic and Emilie look out across the harbor towards tiny Bedloe's Island.

The wind BLOWS a NEWSPAPER against his legs. He peels it away. It's the FRONT PAGE of the THE NEW YORK WORLD.

There's a story about new PRESIDENT, Grover Cleveland.

He smiles.

EMILIE

What is it?

FREDERIC

An old friend just got a very important new job. It comes with the keys to the Federal budget for building monuments.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON - DAY

Establishing.

GROVER CLEVELAND (V.O.)

Mr Bartholdi, I can spare you the time it takes to eat my dinner, but I warn you - I eat fast.

INT. STATE ROOM, THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The Oval Office hasn't been built yet, but the usual symbols and paraphernalia of high office are all in attendance.

President Cleveland dines at his desk. Frederic stands before him...

FREDERIC

Liberty is built. The foundations are dug.

GROVER CLEVELAND

Congratulations. I never thought you'd get it done.

FREDERIC

The American side of the bargain, though, has not been fulfilled. We have no plinth to stand her upon.

GROVER CLEVELAND

That's a damn shame.

FREDERIC

When you were the Governor of New York, you told me to go to the President for the funds. So here I am.

GROVER CLEVELAND

And this statue is going to stand in New York? Pass the salt.

FREDERIC

Bedloe's Island. In the harbor.

GROVER CLEVELAND

That's going to be a problem.

Off Frederic's look...

GROVER CLEVELAND (CONT'D)

As President, I can't be seen to favor the State where I was Governor. It looks bad. Real bad. Have you tried folks like JP Morgan? Astor? That Vanderbilt fella?

INT. STEAM TRAIN, MOVING - NIGHT

Frederic drinks. Emilie sleeps against his shoulder.

EXT. HOTEL, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

A solid four star establishment.

INT. HOTEL, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Frederic and Emilie enter their suite.

There's a TELEGRAM on the table.

Frederic flops on the bed.

EMILIE

Shall I read it?

He makes an artistic gesture of compliance.

Emilie reads the telegram. She looks to Frederic, upset. She has to sit. Frederic takes note.

FREDERIC

Emilie?

EMILIE

It's from Simon.

INSERT SHOT:

Simon, Laboulaye, frail and old, and others at the graveside of Frederic's Mother.

And now Simon, and the others at the graveside of Laboulaye.

BACK TO THE SCENE:

EMILIE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

FREDERIC

Don't be. I got to taste the Madelines.

EMILIE

Simon says the funerals will be over before you can sail home.

FREDERIC

It's all over whether I stay or whether I go. All over.

He buries his head in a pillow. And sleeps.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

Gulls roost on the packing crates containing the numbered parts of Liberty.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And so Liberty sat there, for months, waiting for a hero. Just one damn guy or gal in the whole United States of America who would step up to the plate and say, "Bartholdi, I'm here to help." Meanwhile, Liberty rotted on Bedloe's Island. And Frederic, sick and exhausted, rotted on Manhattan.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - DAY

Frederic is ILL in bed. Emilie throws the drapes open. She's dressed. And determined.

FREDERIC

Stop.

EMILIE

We're leaving.

FREDERIC

I can't leave. I can't leave her.

EMILIE

We're getting out of this city. It's making you sick. It's just full of diseases, and yes men who like to say no. You need to find Frederic again. The one who fights when everyone else runs away.

FREDERIC

Where is he? Where's this Frederic.

EMILIE

He's in Rhode Island. With my friend.

EXT. CHURCH, RHODE ISLAND - DAY

Frederic and Emilie emerge with friends - MARRIED.

EMILIE (V.O.)

He's a minister.

INT. MINISTER'S HOUSE, RHODE ISLAND - NIGHT

A big PARTY of friends, locals, musicians, artists.

For once, Frederic relaxes among his own kind of people.

There's wine, and song, and dance, and so much love for his new wife Emilie.

Choristers from the church sing them a beautiful aria.

The MINISTER says a few words...

MINISTER

I want to welcome the new Mr and Mrs Batholdi to our Rhode Island sanctuary for disaffected artists.

Cheers from the guests.

MINISTER (CONT'D)

One thing that's clear in this community of love and art and creativity, is that before you can build anything of note, you must have a strong foundation.

Frederic stands up and expresses his own heartfelt emotions. We sense he's finding strength here. Strength to continue the journey.

FREDERIC

The rock I build my life upon is love. And the love has a name. And her name is Emilie. And without her, I am just broken pieces in boxes, sitting out in the rain.

Emilie and Frederic kiss, and dance, and love some more.

EXT. MINISTER'S HOUSE, RHODE ISLAND - NIGHT

At the end of the evening, they smoke cigars and drink fine brandy out on the porch.

The MINISTER hands Frederic a business card.

MINISTER

What you need is someone who can reach the regular folks, the real New Yorkers. Not the hoity-toits. Regular human beings with heart and soul and a need for something more than what they got.

Reading the card...

FREDERIC  
Who is this Mr Pulitzer?

MINISTER  
He runs a newspaper. Dreadful rag. But he  
knows people. What have you got to lose?

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

A carriage drops Frederic outside the offices of THE WORLD NEWSPAPER.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Dreadful rag indeed. I should sue.

INT. THE WORLD, MANHATTAN - DAY

Frederic is guided through a labyrinthine arrangements of desks and journalists by an UNDER-SECRETARY. Finally, he is ushered into the smoke-filled office of JOSEPH PULITZER.

Pulitzer sits in a high-back swivel chair facing the window, where he has a distant view of the harbor.

UNDER-SECRETARY  
Mr Frederic Bartholdi, sir.

Pulitzer turns to meet Frederic. He has that sort of wickedly infectious charm that you can't help but adore. He's a Victorian Tom Hanks or Robert Downey. And when he speaks, we realize something else...

PULITZER  
Frederic, I hear you got quite a story?

Pulitzer is our NARRATOR. It's HIS voice we've been hearing pass comment throughout the movie so far.

EXT. BATTERY PARK, MANHATTAN - DAY

Pulitzer and Frederic gaze across the harbor to Bedloe's Island. Next to them, a BOY throws breadcrumbs for the gulls, whilst his GRANDMOTHER reads a NEWSPAPER.

PULITZER  
A newspaper is a very powerful tool. I can use it to support or condemn, to inform or misinform. One hundred thousand people read my newspaper every morning.  
(MORE)

PULITZER (CONT'D)

They want to read good stories, uplifting stories. What's that you're reading there, young lady?

The GRANDMOTHER shows him her copy of THE NEW YORK JOURNAL. Pulitzer grimaces...

PULITZER (CONT'D)

May I?

He takes it from her.

PULITZER (CONT'D)

I'll need a bath after touching this filth, obviously. This is the drivel spewed out by Randolph Hearst. Here.

He opens the paper at a CARTOON.

The cartoon MOCKS the lack of progress made in erecting the Statue Of Liberty. It shows her as an aged crone with a walking stick.

PULITZER (CONT'D)

See that? Sensationalist negativity. He can't build anything other than fear and loathing.

FREDERIC

The fund to build the plinth is empty. No money, no plinth. Nobody wants to help.

The BOY tugs on Frederic's trousers.

BOY

I'll help.

FREDERIC

That's very kind. But you're a boy. We need men with money. Lots of money.

BOY

I've got money. I've got two jobs. I make almost a dollar a week.

PULITZER

Wow. You're exactly the kind of kid that's going to make this country great. How old are you?

BOY

Ten.

PULITZER

Come see me when you're fourteen. I'll give you a job pays five dollars week.

The kid spits on his hand and holds it out to shake.

BOY

Got yourself a sweet deal, sir.

Pulitzer shakes his hand. The Boy digs in his pocket and pulls out a NICKEL. Hands it to Frederic.

BOY (CONT'D)

This is for you. Put it in your fund. Get enough of those, you can build anything you want.

FREDERIC

I can't take it.

BOY

Take it. I'd only spend it on candy or cigarettes or a kiss from Maisy-Sue at the market.

PULITZER

What's your name, kid.

BOY

Brendan P Maloney, sir.

PULITZER

That's generous positivity you just displayed, Brendan P Maloney. You should be rewarded. What can I get you?

BOY

Don't seem much point me giving you a nickel if you're going to spend it giving me a reward.

PULITZER

There has to be something I can do.

BOY

What's this job you were talking about for when I'm thirteen.

PULITZER

I said fourteen, but I like your negotiating skills. I got a newspaper. The New York World.

BOY  
Best damn newspaper in New York.

To the Grandmother...

PULITZER  
Is this kid up for adoption?

To the Boy...

PULITZER (CONT'D)  
How about you get a free newspaper every  
day?

The Boy thinks about it...

FREDERIC  
Tell me, Brendan P Maloney, have you ever  
seen your name in a newspaper. Printed,  
so all your friends can see it too?

The Boy's eyes LIGHT UP.

BOY  
That would be awesome.

PULITZER  
Then that's what I'm going to do. And you  
tell everyone you know. You give us a  
nickel, a dime, two cents, whatever you  
have in your pocket for Liberty, I'll  
print your name in my newspaper. How  
about that?

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

The Boy picks up the next edition of The New York World  
and sure enough, his NAME is right there as a DONOR in  
bold letters beneath a CALL TO ACTION for the LIBERTY  
FUND. Brendan P Maloney is the happiest kid on Earth.

We see further days -

And more people picking up The New York World to read  
their own name in print as a DONOR to the Liberty Fund.

The LIST of DONOR NAMES grows longer every day.

Soon, it fills half a page. Excitement BUILDS among the  
people of New York.

INT. OFFICES, THE NEW YORK WORLD - DAY

Pulitzer and Frederic have created a FUND METER in the LOBBY. It's a growing statue of Liberty built from DONATED COPPER COINS.

We see Liberty rise - first the plinth itself -

Then the feet -

The lower parts of the dress -

Up over the waist -

And onwards, higher, her left arm holding the tablet.

Frederic stands on a ladder to add more coins to the sculpture. Pulitzer looks on, delighted.

EXT. STREET, MANHATTAN - DAY

The Boy, Brendan P Maloney, shows his friends his name in the newspaper.

BOY

That's six times I've been in the news.  
They write more about me than they do  
rich folks like Vanderbilt.

He gets a free kiss from Maisy-Sue.

EXT. RESTAURANT, LITTLE ITALY - NIGHT

Italian music drifts out.

INT. RESTAURANT, LITTLE ITALY - NIGHT

Frederic and Emilie dine with Pulitzer and his wife. This is a "straight off the boat" Sicilian place. There's even a shrine in the corner with figurines of the VIRGIN MARY and a gang of pertinent SAINTS.

EMILIE

I hear there is a movement here for the  
emancipation of women, like in Europe.

WIFE OF PULITZER

Emancipation is a long long way off for  
American women, darling. The menfolk here  
have just got over the shock of giving  
the blacks a whiff of freedom.

(MORE)

WIFE OF PULITZER (CONT'D)

Lord knows what would happen if us ladies had such things as rights, votes, equal pay.

EMILIE

Nothing is impossible.

WIFE OF PULITZER

Impossible, no. Improbable, yes.

PULITZER

What made you want to undertake such an improbable task as building Liberty?

FREDERIC

In all honesty, at first, I thought this Statue Of Liberty will be great for me. Make me famous. Earn me commissions from the wealthy people of America.

INSERT SHOT: Frederic puts on his military uniform and rides alone through the fog shrouded streets of Colmar. He wears a red, white, and blue sash.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

But it doesn't make me famous. It makes me ill. And broke. And stupid. And laughed at. A lot. Building Liberty was not about me any more.

INSERT SHOT: Frederic is joined by Emilie, and Laboulaye, wearing the same uniform.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

It was about the struggle, the fight, the will to carry on when the world did everything it could to stop me.

INSERT SHOT: Victor Hugo and Henri Leboeuf join the riders, along with the One Armed Man and former President Ulysses S Grant.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Years have come and gone. Ten years. More, and now it's not even about the fight.

INSERT SHOT: The riders reach the battlefield outside the village of Colmar.

Across the muddy expanse, they see the enemy lines by the trees. But these are not Germans any more...

They are the people who ridiculed Frederic - JP Morgan, Astor, Vanderbilt, Cleveland. They are crazy Charles and the Paris intellectuals. They are the RICH and the ELITE with their GOLDEN CANNONS and laughing minions.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

The fight will always be there. It's about the people joining me, the people helping to carry the load.

INSERT SHOT: Frederic and his allies CHARGE the lines of the Rich and rout them. And they're joined by THOUSANDS of regular folks - an army of common men, women and children and Brendan P Maloney. They swarm the enemy lines -

Flashing swords slash down and slaughter the sneering Vanderbilts, the San Francisco Trump, the Paris Intellectuals. It's a sweeping VICTORY for Frederic.

BACK TO THE RESTAURANT SCENE:

PULITZER

I'm positively priapic with joy that we are so close. Yet...

Concern from those around the table.

PULITZER (CONT'D)

Still so far. We need more. And we need it soon. We have to build before Winter or we lose another year and how our enemies will swoop upon that delay to destroy us in our moment of victory.

EMILIE

The coins are not enough?

PULITZER

No. We need more dollars.

EMILIE

How many?

PULITZER

25,000.

Frederic's attention is caught by the Italian Shrine in the corner of the restaurant, with the figurines of the Virgin Mary and Saints.

FREDERIC

I have an idea.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - DAY

Frederic carves a new sculpture of Liberty, 18 inches high, from clay.

INT. CERAMICS FACTORY, BROOKLYN - DAY

A MOLD is made of Little Liberty.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

Brendan P Maloney runs a STALL selling those 18 inch high plaster models of Liberty for a dollar a pop. Seems everyone in the city wants one.

PULITZER (V.O.)

Those tacky statuettes of Liberty all the damn tourists buy? They came first. That's right. Without those little Liberties, there would have been no big Liberty. True fact.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

The haunting bellow of a passing ship's horn.

Frederic addresses a large group of WORKMEN, led by architect Dick Hunt.

FREDERIC

Gentlemen, let us begin.

Nobody moves.

DICK HUNT

They don't speak English. Or French. I don't actually know where they come from. Timbuktu most likely.

FREDERIC

Immigrants. Outsiders. The unwanted. The lost. Well, good. The time for talk is over. Now is the time for us to do.

He leads them down to the dock -

Where SHIPS are lining up to UNLOAD BUILDING MATERIALS for the PLINTH.

PULITZER (V.O.)

It only seems right that the men who  
built Liberty barely had a word of  
English between them.

Time lapse of the PLINTH rising, and completed.

Frederic and Emilie climb a ladder to the top.

Emilie is draped in a copper-colored fabric. She wears a copper radiant crown, carries a copper torch, and tablet.

She poses as Liberty, looking out towards the city.

FREDERIC

The whole of Manhattan can see you.

EMILIE

Why am I looking at the city, though.

FREDERIC

It's your home.

She turns around, and faces OUT TO SEA.

EMILIE

I should be looking out to the ocean,  
looking for the people coming here for  
freedom and a new life.

He joins her. It's a good idea. But still, it's not  
right.

FREDERIC

I like it, but all the people in the city  
will see is the back of her head.

At that moment -

A SHIP passes by the island. Hundreds of passengers crowd  
on deck. The Ship's Captain TOOTS the HORN. The  
passengers wave.

Emilie and Frederic turn and WAVE back.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

It's like President Grant told me. The  
best view is of the ships sailing by.  
Liberty has to face the ships, has to  
welcome the new arrivals. This is the way  
she will face.

He MARKS the position of Emilie with CHALK, and whistles  
down to the build crew below.

Cranes whir into action and begin to LIFT the first pieces of Liberty's iron Skeleton UP onto the plinth.

TIME LAPSE:

Of the iron skeleton taking shape.

Then -

One by one -

The numbered pieces of Liberty's copper skin are attached with iron straps and copper rivets.

Piece by piece, she rises.

EXT. BATTERY PARK, MANHATTAN - DAY

Brendan P Maloney feeds the birds with his Grandmother and proudly claims -

BOY

That's my piece they're putting on now. I paid for that. Me. Not JP Morgan. Me. Brendan P Maloney.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

Liberty is built as far as the shoulders.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Frederic is high inside Liberty, guiding the workers, lending a hand, building his masterpiece.

He reaches into his pocket, and takes out the POEM that Victor Hugo wrote for him.

WORKER

What you have there?

FREDERIC

A poem.

WORKER

You going to read it to us?

FREDERIC

No. It's for her.

He tucks the poem behind an iron connection strap, and rivets the piece in place, sealing the poem within the skin of Liberty, forever. The SOUND of him HAMMERING in the rivets becomes the...

EXT. KNICKERBOCKER HOTEL, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The hammering of a GAVEL by the MASTER OF CEREMONIES to quieten the assembled GUESTS at -

A LAVISH DINNER -

In the Grand Ballroom of the city's oldest luxury hotel.

A small orchestra finishes its piece. There are hundreds of tables, with a thousand or more HIGH SOCIETY diners. We recognize many of the wealthy families here, including the Astors, who built this hotel.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Ladies and gentlemen, please be upstanding for your distinguished host, owner and publisher of New York's best selling daily newspaper, Mr Joseph Pulitzer.

Pulitzer takes to the stage. His backdrop is a huge PAINTING of Liberty. And he's flanked by MODELS in Liberty costumes...

PULITZER

Thank you. Tonight we celebrate the truest spark of human ingenuity. We celebrate the triumph of an idea that will change the way the whole world sees this great city of ours forever. An idea that would have been crushed a thousand times by small-minded bureaucrats and dilettantes - were it not for the perseverance and persistence of one man. You wouldn't put your hands in your pockets for him so you can damn well put your hands together for him, the tres magnifique Mr Frederic Auguste Bartholdi.

Frederic kisses Emilie, and makes his way to the stage.

FREDERIC

I'm good with big ideas. Not so good with big speeches. Fortunately, you are blessed with an unbelievable artistic community. We have heard tonight their music, their songs, and now...

He takes out a sheet of paper...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Their poetry. We celebrate many things tonight. For me, we celebrate the most important aspect of any man's life - the woman. The mother, the wife, the daughter, the statue. And here, the poet, the very wonderful Miss Emma Lazarus.

INSERT SHOT: EMMA LAZARUS, flattered, at a table

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

I read for you tonight the words she has written regarding our Lady Liberty.

A pause whilst he milks the attention of his audience.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land  
to land.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - NIGHT

We move across the harbor waters towards the island and the silhouette of the giant statue there.

FREDERIC (V.O.)

Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates  
shall stand...

Up, onto the island now, towards the plinth.

FREDERIC (V.O.)

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles.

Circling around her moonlit curves and the fold of her dress.

FREDERIC (V.O.)

From her beacon-hand, Glows world-wide  
welcome; her mild eyes command, the air-  
bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

Adoring Liberty, almost complete, only her face and her torch yet to be fixed in place.

FREDERIC (V.O.)

Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp,  
cries she, with silent lips.

(MORE)

FREDERIC (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Give me your tired, your poor, your  
huddled masses yearning to breathe  
free...

And back down to the TENTS of the Immigrant Workers and their camp-fires. Men from the darkest corners of the Earth, gathered to labor on its greatest wonder. Their names have been forgotten. Their work lives on.

FREDERIC

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me...

INT. KNICKERBOCKER HOTEL, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Frederic raises his clenched fist in triumph...

FREDERIC

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

A hush falls over the distinguished guests.

A tear rolls down Emilie's cheek.

Frederic shares a look with Pulitzer. He nailed it.

Astor gets up from his seat. He applauds.

And one by one, the rest of High Society stands and applauds Frederic, applauds Liberty, applauds everything she encapsulates about hope, and freedom.

A beacon of light for the world.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

Early morning mist shrouds the island.

We follow Frederic's walk from the dock -

To the plinth -

To the public entrance to the interior.

He is greeted by all the workers he passes. Not like a King, or a boss. But as one of them.

He's carrying a BURLAP SACK over his shoulder, about the size of a sack of potatoes.

The workers are setting out SEATS around the plinth, and building a small stage.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Frederic climbs the steel stairs inside the statue -

Past more workers applying the finishing touches to the interior -

All the way up to the VIEWING DECK in her crown.

Here, he sets down the burlap sack -

And takes out a HUGE ROLLED FLAG - red, white, and blue.

With several men helping, he feeds the FLAG out onto a POLE that runs horizontally across the FOREHEAD of Liberty. Once secured -

He releases the TIES that keep the flag rolled.

The flag UNFURLS downwards.

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

We see that the flag is a huge Tricolor.

It COVERS the face of Liberty.

We see TWO STERN MESSENGERS striding up from the dock.

MESSENGER #1

A French flag? What the bejeezus is all that about then?

MESSENGER #2

He's French, the fella that's done the drawing for the statue.

MESSENGER #1

Anyone can do a drawing. It's Americans what's built it. The nerve of some people.

MESSENGER #2

That's foreigners for you.

Even more stern, they march up to the plinth.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Frederic enjoys the VIEW and a cigar.

A worker approaches from the stairs...

WORKER

Some Messengers are here.

FREDERIC

Tell them I'm busy.

WORKER

The telegram comes from the President.

FREDERIC

Then have them to bring it up.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

Frederic READS the message. The Messengers are sweating and exhausted from the climb up to the viewing level.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

President Cleveland is offering to deliver the inauguration address for Liberty?

MESSENGER #1

Yes. It's a great honor.

FREDERIC

It is. An incredible honor. And it should go to someone who deserves it. Tell the President I respectfully decline his offer. Good day, gentlemen.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON - DAY

President Cleveland reads a reply telegram. He EXPLODES.

GROVER CLEVELAND

WHAT?!!!

INT. RESTAURANT, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Frederic dines with Emilie.

The Messengers approach his table with another telegram.

Frederic reads.

FREDERIC

He's offering to declare a holiday for New York, and organize a parade, if I let him cut the ribbon and speak.

EMILIE

What does your heart say?

FREDERIC

It says that cutting the ribbon is a special job for a special person, like you.

To the Messengers...

FREDERIC (CONT'D)

Tell him thank you, but no. We have our own scissors.

MESSENGER #1

Sir, I don't think you understand. The President is very angry about this.

FREDERIC

Then let him know I was more angry when he refused to donate a single cent of State or Federal funds, or his own very deep pockets, towards the building of the single greatest monument of the modern world. The man who cuts the grass on Bedloe's Island has more right to cut the ribbon on Liberty than the President. He will have to contribute far more than his massive ego to persuade me otherwise.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON - NIGHT

President Cleveland THROWS something heavy and breakable across the room. It SMASHES.

GROVER CLEVELAND

WHAT?!!!

EXT. UNION SQUARE, MANHATTAN - DAY

Frederic and Emilie feed the birds at his statue of LAFAYETTE that now stands in the Square.

The distraught Messengers approach with another urgent telegram. Emilie reads it...

EMILIE

He's now offering to pay for a ticker-tape parade, with marching band, a 21 cannon salute, a firework display, and a party afterwards.

Frederic considers the offer...

EMILIE (CONT'D)

I do love fireworks.

FREDERIC

Tell him that the cost of the party shall not be less than \$50,000. I want to invite a lot of important guests.

The Messengers leave with his demands.

EMILIE

\$50,000 is such a lot of money.

FREDERIC

It's symbolic. He could have paid half of that when he was the Governor, and when he took office as President. He could have helped. He could have rallied support. Now he wants all the glory. No. Liberty has a price. And today, the price is a \$50,000 party.

EMILIE

Who shall we invite?

FREDERIC

For Liberty? Everyone. The whole world.

EXT. HOTEL, MANHATTAN - MORNING

The sun has barely peeked above the horizon, but already the city is alive with workers, merchants and carriages.

INT. SUITE, HOTEL - MORNING

Emilie helps Frederic with his cravat. They both wear new clothes. Emilie has red white and blue ribbons around her hat. There's a KNOCK on the door.

EMILIE

That will be our carriage.

Frederic opens the door.

In the HALLWAY, there are four POLICE, and several BURLY MEN in SUITS. The first of these men offers his hand to Frederic and introduces himself.

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
Special Agent Raven, sir. Good morning.

FREDERIC  
Have I done something wrong?

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
No, sir. Not at all. I'm leading the President's Security Detail. I just wanted to let you know about a few of the minor changes we've had to make, as a matter of courtesy.

FREDERIC  
What kind of changes?

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
Specifically, there can be no women at the inauguration.

FREDERIC  
No women?

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
None. We've had threats from Emancipation Groups aimed at the President himself and we just can't take the risk. The President sends his apologies.

FREDERIC  
It's unfortunate. I was so looking forward to meeting him again.

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
Sir?

FREDERIC  
If the President cannot make it because he is afraid of women, then I completely understand.

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN  
The President will be there, sir. We just can't have any women there at the same time.

Emilie comes to the door.

EMILIE

If your President thinks I'm a danger to his life then perhaps you need a new President.

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN

I cannot possibly comment on that, ma'am. But I'm willing to suggest that the ban does not apply to your lovely wife, sir.

FREDERIC

What about Liberty? She's a woman.

EMILIE

A very large woman. She could crush him like a fat grape.

SPECIAL AGENT RAVEN

If Liberty promises to behave, she can stay too. I appreciate your cooperation, sir. Have a wonderful day.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DAY

Dense FOG.

You can barely see ten feet ahead.

At the front of the boat ferrying them across the harbor with the BAND and dignitaries, Frederic is tense.

FREDERIC

Even now the Gods conspire against me.

EMILIE

God sends the fog to hide the shame of these stupid men.

All around, the harbor is full of fleeting shadows. HUNDREDS of boats mill about, decked out in French and US flags. Fog Horns BLARE.

FREDERIC

I knew I shouldn't have let Cleveland come today.

EMILIE

I hear he likes to make long speeches.

FREDERIC

Long boring speeches.

They hear a CHANT coming across the water. Dozens of female voices shouting a protest mantra together. And now their boat appears out of the mist, bedecked in protest banners and slogans - it's a Feminist Movement boat.

FEMINISTS

Votes for women! Shame on America! Votes for women! Shame on America!

Emilie takes up the cry...

EMILIE

Votes for women! Shame on America!

Frederic joins her...

FREDERIC

Votes for women! Shame on America!

They feel better. He glances behind. The other fifty occupants of the boat are all STERN FACED MEN in suits, staring at him with faces of contempt. Good.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

Blanketed in fog.

The band set up.

Dignitaries take their seats.

Red, white and blue ribbons adorn every surface.

The plinth of Liberty looms over them, a huge stone monolith. But then the fog hides Liberty completely. Only her toes are visible.

Frederic addresses the BAND LEADER.

FREDERIC

When I release the flag from Liberty's face, that's your cue to begin the anthems.

BAND LEADER

How will I know? I can't see the flag.

FREDERIC

It will fall. When it does, play. Play loud. Play strong. They have to hear you all the way across the harbor.

Frederic embraces the Band Leader, and kisses both his cheeks.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)  
Play for Liberty.

President Cleveland arrives.

He's holding his SPEECH. It looks like it's several pages long. Frederic groans inside.

Emilie brushes down his jacket.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)  
Nobody can see her. Nobody can see this moment. All these years, and what do we get? A fog-bank and an old windbag of a President.

EMILIE  
Perhaps the old windbag will blow the fog away.

He smiles.

FREDERIC  
Where would I be without you?

EMILIE  
With your brother, probably. Now, it has been 21 years since you had the idea to build Liberty. We won't let a little bad weather ruin the final day. Go. She has you for one more hour. Then you are all mine. And only mine.

Frederic heads off to Liberty.

We follow him, shaking hands with a "tunnel" of workers lining the route to the plinth's entrance.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Frederic climbs the 354 step to her viewing platform...

Where there are TWO SEATS. One is occupied -

By Simon. He passes Frederic a bottle of Brandy.

SIMON  
For the cold. Congratulations old friend.

Frederic drinks. And proposes a toast.

FREDERIC  
To blue skies ahead.

SIMON  
I think that's impossible today.

FREDERIC  
Impossible, no. Improbable, yes.

SIMON  
Then I'll drink to improbable blue skies.

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

We move across rows and rows of dignitaries, all men, and each man doing his utmost to stay awake as President Cleveland delivers one of the dullest oratories ever.

His words are mercifully MUFFLED and come across as a soporific drone...

GROVER CLEVELAND  
Blah blah blah blah blah blah.

Emilie yawns.

The yawn is contagious.

Now everyone yawns.

Still Cleveland drones on.

GROVER CLEVELAND (CONT'D)  
Blah blah blah blah blah blah.

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - DAY

Looking out of the viewing windows into the grey enveloping mist...

FREDERIC  
Laboulaye would have enjoyed it here today. He liked parties, and people.

Then -

He sees it.

FREDERIC (CONT'D)  
Look!

The CLOUDS above are PARTING.

There's a slither of BLUE SKY.

SIMON

My God. It worked.

Simon looks at his bottle of Brandy. And drinks a whole lot more.

Frederic reaches out and RELEASES the FLAG that's covering Liberty's FACE. Grabs Simon by the hand. And runs to the steps...

EXT. BEDLOE'S ISLAND - DAY

The French Flag floats down from Liberty and seems to DISPEL the fog with every twist and turn of its flight.

The Flag flutters over the gathered dignataries -

All look up and SEE the blue sky appearing overhead.

And as Cleveland DRONES on -

The Band Leader gives the signal and STRIKES UP THE BAND.

The US ANTHEM blasts out and cuts Cleveland off before he can turn to page 2 of 20.

Everybody stands and CHEERS as the fog parts and reveals Liberty in all he GLORY.

Frederic and Simon run from the plinth and JOIN the celebration. Boats surrounding the island LAUNCH FIREWORKS.

Frederic and Emilie see Pulitzer amid the crowd of dignitaries and share a look of triumph.

PULITZER (V.O.)

We travel different paths, but we all want the same destination.

And we rise from the crowd on Bedloe's Island, up to the face of Liberty. Fireworks explode all around.

PULITZER (V.O.)

Freedom. Freedom to be who we are...

Then plunge down and race across the harbor, teeming with ships and party boats -

PULITZER (V.O.)

Freedom to do what we do...

All the way across to Manhattan where -

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

We have the FIRST EVER TICKER TAPE PARADE in honor of Frederic and Liberty.

PULITZER (V.O.)  
Freedom to love who we love.

The Band march at the front, playing the French Anthem.

It's the biggest party New York has ever seen. And it's all at the President's expense.

PULITZER (V.O.)  
Liberty was created to be a symbol of hope for France and America.

In Frederic's carriage are Emilie and Pulitzer.

PULITZER (V.O.)  
But she has become so much bigger than Frederic ever dreamed.

As they parade down Broadway, crowds line either side and cheer. Streamers and ticker tape fill the air.

PULITZER (V.O.)  
She's a symbol of hope for the whole world.

The marching band switches from the French Anthem to the Can Can.

And we leave the DANCING Frederic and Emile to rise up through the streamers - and back out to Liberty.

We circle around her, and keep her in the foreground as behind, we see a TIME LAPSE of Manhattan over the next 130 years...

We see Liberty turn from the dazzling color of copper -

To her famous verdigris green. We see Manhattan reaching for the heavens with skyscrapers. We see the attacks on the Twin Towers. And the rise of the new LIBERTY TOWER.

Then hold on a glorious wide of Liberty at night -and red, white, and blue fireworks explode all around her.

THE END.