

**NINETEEN  
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screenplay

by

CHARLES STURRIDGE

Revised Draft

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EXT. WOODROW'S HOUSE 'S' STREET -- DAY

The Camera cranes down to see a VAN with a sign reading 'NATIONAL RADIO OUTSIDE BROADCAST UNIT', and two TECHNICIANS unloading equipment and checking cables which lead into the HOUSE.

CAPTION: Washington DC November 11th 1924

INT. STAIRS WOODROW WILSON'S HOUSE -- DAY

CLOSE SHOT: A hand clutches a wooden banister.

A huddled group is coming down the stairs, among them WOODROW'S doctor, DR GRAYSON (50's). Together they are carrying WOODROW down the narrow staircase, he is 69 with white hair, he is almost totally blind and his left side is paralyzed. Walking down behind him is his wife EDITH (53) watching her husbands progress. The SHOTS are tight, intimate, the party tense and anxious.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

As they reach the bottom of the stairs WOODROW'S right hand reaches out.

WOODROW  
Cane.

DR GRAYSON gives it to him.

\*

WOODROW (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

EDITH  
(whispers)  
Take my arm.

WOODROW  
I'm fine, little girl, quite fine.

EDITH gives a small nod, and DR GRAYSON opens the door.

\*

INT. WOODROW WILSON'S LIBRARY 'S' STREET WASHINGTON -- DAY

The door opens and WOODROW walks in unaided, for a moment we catch a glimpse of how he was before the stroke. Standing waiting to receive him are ELLEN, a radio producer and four RADIO Technicians. A large microphone has been rigged in the centre of the book lined room and a lectern is set in front of it.

WOODROW  
Gentleman. I trust I haven't kept  
you waiting.

\*

ELLEN  
Not at all, sir.

TECHNICIAN

We've got three minutes till we're  
on air.

EDITH who has been standing close beside him leans over and  
whispers in his ear.

EDITH

(soft)  
The lectern is directly in front of  
you. Three paces.

WOODROW

Thank you.

INT. BULLITT'S APARTMENT, WASHINGTON -- DAY

We are moving down a narrow corridor with LOUISE (30) towards  
and untidy study.

LOUISE

Darling it's time.

BULLITT

I know. I've found it.

BULLITT (31), a handsome looking young man is sitting at an  
untidy desk covered with books and papers playing with the  
dials of a large VALVE WIRELESS SET. The voice of the  
ANNOUNCER goes in and out of focus as BULLITT adjusts the  
frequency.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

In a few moments we are going over  
to the state capital to hear a live  
Armistice Day address from former  
president Woodrow Wilson, speaking  
to us live from his own Library in  
Washington.

LOUISE

I thought you said he was dying.

BULLITT

He is.

LOUISE and BULLITT lean closer towards the WIRELESS.

INT. WOODROW WILSON'S LIBRARY 'S' STREET WASHINGTON -- DAY

ELLEN, wearing headphones, is silently counting WOODROW in,  
'THREE, TWO, ONE'. He hesitates but EDITH squeezes his hand.

WOODROW

My fellow citizens, the anniversary  
of Armistice Day should stir us to  
(MORE)

WOODROW (CONT'D)  
great exaltation of spirit because  
of the proud recollection that it  
was our day, upon which the great  
war for democracy and right was fought  
and won...and won.

WOODROW his voice at first strong, starts to falter. EDITH  
seeing his quietly whispers:

EDITH  
But the stimulating...

WOODROW  
But the stimulating memories...

WILSON hesitates.

EDITH  
(whisper)  
...of that happy time...

WOODROW  
of that happy time of triumph are  
forever marred and embittered by the  
shameful fact...

INT. BULLITT'S APARTMENT, WASHINGTON -- DAY

The camera moves closer towards BULLITT.

WOODROW (O.S.)  
That when the victory was won, chiefly  
by the indomitable sacrifice of our  
incomparable soldiers, we turned our  
backs on our associates and refused  
to bear any responsible part in the  
administration of peace...

INT. WOODROW WILSON'S LIBRARY 'S' STREET WASHINGTON -- DAY

EDITH is mouthing the words in his ear as he says them, almost  
willing him to remember what he cannot see.

EDITH  
And withdrew....

Her eyes are fixed on his face, but as we move in closer we  
see that they are welling up with tears that she cannot hold  
back.

WOODROW  
...and withdrew into a sullen and  
selfish isolation which is deeply...  
deeply...

EDITH  
Ignoble...

WOODROW  
Ignoble, because manifestly cowardly  
and dishonorable.

INT. BULLITT'S APARTMENT, WASHINGTON -- DAY

WOODROW'S voice continues on.

LOUISE  
(whisper)  
Is he blaming us?

BULLITT  
Well he's not blaming himself. That's  
for sure. That's the voice of a  
true believer. That was his strength  
he made us believe that anything was  
possible. But is it enough? Is  
believing in something enough to  
make it happen?

LOUISE  
You have to start somewhere.

BULLITT looks across the desk at her as we...

DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. STATION NEWS STAND, BREST -- DAY

The platform is crowded with FRENCH FAMILIES all carrying  
little AMERICAN FLAGS. They are waving and cheering and  
chanting 'WOODROW, WOODROW, WOODROW'. We see BULLITT (now  
28) buying a stack of THE NEW YORK HERALD (International  
Edition) newspapers.

BULLITT  
Oui oui, je dis, cinq New York  
Heralds. Cinq.

He holds up five fingers, and thrusts a note at the VENDOR.

BULLITT (CONT'D)  
C'est bien, c'est bien. Merci.

He grabs the FIVE COPIES and starts to make his way back  
through the crowd, towards the train. The CAMERA moves with  
him until he stops to watch WOODROW, standing at a window  
waving to the cheering crowd. Although WOODROW is in fact  
four years younger than when we last saw him, but it looks  
more like twenty. He seems a different man, exuding energy  
and confidence. The train whistle blows and the train begins  
to move. BULLITT pushes on through the crowd to a carriage  
door which is being held open for him.

He is dragged aboard as the train moves out. \*

INT. WILSON'S CARRIAGE - TRAIN -- DAY \*

BULLITT pushes down the carriage, past SECRET SERVICEMEN and AIDES as the train start to move off. WILSON moving away from the window, is with EDITH, opposite him is HOUSE who is going through some papers. \*

BULLITT \*

Mr President, I though you might like to see these. It's two days old, they've got a picture of you with the King and Queen of England on the front page. \*

WOODROW \*

What about the people, do they show the people? \*

BULLITT \*

Yes sir. There's one of you with the crowds in Trafalgar square on the inside. They say there was over a hundred thousand. \*

EDITH \*

That's more than Italy isn't it. \*

HOUSE \*

(dry) \*

No, the papers said a quarter of a million in Rome, although the Italians are prone to exaggeration. \*

WOODROW \*

I just want the American people to see what kind of a response we are getting over here. That's what is going to make the difference you know, not Kings or Queens or even politicians. It's what the people think. That what matters now. \*

HOUSE \*

Well, let's not forget the politician entirely. Prime Minister Clemenceau is waiting for us in Paris. \*

WOODROW \*

Quite right Colonel. Time is of the essence. Despite the collapse of their government, the German army is still standing. This is an Armistice not a defeat. We must move swiftly while we have the advantage or the War will start up again. \*

INT. DINING ROOM, MAJESTIC HOTEL -- DAY

\*

TITLE: January 1919

\*

A large ornate formal room filled with bare uncovered tables giving it an air of abandonment. Into the room come a motley procession of WAITERS, WAITRESSES, CHAMBERMAIDS. They are dressed in traveling clothes and carrying their suitcases. They are of different ages some clearly teenagers, more women than men, at first sight they look like refugees than Hotel Staff. The hotel under manager, WELSH, a small balding man in a long black overcoat urges them on in a broad Manchester accent.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

WELSH

Come on you lot, let's be havin'  
yer. Don't be shy now. Step right  
in.

In the crowd two girls, IVY LEAF(18) and ALICE BEARDSLEY (18) are looking around in awe at the room. A dark haired young man, FRANK is watching them.

FRANK

(Liverpool accent)  
What do you think, ladies?

IVY

(Manchester accent)  
Big isn't it.

FRANK

I've seen bigger.  
(introducing)  
Frank Clark, Adelphi Hotel Liverpool.

IVY

Ivy Leaf Beardsly, Midland Hotel,  
Manchester.

\*

FRANK

Are you serious? Ivy Leaf?

\*

IVY

Afraid so. My dad's idea of a joke.

\*

WELSH climbs up onto one of the tables in the middle of the room.

WELSH

Right, welcome to Paris, all of you.  
It's a very beautiful place, or was  
till the bloody Kaiser started  
knocking it about. Only one problem,  
too many Frenchman.

(MORE)

WELSH (CONT'D)

(polite laugh)

However Mr Parrish here from the Ministry of Food, and Mr Soames from the Foreign Office want to put a stop to that. Here in the Majestic Hotel at least. We will be looking after the British delegation to the Peace Conference whose job is to squeeze the bloody Hun till the pips squeak. Isn't that right Mr Soames.

(cheer from the audience)

And they don't want a load of French spies peering over their shoulder with a cup of coffee while they do it. Got that? So George, you can cut the phony French accent, even the wine waiters will speak English at the Majestic.

\*

George, is a camp looking waiter with an ostentatious 'French' moustache.

INT. CHATEAU MURAT, PARIS -- DAY

\*

A large ornate room, originally built for Prince Murat one of Napoleons Lieutenants, and now the US Presidential Residence for the Conference. The doors open and EDITH comes in.

\*

EDITH

(awe)

Oh - my - God. It's incredible isn't it?

WOODROW follows her.

\*

WOODROW

I feel a little like Jack when he climbed the beanstalk and wandered into the giants castle.

EDITH

And it's ours. Our first proper house together.

WOODROW

Come here. The White House not proper enough for you?

She walks back and takes his hand.

EDITH

You know what I mean. We've never had, well a place that was just ours.



WOODROW

Well don't get too comfy. We won't  
be here for long. But I love to see  
you happy, little girl.

\*  
\*

EDITH

Well, Mr President.  
(kiss)  
I'm very, very happy.

She kisses him. There is a soft cough. LONGCHAMP the elderly  
butler is standing in the tall doorway, behind him are two  
SECRET SERVICEMEN and two ARMED MARINES.

LONGCHAMP

Madame, excusez-moi, mais voulez  
vous voir les autre chambres peut-  
etre?

WOODROW turns.

WOODROW

Merci.

LONGCHAMP indicates that they should follow.

EDITH

(as they go)  
Wouldn't it be easier if they could  
speak English?

WOODROW

Security, my darling. Colonel House  
says if anybody is caught  
understanding a word we say they're  
to be immediately dismissed.

As they go through the door. LONGCHAMP bows and the SECRET  
SERVICEMEN and MARINES follow on as he closes the door.

INT. CLEMENCEAU DRAWING ROOM -- DAY

Close on a pair of WHITE FENCING BOOTS walking away across a  
bare wooden floor.

The large dark room is lit by the tall heavily curtained  
windows at one end. The carpets have been rolled back and  
the furniture set to the side of the room to create a space.  
There are two MASKED FENCERS. One is slim and agile, but  
the white boots belong to a large, slightly stooping figure  
whose large belly is not hidden by his uniform. This is  
GEORGES CLEMENCEAU, 78 years old, the prime minister of  
France, nicknamed: 'Le Tigre' and not just for his debating  
skills.

\*

CLEMENCEAU

En garde.

CLEMENCEAU takes his position, his opponent is his fencing master. As they join it is clear that as the FENCING MASTER attacks CLEMENCEAU's technique is to hold his position while his opponent moves backwards and forwards using his agility to no avail. As they fight on, we are aware of his audience, on one side of the room is an ELDERLY MAIDSERVANT, EMILIE. On the other a small deputation of five men, including TARDIEU, and POINCARRE, the President of France who at 59 is nearly twenty years younger than CLEMENCEAU but seems older. There is one more clash and CLEMENCEAU scores the point.

\*  
\*

CLEMENCEAU (CONT'D)

Merci.

The two FENCERS bow, POINCARRE applauds politely. CLEMENCEAU ignoring this, pads across to EMILIE who removed his mask and the MOUSTACHE PROTECTOR that preserves his large and carefully groomed appendage. He is a formidable sight now that we see for the first time just how old and yet how physically powerful he is.

POINTCARRE

George, je suis Le President de France, et si Le President des Etats Unis est a la table c'est necessaire je pense que le president de la France.....

\*  
\*

CLEMENCEAU

(interrupting)

Non.

POINTCARRE

Mais...

CLEMENCEAU

NON! NON! NON! Tu comprehends?  
Non!

\*

He crosses back through the room followed by EMILIE moving straight through POINCARRE'S party towards his bedroom. POINCARRE is forced to follow.

CLEMENCEAU (CONT'D)

Moi. Je suis le President. President de la Conference. And because I am the President I make the rules.

\*  
\*  
\*

(his English is  
impeccable)

But there is one small problem. As host to the Peace Conference, I get to make the rules of the engagement but I did not choose the weapon.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CLEMENCEAU sits on his bed and POINCARRE'S group stands by the door as EMILIE gently removes his fencing gloves and offers him a pair of pale grey in exchange.

As he pulls them, on we notice that his hands are badly scarred with eczema.

CLEMENCEAU (CONT'D)

The British and the Americans made the choice, and the weapon they selected was the English language. Am I going too fast for you?

\*  
\*  
\*

POINCARRE opens his mouth and then closes it.

CLEMENCEAU (CONT'D)

(getting faster)  
They think that by making everyone speak their language they will gain some advantage, well maybe they will but not over me, and not over France. How many Americans have you fucked, Monsieur le President?

\*

POINTCARRE

(shocked)  
Qu'est qu'il a demande?

\*

CLEMENCEAU

Exactly. Well I think I win. I was even married to one, for God's sake. (crossing himself)  
May she rest in peace.

A confused POINCARRE follows suit.

CLEMENCEAU (CONT'D)

Well, now it seems I have to fuck one more. (smile to himself)  
Let us hope, for the sake of France I have not lost my touch. Excuse me.

He moves past POINCARRE followed by EMILIE. On POINCARRE defeated.

INT. FOYER HOTEL LUTETIA -- DAY

A large group of CHINESE DIPLOMATS enter the foyer, they are all carrying suitcases and dressed in dark western suits. The HOTEL MANAGER come up to them and gives a small bow.

LUTETIA MANAGER

Un moment, s'il vous plait, messieurs.  
One moment please.

\*

He pulls out a crumpled piece of paper and haltingly reads a welcome speech written in phonetic Chinese. The delegates look slightly bewildered. One of them, a good looking young man, WELLINGTON KOO (32) smiles and bows.

\*  
\*

WELLINGTON

(with a slight American  
accent)

Thank you so much for the welcome,  
but if someone would be kind enough  
to organize our luggage we would  
like to have lunch immediately if  
that's possible. I understand the  
fish is very good here. I am looking  
forward to some.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LUTETIA MANAGER

(only slightly wrong  
footed)

Of course, gentlemen. This way.

He indicates where they should go, and as the DELEGATES pass  
they all offer a polite 'Thank you'.

INT. STUDY, RUE NITOT -- DAY

TWO LARGE DESKS set opposite each other, comfortable chairs  
and ENGLISH PAINTINGS on the walls. A smart looking woman  
in her early forties is sitting at one of the desks typing.  
This is FRANCES STEPHENSON, LLOYD GEORGE'S personal secretary,  
and mistress. We hear LLOYD GEORGE and a young Civil Servant,  
PHILIP KERR.

LLOYD GEORGE

Well he'll have to, I won't be able  
to run back every ten minutes just  
because the House is getting upset.  
He'll have to talk and they'll have  
to listen. And speak to Thomas, I  
want to see him here in Paris, tell  
him we'll put him up, he can stay at  
the Majestic, that should make him  
happy.

(seeing her)

Frances.

\*

FRANCES

(acknowledging)

Prime Minister.

(she picks up some  
notes)

Colonel House called and wants to  
see you as soon as possible. The -  
Canadians and the Australians would  
like to meet as soon as you can  
manage, but I told them not before  
Thursday and Maurice Hankey has  
rung three times.

\*

LLOYD GEORGE

Very good.

(MORE)

LLOYD GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(looking around)  
Very good. How is it?

She smiles. Unexpectedly openly.

FRANCES  
Do you want to come and see?

LLOYD GEORGE  
Please.

He steps aside and she takes his hand and leads him into the sitting room.

FRANCES  
I got the F.O. to send over some more paintings, if you don't like them I can change them.

LLOYD GEORGE  
They're perfect. Just a moment.

He leaves and goes back to KERR standing hesitantly in the corridor.

LLOYD GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Have you checked in to the Majestic? \*

KERR  
No yet. \*

LLOYD GEORGE  
Well I won't need you for an hour or so, so pop along, there's a good chap. \*

KERR  
Yes, Prime Minister. \*

He turns to go.

LLOYD GEORGE  
(low)  
Oh, and er Philip, pick me up some flowers on the way back. \*

KERR  
Yes sir. What sort?

LLOYD GEORGE  
(light)  
Whatever you think best. No rush.

He turns back into the drawing room closing the door behind him leaving a slightly confused KERR.

LLOYD GEORGE (CONT'D)

So.

FRANCES

So.

LLOYD GEORGE

Mrs George was very sad to see me go. Just as I was leaving the house she said Megan wants to come and stay. She had a big grin on her face, like the cat that's got the cream.

FRANCES

What did you say?

LLOYD GEORGE

I said of course, she must. She'll love Paris, the perfect place to be sixteen. I said, there's just one thing. I'll just have to ask my secretary if she would consent to stay to act as chaperon.

(He kisses her)

You could practically see the steam coming out of her ears.

FRANCES

Was that sensible?

LLOYD GEORGE

I'm not sure. Would Miss Stephenson consent to stay in this apartment, in the interests of propriety of course?

FRANCES

What about the Press?

LLOYD GEORGE

They wouldn't dare.

FRANCES

And your daughter?

LLOYD GEORGE

Megan'll be delighted. She adores you.

FRANCES kisses him.

FRANCES

(smile)

It's a very beautiful bedroom.

LLOYD GEORGE

It's a quite a beautiful sitting  
room.

He kisses her again moving her towards the sofa.

INT. ROOM, RUE DES PRINCE -- DAY

A small room, barely furnished with a simple IRON BED, a small table with an enamel WASH BASIN and a scrubbed WOODEN TABLE that acts as a desk. In one corner there is a 'kitchen' area which consists of a paraffin STOVE, a single saucepan and some small paper bags filled with rice. All over the floor there are STACKS OF BOOKS, if we were to look more closely we would see Dickens, Tolstoy, Flaubert, Zola and Shakespeare. There are also piles of OLD NEWSPAPERS stacked everywhere. At the table sits a young VIETNAMESE MAN, HO (29), he is carefully cutting out a story from the Continental Daily Mail, the headline reads: WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS. As we look at him more closely we can see the intensity of his concentration.

\*

INT. CORRIDOR MAJESTIC -- DAY

\*

The corridor is busy with DELEGATES looking for their rooms and SUITCASES being delivered. It is like a first day back at boarding school. FRANK is carrying TWO LARGE SUITCASES and walking ahead of KERR. He stops and opens the door to a room, KERR walks in.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

INT. KERR'S ROOM MAJESTIC -- DAY

\*

The room is large and has a tall window and a balcony which overlooks the street. KERR looks at the view. FRANK puts the case on the stand.

\*

\*

FRANK

\*

Will there be anything else sir?

\*

KERR

\*

Oh.

\*

(feeling for change)

\*

Francs or sterling.

\*

FRANK

\*

British will do fine.

\*

KERR

\*

You'd do better to take the francs  
at the moment, but suit yourself.

\*

Tell me are all the hotel staff from  
England?

\*

FRANK

\*

Yes sir.

\*