

**A MOTIVATED MAN**

*A story of transmutation and the chemist, Fritz Haber*

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OVER BLACK:

FRITZ (V.O.)

*To obey, is the way of the soldier.  
To be obeyed, is the way of the  
general.*

FADE IN:

**EXT. HEIDELBURG STREET - DAY**

Church bells RING and gas-lamps adorned with wreath and ribbon flicker in the winter night. A gentle snow falls on the cobblestone streets.

FRITZ (V.O.)

This is why I did what I did. For honor. For homeland.

**EXT. HABER HOUSEHOLD - SAME TIME**

A fine home -- long, plate windows steamed over -- alive with the LAUGHTER of adults and the playful SHOUTS of children.

FRITZ (V.O.)

It was my duty, as a German, to take it upon myself to see that both were found.

**INT. HABER HOUSEHOLD - CONTINUOUS**

**SUPER:** Germany, 1916

Women and children possessed by the gaiety of the holidays. Dancing, laughing, playing. But passed this, in...

**THE HABER STUDY**

... Sits FRITZ Haber, early-40's bald and compact, eyes twinkling behind round spectacles as he addresses a small cadre of YOUNG SCIENTISTS. He has them rapt.

FRITZ

And so. With shovel in hand. I proudly dug the officer the deepest latrine anyone had ever seen.

The young scientists erupt with LAUGHTER. Fritz is pleased with the attention.

YOUNG SCIENTIST

You are an example to us all, Herr Haber.

FRITZ

Truly. None of you should feel the pressures I felt -- intestinal or otherwise.

The door cracks open, the laughter fades. The tiny head of HERMANN Haber, 10, pokes in.

HERMANN

Father, mother requests you in the kitchen.

Fritz pushes himself up from his chair.

FRITZ

If you'll excuse me, gentlemen. It seems my wife is in need of orders of her own.

**INT. HABER KITCHEN - DAY**

A GERMAN MELODY floats from a phonograph, fills a spacious kitchen.

CLARA Haber, 40's, petite with thick hair done to strict perfection, inspects a burned ham -- *quiet genius in deep contemplation.*

Hermann bursts in.

HERMANN

Mother, father is --

CLARA

Do NOT run.

HERMANN

I'm sorry. Father is coming.

Fritz walks in, his smile disappears at the sight of the ham.

FRITZ

Clara!

CLARA

I am aware and have no need for further observation. Only a solution.

Fritz joins his wife in contemplating the charred ham.

FRITZ

Baking soda? React with the sugars,  
perhaps?

CLARA

Too late. The skin is far too dry  
and the proteins in the meat have  
already reacted from the heat.  
Thus, its current burnt  
disposition.

Fritz steals a glance at Clara -- her intelligence has always  
fascinated him. He turns to the pantry and pulls several  
jars. Molasses, honey, etc.

FRITZ

Sugars... What can be done with  
these?

Clara considers each jar. And then...

CLARA

Pyrolysis.

FRITZ

Oh?

Clara selects the molasses and the honey.

CLARA

Caramelized ham, husband. This will  
be an original recipe.

Clara turns back to the shelf, pulls a bottle of wine.

FRITZ

Pyrolysis can occur from the sugars  
in wine?

CLARA

Of course not.

FRITZ

Then why the red?

Clara pours a glass of wine, winks at her husband as she  
takes a sip. Fritz smiles, kisses his wife.

PRELAP: The CHATTER of post-dinner conversation.

**INT. HABER DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

A ham hock, stripped of its meat, glistens on a large serving plate. The Habers entertain their guests from either end of the long table.

One of the young scientists rises from his seat, holds his glass high.

YOUNG SCIENTIST

A toast! To this delicious  
Christmas ham --

The guests fall silent, all eyes are on the young scientist.

YOUNG SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

-- Provided by our dear hosts,  
Fritz and Clara.

KARL Bosch, 50's, the oldest and most handsome guest, raises his glass. The young scientist notices.

YOUNG SCIENTIST (CONT'D)

And to the combined genius of Fritz  
and Karl. They have brought  
humanity closer to defeating one of  
its greatest, most persistent foes:  
famine. May the Haber-Bosch process  
herald a new era for mankind.

Karl blushes. Fritz rises from his seat, shoulders back. His stout frame exuding authority, pride.

FRITZ

May we bring honor and pride to  
Germany. May the fatherland find  
victory over the villainy of our  
many enemies.

Fritz raises his glass, looks to Clara. She shifts in her seat, then raises her glass.

CLARA

Prost.

YOUNG SCIENTIST

Prost!

The guests raise their glasses. Fritz takes a long drink from his glass, eyes closed.

**INT. HABER HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT**

Many of the guests have left. The home is in disarray. Clara quietly returns the home to order.

Fritz and Karl sit beside one another in the living room, drinking from near empty cups of tea.

FRITZ

What will we do next, my friend?

Karl takes his time before speaking, as is his nature. He casts his eyes to his tea.

KARL

It will be back to my employers for me. I believe I have a project awaiting my arrival.

Fritz watches expectantly as Karl takes a sip from his tea.

FRITZ

And?

KARL

And? That is all, Fritz.

Fritz pauses, averts his eyes to his own cup.

FRITZ

I see.

Karl notices Fritz's disappointment. He sets his cup down.

KARL

I think what you and I accomplished is quite substantial. Do you agree?

FRITZ

I do. Truly. But during these times I wonder what else can be done.

KARL

This is true. Tell me, what is your young friend Dr. Einstein up to these days?

A smile forms on Fritz's face.

FRITZ

I have made him the head of Physics at the Wilhelm institute.

KARL

Ah, a wise appointment. Give him my congratulations.

FRITZ

I shall indeed.

**EXT. HABER GARDEN - DAY**

The noonday sun shines off snowbanks and iron-wrought gates.

Hermann giggles as he pushes a large ball of snow onto the base of what will be a snowman. Fritz and Clara watch on.

COURIER (O.S.)

Sir! Pardon me, sir.

Fritz and Clara turn to see a young COURIER peering from over their garden gate. Fritz approaches.

COURIER (CONT'D)

My apologies, sir, but I rang your door twice and no one answered. I thought I would come around back.

Clara can tell this is a message of importance. She rounds over toward Hermann, busies him with his snowman.

FRITZ

What is the matter?

The courier hands Fritz a small envelope.

COURIER

My condolences, sir.

The courier leaves as Fritz opens the envelope. His eyes scan the square of parchment inside. Lips tremble as he reads.

CLARA

Eyes on Fritz's back as he stands in still silence. Hermann finishing his snowman. A masterpiece to the boy.

HERMANN

Look, mother!

(to Fritz)

Father, come look!

FRITZ

Squeezes his eyes tight, as if he's staunching a headache. A deep exhale. Eyes open. He pockets the letter. Turns around.

Hermann and an anxious Clara watch as he stalks toward them. He kneels next to Hermann.

FRITZ  
Excellent work, Hermann.

Clara's eyes are still on her husband.

CLARA  
Any news?

FRITZ  
(matter of fact)  
It seems my father passed in his sleep yesterday.

Clara is jolted with shock. Hermann looks at Fritz, confused. Ever-innocent.

HERMANN  
Your father?

FRITZ  
Yes. He lives -- lived -- in Bavaria.

HERMANN  
Does that make him my grandfather?

FRITZ  
It does, yes.

HERMANN  
(upset)  
I never met my grandfather before he died.

Fritz obliges the boy with a hand to his small shoulder.

FRITZ  
There, there. Be calm, my boy.

Hermann tries to obey his father. Tears tumble from the boy's eyes.

HERMANN  
But I will never know him.

Clara's look urges Fritz to let the boy in -- calls for empathy. Fritz draws closer to the boy but speaks to the ground.

FRITZ

Your grandfather was a good man. I remember him to be clever man. A hard worker. And... well, there is not much to say beyond that.

HERMANN

Was he like you, papa?

Fritz looks back to his boy.

FRITZ

No. Nothing like me.

HERMANN

Why?

FRITZ

We were simply very different. He was content in with life as it was, I wanted more.

Clara steps between father and son, kneels beside Hermann.

CLARA

Your grandfather was very much like us. He was kind and warm and very smart. And you know what else? I'm certain he loved you.

Hermann warms at the notion.

HERMANN

Are you positive?

CLARA

I am. Very much so. In fact, come look.

Clara rises, pulls Hermann toward their wrought iron gate. She turns back to Fritz.

CLARA (CONT'D)

You, too. Come.

THE IRON GATE

Clara points to a portion of the gate beginning to flake with rust. She pulls a chunk off, presents it to Hermann.

CLARA (CONT'D)

What do you believe this to be?

HERMANN

Rust.

CLARA

Correct. Do you think it to still  
be magnetic?

HERMANN

No, not anymore.

Fritz smiles at his wife, knowing full well what she will be  
displaying. She smiles back.

CLARA

Well...

Clara digs in her coat pocket, pulls from it a small magnet.

Hermann watches as Clara places the magnet near the iron  
gate. It presses itself on it with a CLANG. She peels it off.

CLARA (CONT'D)

Even though something has a  
different name. To the naked eye  
appears different from something it  
once was...

Clara holds the magnet over the chunk of rust. It attracts,  
ever so slightly, hopping from her hand toward the magnet.

CLARA (CONT'D)

The properties of what it once was  
remain. It has a memory, just like  
us.

Hermann smiles, eyes wide.

Clara smiles back, offers the magnet to her son. He takes it.

**INT. HABER DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Clara sits with a straight back reading the evening post by  
lamp light.

Fritz, stares at her from the other end of the table, an  
unread paper before him.

FRITZ

Anything of interest?

CLARA

No.

Fritz gives his paper a cursory glance -- an attempt is made to read -- but then...

FRITZ

Clara, I feel badly.

Clara puts her paper down, empathetic is her gaze.

CLARA

Would you like to talk?

FRITZ

I would, yes.

Clara rises from her seat, approaches her husband. Prepared to console.

Fritz takes Clara's hand, smiles.

FRITZ (CONT'D)

I am uncertain about my pursuits. I feel that my time working with the German government was the first time I knocked upon the door of meaning. I worry I will not regain that opportunity.

A flash of disbelief crosses Clara's face. This wasn't the conversation she expected. Her countenance shifts, assumes the role of advisor.

CLARA

And what would you do?

Fritz leaps from his seat, energized.

FRITZ

Continue! Take this work and push it further. I gave a gift to Germany -- complete independence in the synthesis and manufacture of ammonia. Of course, it's finding applications in agriculture but it can do more! Now! At this very moment, there are dozens of factories using the same process to manufacture ammunition. It is Germany's most desperate time and I answered its cry for help. I know I can do more. I must do more.

Fritz looks at Clara with eyes full of anxious, excited energy. Clara stares back, unmoved.