

PRUSSIAN BLUE

by

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Character list

DIPPEL: A mad alchemist, he discovered Prussian Blue in his 30s, but age isn't important. He's had a string of failed experiments; from trying to move the soul of a living creature into a dead one, trying to convert one base metal into another- mostly trying to turn a common metal like iron into gold, and I've chucked in trying to invent a truth serum. All of these have failed. He is prone to dramatic shifts in mood, a mixture of his string of failures and privileged upbringing (who else could afford a life of academia in the 18th century, and perform so poorly at it?), and inability to handle money. In the opening scenes of the play we see him in the throes of depression after another failed project, and coming to choose his next: the elixir of life. He has no idea how he will achieve it, but it won't stop him. Despite being an alchemist (a kind of proto-scientist), Dippel is the one prone to the abrupt mood swings and the irrational decisions. He is the stooge to Diesbach's straight man. Also, Dippel has moments where he either breaks the fourth wall or refers to things that haven't happened yet, such as the Rosetta Stone or iPads. This does happen at the start of the play, but really steps up after Act I Scene III where he has the potion that makes him trip balls. It isn't addressed or explained, but serves as a bit of a chronological reference point for the audience so they know when the events of the play happened in context to other historical events.

DIESBACH: A failed painter who had to turn to pigment making to make a buck. He wasn't actually a painter, but it fits the narrative. He is the straight man of the play, the one that tries to hold Dippel accountable, tries to make sure they don't get evicted, and sets up all the business side of things once they discover the pigment.

He's haunted by his failures as an artist, and how his situation has reduced him to subletting the basement of a castle with a mad alchemist. Diesbach's relationship with Dippel is more like modern room mates than anything from the 18th century. He puts up with the eccentric alchemist because he can't afford anywhere else. He's also the closest thing to a sympathetic character in this play. Neither really have a character arc, but things work out best for him and he is the one of the two the audience should want to see succeed.

The play is split into two acts, the first being the setup of the characters and their situation. The second is the discovery of the paint and their attempts to capitalise on it. Neither character ever says 'Prussian Blue' until the end of the play. Think of it more like an 'origin story' about the paint, kind of like all the superhero movie reboots out there.

The stage is meant to resemble a dusty shared workspace in the basement of a castle. Dippel did work out of Castle Frankenstein, and he did share working space with Diesbach, just not at the same time in real life. But if there's any hint of including the real Castle Frankenstein in a play like this, you're gonna do it.

There are 3 tables on stage with cloths thrown over them. These tables represent workbenches where all the alchemy and paint making takes place. As such, they are cluttered with all the sorts of equipment one expects of 18th century alchemists: beakers, mortars and pestles, flasks, retort stands, papers, woodblock presses, and a bunch of small containers. There is also an easel, which is Diesbach's for testing paint, the same he uses to quickly paint Van Gogh's Starry Night. Later, there is a mannequin with wings painted blue on stage, meant to be a nod to Yves Klein's Venus of Alexandria, handy to know in the prop department.

In terms of costume, you could get away with 17th or 18th century styles of dress, but even then, this is a play set in the two character's homes, so they won't be dressing up too fancy. Those collarless buttoned shirts with a vest, slacks, and simple leather shoes should do the trick. The two characters do need to look different, they have similar names so they need to be distinguishable by sight. Dippel would dress nicer than Diesbach because of his background and vanity, Diesbach's clothes would be older, dirtier, and more tattered. But they'd

both be wearing clothes they could work in, so neither would be wearing pristine clothing.

Even though there are only two actors, you'll need someone to through the boots at Dippel in the final scene. There are also a few moments that need some alchemy to happen, fog machines and the ol' baking soda and vinegar combo should do the trick, but I'm sure there are some other easy chemistry experiments you can use for the desired effect.

The period of time the play takes place over is nondescript, but not so long there are noticeable changes in the characters' appearance. You could probably put it at about a month or so, as each scene isn't expected to immediately follow the one before it.

Another note is some scenes call for a projector. There are only some small parts that need this, but the opening scene with the projector helps to set the tone of the piece, the final part ties in Dippel's alleged connection to Mary Shelley's work, and if you can think of an easier way to show the wing of a castle collapsing go right ahead.

All in all, this is a dumb, fun play that can be done by two people with minimal resources. The play is 32 pages long, which you might be able to stretch out to a 45 minute runtime, making for an hour performance all up. As such, it's a fast, snappy night for the audience and a good bit of fun for the actors.

ACT [1]

SCENE [1]

A PROJECTION DISPLAYS THE FOLLOWING:

1705

Castle Frankenstein

The real one

Yes, it's real

Look it up

DIPPEL STORMS INTO THE CASTLE
DOWNTRODDEN AND DESPONDENT.

DIPPEL: It's over. It's over. It's over. It's over.
There's no point to it now. Why bother? I've
failed, who would want to see me now? (FACING
AUDIENCE) Didn't you hear me? It's over! You can
all go home. Over before it even started. I
couldn't transfer the soul of one living
creature into another, no matter what concoction
I tried. I couldn't turn copper or iron into
gold. No, no amount of chemical solution, no
concentration, no mixture. The copper stayed
copper, I couldn't even get the iron to oxidise.
My life's work- my life's savings. All for
nought! How can I continue the rest of my life
knowing that I'm a failure?

DIPPEL STARTS PACING.

I'll never be taken seriously in the journals.
All the other academics out there laugh at me, I
can feel them. I've tried for so long to create
a breakthrough in alchemy, I fear my days of
experimentation could be coming to an end. If
only I had more time...

(DEPRESSED) That's it. That's it, that's it.
(CHEERING UP) That's it. That's... it. That's.
It. THAT'S IT!

Such a small mind I had. Why do I operate as if
my life is finite? Isn't the point of alchemy to

bend the world to my will? If I need more time to achieve my goals, I shall make more time. And to make more time I will need more life. My life will continue- indefinitely. I will dedicate the rest of my life to the rest of my life. I know my true calling now. I could not perfect corporeal soul transference, I could not convert one element to another. No, I have a new illustrious goal. I, Johann Conrad Dippel, will be the first to create the elixir of life!

DIPPEL GOES OVER TO THE WORKBENCH THAT HAS HIS EQUIPMENT ON IT AND STARTS MIXING THINGS TOGETHER.

There must be a knack to it. Every beneficial vitamin, all the grains and goods your body longs for. Mix them together in a great enough concentration and you just might have enough sustenance to keep you going forever. There must be a way to put the ageing process on hold. To keep skin taut, bones strong, joints limber, and to have enough vitality to go a whole day without taking a nap.

DIPPEL HOLDS UP A VIAL WITH THE MIXTURE HE'S CREATED.

The spark of life. Yes. Maybe this won't last forever, but will require multiple doses to be sustainable. It is the first attempt after all. I'll have all eternity to refine and perfect.

DIPPEL TAKES A SWIG, GAGS, AND RUNS OFF STAGE TO VOMIT. AFTER THE HEAVING STOPS DIESBACH WALKS ON STAGE, HE HOLDS LETTERS ADDRESSED TO DIPPEL.

DIESBACH: Dippel? Dippel? I've got some letters for you here. (SHUFFLING NOTES) You've got... a lot of creditors who want money from you. Haven't you been playing the rent for this place? What about the half I've been paying you? Dippel? Dippel!

DIEBACH LOOKS AROUND THE STAGE,
TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHERE DIPPEL IS.

Where are you? What are you up to this time? What foolish pursuit has consumed you? What am I doing? How did I end up here? Is this really all there is for me? A failed painter, turned pigment maker, just to make a buck. I've spent more time playing with paint in a pestle than on a canvas. Forced to sub-let the basement of a castle with a... mad alchemist, just to cover the costs.

I know every artist, every paint store, supplier, dealer, and gallery this side of Germany. I've hocked them all dyes, paints and pigments. They love my work: my verdant greens, rich reds, and dazzling yellows. But when I present it to them on a canvas of my own design, they fall silent. Is it really that bad? I'd almost rather them not say. But now I spend so much time mixing pigment I hardly get a chance to work on my own projects. I must be the only painter who makes his money off selling his paint instead of his paintings. I should be grateful for that- there are a lot of painters who make no money at all.

Speaking of money, speaking of mad alchemists, and speaking of dingy castle basements: what's happened to my half of the rent? You can't say Dippel has a hole in his pocket, because his money never even makes it that far. Dippel had already set up his shop of horrors. The agreement was Dippel would give up half his workspace, I would pay him half the rent, and he would then pay the full rent to the landlord. I may have been driven to this castle out of desperation, but I will not be evicted from it out of destitution.

DIEBACH STARTS LOOKING AROUND AND

SHOUTING.

Dippel? Dippel? For God's sake, I don't have the time for this. There's a chilling draft through the basement as of late. And I swear when the breeze is just right... it whispers things.

DIESBACH WALKS OFF STAGE.

ACT [1]

SCENE [2]

DIPPEL STORMS ON TO STAGE FROM THE ENTRY. AN OFFSTAGE CROWD IS SHOUTING AT HIM, HE SHOUTS BACK.

DIPPEL: (TO THE OFFSTAGE CROWD) If you don't like the water, why don't you try moving upstream? I'm working on some important stuff here, you dare stand in the way of progress? Where else am I meant to put it? Yes it's toxic, that's why I flush it down the river. How about this? Why don't you boil the water, let the condensation collect on a piece of glass, have that water run off into a beaker, and drink that? There's some entry level alchemy for you. Put that knowledge to use and you might not spend the rest of your life sticking your arm inside of cows!

DIPPEL SLAMS THE DOOR TO THE CASTLE.
DIESBACH WALKS ON STAGE FROM THE OTHER SIDE.

DIESBACH: Dippel, I thought I heard something.

DIPPEL SWINGS AROUND TO FACE DIESBACH, SURPRISED.

DIPPEL: Diesbach! What are you doing here?

DIESBACH: I live here, at least for the moment. What was all that about?

DIPPEL: Oh, just some disgruntled villagers. They asked me to stop dumping the waste from my experiments in the river. Apparently it makes the water too hard to drink or something.

DIESBACH: Those greedy villagers and their demand for drinking water. You know they need to drink something, right?

DIPPEL: But think about how inconvenient it is for me.

DIESBACH: No, of course. Their lives shouldn't stand in the way of progress.

DIPPEL: Exactly!

DIESBACH: I need to talk to you. A nasty draft has started in here, there are times when I swear it sounds like it's whispering messages to me, like 'get out' and 'tonight you die.'

DIPPEL: I've been hearing voices as well, Diesbach. This most divine murmur in the back of my mind, it's my own voice, is telling me to take on a new project!

DIESBACH: Because the truth serum didn't work, is that why?

DIPPEL: That's not the reason! But it turns out nothing beats alcohol. There's not much you can do with it, giving people more alcohol doesn't work- they just stop talking completely.

DIESBACH: I see. I'm sure you did a lot of self testing on that one.

DIPPEL: No, actually. I put out a call for live test subjects. When they heard alcohol would be involved, all I got were vagrants from the village. And you know what I found out from them? Nothing! What secrets do vagrants have to tell? They have no scandal in their lives. And some of the more elaborate things they were saying, I had no way of knowing if it was true.

DIESBACH: But you were testing truth serum.

DIPPEL: I suppose you're right. I should have done some more follow up there.

DIESBACH: And they all just came to you because you were giving out free alcohol.

DIPPEL: Those vagrants got an even better deal- I was

paying them.

DIESBACH: And the transmuting of souls, that didn't work out either, did it?

DIPPEL: I had some minor success there.

DIESBACH: You never told me.

DIPPEL: I was able to get a dog to act like a cat.

DIESBACH: How so?

DIPPEL: After a couple of experiments, the dog ran and cowered- much like a cat would. It would hide and try to bite me. The damn thing was as hard to catch as a cat, I'll tell you that much.

DIESBACH: I do think that was a result of your experiments, but not in the way you think.

DIPPEL: I will take victory in any form, thank you.

DIESBACH: And then your most recent project was turning iron into gold. How did that go?

DIPPEL: Oh, Diesbach, why must you make me relive my greatest failure? I've nary been able to get the iron to oxidise. It is the project that has had the biggest blight on my reputation, and the most damaging to my finances.

DIESBACH: I can tell.

DIPPEL: You see, with the transformation process, I invested heavily in raw materials, a way to bet on myself so to speak-

DIESBACH: Based on your track record, of course.

DIPPEL: You could see the return if I was successful. I bought tons of iron and copper, that which now litters the courtyard, because I planned to turn it into gold and sell it. If I could only get

the damn transformation to work.

DIESBACH: You see, your finances are exactly what I wanted to talk to you about.

DIPPEL: Please, Diesbach, I haven't the strength to discuss the minutiae of finance. Discussing my balance may be what pushes me over the edge.

DIESBACH: Well, the thing I care about has nothing to do with your money.

DIPPEL: Very well, what is it?

DIESBACH: What have you done with my half of the rent?

DIPPEL: Ah! Ah, but you see, the fate of your finances and my new project are interlinked...

DIESBACH STARES AT DIPPEL FOR A BEAT,
THEN DIPPEL PROMPTS HIM TO ASK.

DIESBACH: Alright, I'll play along. What is your new project, Dippel?

DIPPEL: So glad you asked. I am working on a project that will transform the face of humanity itself. I was given a jolt of inspiration to create... The Elixir of Life! A rejuvenating concoction that promises to scourge death itself from the earth.

DIESBACH: You always pick the most achievable goals.

DIPPEL: Aim tall I say! What is the point of creating the elixir of life extension?

DIESBACH: It's great you've got a new project to keep you busy, but can you please not spend my half of the rent on it? I've spoken to the Landlord about fixing that haunted draft, and he said he won't do a thing until the rent has been paid up to date.

DIPPEL: I'm afraid this project will need everything I can throw at it. Come with me, let me show you what I've been working on.

DIPPEL GUIDES DIESBACH OVER TO THE WORKBENCH. DIPPEL STARTS PLAYING WITH VIALS AND MIXTURES AS HE TALKS.

DIPPEL: I have this theory around rejuvenating the spark of life, the heat of existence, the fire of passion. I've been looking into combustible elements- things that can make a big bang! If I can capture the essence of human nature in a bottle, I should be able to extend it.

DIPPEL POURS TWO SOLUTIONS TOGETHER, THEY FIZZ UP LIKE VINEGAR AND BAKING SODA. HE FLINCHES AWAY THEN LOOKS DEJECTED.

DIPPEL: As you can see, I need to go for something bigger.

DIESBACH: Is this what you spent the rent on?

DIPPEL: Oh, I haven't bought any new materials just yet. I'm still in the planning stage.

DIESBACH STARES AT DIPPEL IN SURPRISE.

ACT [1]

SCENE [3]

DIPPEL IS HIDING BEHIND A WORKBENCH, UNSEEN BY THE CROWD. HE NEEDS TO JUMP OUT AND SCARE BOTH DIESBACH AND THE AUDIENCE.

DIESBACH WALKS ONTO STAGE HOLDING A CANVAS, HE WHISTLES AND HUMS IN A REVERIE AS HE DROPS THE CANVAS ONTO HIS EASEL AND BEGINS PAINTING. HE SPENDS A MOMENT PAINTING AND HUMMING, LOST IN HIS OWN WORLD WHEN DIPPEL JUMPS OUT FROM BEHIND THE WORKBENCH, SCARING DIESBACH.

DIPPEL: DIESBACH!

DIESBACH: (STARTLED) Jesus! Dippel!

DIPPEL: BE QUIET!

DIESBACH: What? (TERSE WHISPER) Why?

DIPPEL: (STILL SHOUTING) We need to hide from the landlord.

DIESBACH: I told you to pay my half!

DIPPEL: Shhhh!

THERE ARE THE SOUNDS OF THUMPING FOOTSTEPS. BOTH LOOK UP, INDICATING THE LANDLORD IS WALKING AROUND ON THE FLOOR ABOVE. DIESBACH JUST STARES UP, DIPPEL CROUCHES DOWN BEHIND THE WORKBENCH, BUT STILL VISIBLE TO THE AUDIENCE. THEN THERE IS THE SOUND OF A LARGE DOOR CREAKING OPEN AND SLAMMING SHUT.

DIPPEL: There, I think he's gone.

DIESBACH: Why are you hiding from the Landlord?

DIPPEL: He won't give me an extension on the rent.

DIESBACH: You mean an extension on your extension.

DIPPEL: Details! There's a blockage in my cash flow at present, and it could put access to my workspace at jeopardy.

DIESBACH: You mean blockage of cash flow- for our workspace.

DIPPEL: Yes. That is the source of disagreement. The landlord wants a certain amount, and I would like to pay... considerably less.

DIESBACH: I think the landlord wants you to pay the amount stipulated on this thing called a 'lease agreement'. You know, a legally binding document.

DIPPEL: These affairs are so exhausting. I'm an alchemist, my whole life has been dedicated to bending and breaking the laws of nature. Why can't I bend a few human laws? Those are the made up ones.

DIESBACH: Maybe because breaking human laws gets you thrown in jail.

DIPPEL: Yeah, well do you know what happens when you try to break a law of nature?

DIESBACH: What?

DIPPEL: You die!

DIESBACH: Dippel, this affects me too. If you're not paying the Landlord then I'm not paying the Landlord.

DIPPEL GOES UP TO DIESBACH AND PUTS
HIS HAND ON DIESBACH'S SHOULDER.

DIPPEL: I would like to thank you for your solidarity in this-

DIESBACH: No! I want to pay the landlord. I give you my half of the rent and then you're supposed to give the whole to him. So if you're not paying the landlord, then it means neither am I!

DIPPEL: I'm sorry, I know. I should be forwarding your rent onto its intended recipient, but I have so many creditors- all these thieves dressed up as iron and copper mongers- I have to take fiscal windfalls as they come.

DIESBACH: Can you understand why I'm frustrated? I'm stuck making paint in a basement, there's dust and damp all over the place. Even with the meagre income I make, I can still afford the rent on this place. It would be just my luck despite that I'd still be kicked out!

DIPPEL: I'm sorry, Diesbach. I know that due to your pathetic profession you wear a great sense of shame and failure on yours shoulders. You know, despite my elite education and my visage as an accomplished alchemist, I'm dealing with my own existential terrors.

DIESBACH: You don't say...

DIPPEL: Why, if I don't complete the elixir of life, it will be the end of my career. If I'm reduced to the level of shame and failure you face everyday, I'm afraid I might die. You've never had the prestige and status I do, so you don't know what it's like to lose it. I don't have the endurance you do.

DIESBACH: If you don't get this draft fixed it will kill the pair of us. Dippel, I am telling you to square up our ledger. I have been upholding my end, so if you aren't able to follow through, I will have to get... disagreeable.

DIPPEL: Do not fret, my young Diesbach. The virtue of an alchemist is ingenuity and resourcefulness in all its forms. Squaring our accounts will be at the top of my priority list. (GOES OVER TO A WORKBENCH AND STARTS MIXING) After working on creating the elixir of life, of course.

DIESBACH: Glad to see you have your priorities in order.

DIPPEL: It's basic business theory. Working on the highest value project will yield the highest returns, and the benefits will flow.

DIESBACH: And what's the timeframe of the turnaround on your elixir?

DIPPEL: Well, uh, once it starts you see, it will be a logarithmic return, an increasing stream of income at an increasing rate. Once it's made, of course.

DIESBACH: I think you should take on something lower risk with a more immediate return.

DIPPEL: What exactly are you implying?

DIESBACH: I think you should get a job.

DIPPEL WINCES AND HAS TO GRAB THE
WORKBENCH TO STAY STANDING.

DIPPEL: Diesbach! Never, has anyone, ever said anything so hurtfull...

DIESBACH: (PULLING AT HIS SLEEVES AS IF HE'S ABOUT TO FIGHT) Dippel, I'm going to be straight with you. If we get kicked out of this place, I won't have grounds to maintain cordial relations. If that comes to pass, I will let you know the full extent of my dissatisfaction with your conduct.

DIPPEL: (ALSO SQUARING UP FOR A FIGHT) Well, Diesbach, if it is time for curt exchanges... I would say such bold language is not becoming of you, and

there is a private place on your person where you should place such opinions.

DIESBACH: (GETTING ANNOYED) I ask of you one thing. Something so simple I should not have to expect it from you. Because it affects not only our shared workspace, but also our shared living quarters.

DIPPEL: (EQUALLY ANNOYED) I read and understand your concerns, but you must understand my priorities lie elsewhere. I need to stay up to date with the latest alchemical research and advancements, or I'll never be competitive.

DIESBACH: You know what I'd like you to stay up to date with?

DIPPEL: What?

DIESBACH: THE RENT!

BOTH STARE AT EACH OTHER, THEN DIPPEL FURIOUSLY GOES BACK TO WORKING ON HIS EXPERIMENT. DIESBACH FURIOUSLY CONTINUES PAINTING.

ACT [1]

SCENE [4]

DIPPEL IS SLUMPED NEXT TO SOME CRATES,
THE MIXTURE HE JUST TOOK REALLY
WHACKED HIM OUT. DIESBACH IS AT HIS
EASEL PAINTING.

DIPPEL: Oh, what should I do? What should I do? What
should I dooooo?

DIESBACH: That potion has really done a number on you,
hasn't it?

DIPPEL: I can feel its effects on me.

DIESBACH: You'll feel it in the morning, that's for sure.

DIPPEL: Oh, but Diesbach, what shall I do? When I
complete this elixir and become immortal, what
shall I do with my time?

DIESBACH: Well, once you actually create it, you'll have
plenty of time to figure that out.

DIPPEL: I mean, I'll have made the greatest achievement
in human history. How do I follow that up? Do I
refine the formula and make it more accessible
to the people? Do I move on to new projects?
What could ever match The Elixir of Life?

DIESBACH: Maybe you could create a potion that makes a
drunkard mute.

DIPPEL: (WAVES HIS HAND TO DISMISS THE IDEA) Far too
small a use case. I need to create things that
will benefit the greater society. Oh, and what
shall I do with myself, knowing I am free from
the grip of natural causes? I may become
immortal, but will I be impervious to death? How
could one go about life knowing they will never
experience the tranquillity of passing away in
their own bed? The only way I would be able to
meet my end is through some terrible tragedy; a

toppling horse and carriage, choking, severe impalement or bludgeoning. My end could only come most vile.

DIESBACH: You should worry about these matters once you have made the potion.

DIPPEL: And where will my motivation be once I have all the time in the world? Being free of the constraints of time is meant to be the freedom of the dead. And without an impending sense of the end, where is the motivation to achieve? Those in the afterlife have the rest of eternity, and when have you heard of the dead achieving anything?

DIESBACH: Your logic is sound.

DIPPEL: And what will you do if I give you some elixir?

DIESBACH: I imagine I would paint more, as long as I can fund the habit.

DIPPEL: That's my whole point. Your paintings haven't been that remarkable up until now, and I'm afraid if you don't die they'll never be worth anything. I don't want to condemn you to an eternity of poverty.

DIESBACH: I'm sure being the immortal artist will grant me some notoriety.

DIPPEL: Ah, but you've seen it yourself, movements come and go, and new styles become fashionable. Why, in a couple of years a new movement will be in, and your work will seem dated by comparison.

DIESBACH: I'll have plenty of time to relearn and refine my craft.

DIPPEL: Ha, I'd like to see you adjust to cubism.

DIESBACH: Well then, if you're such an art expert, why don't you come look at my current piece?

DIPPEL CLAMBERS UP AND SHUFFLES OVER
TO DIESBACH TO LOOK AT HIS CURRENT
WORK.

DIPPEL: Why- why is the sky red?

DIESBACH: That's to indicate the coming apocalypse. Since
mankind isn't living by the doctrine of God,
it's a reminder that we will be treated in kind.

DIPPEL: (SCRUNCHES UP HIS FACE AND SHAKES HIS HEAD)
Huhh.

And why is the water green?

DIESBACH: That's- that's meant to be a commentary on the
way we mistreat and pollute the earth. Again,
that ties into the apocalypse metaphor.

DIPPEL: (SHAKES HIS HEAD AGAIN) I'm not buying it.

DIESBACH: (THROWS HIS HANDS UP IN DEFEAT) Alright, you
want to know what it is? I can't afford blue
paint. Alright? It's insanely expensive. I can't
afford to buy it, and it's too difficult to
make.

DIPPEL: Really? But it's just paint, why is blue so
expensive?

DIESBACH: Why? Because you can't just pick up some blue
from the sky or the ocean, grind it up, and
chuck it on a canvas. It may be a common colour
in our lives, but it's not a natural colour. The
blue we see comes from the reflections of the
sea and sky, unlike the earthy tones of red,
green, and yellow we can create otherwise.

DIPPEL: This seems like a real foreshadowing
conversation.

DIESBACH: The Ancient Egyptians had a blue pigment, but it
was only the faintest of sky blues, and their
methods have been lost to time.

DIPPEL: And the Rosetta Stone won't be found for almost another 100 years. Without The Elixir of Life you'll never get to see it happen.

DIESBACH: Do you know how they make blue paint at the moment? Lapis Lazuli, its crushed up gemstones. Do you know how much that costs? I either spend everything I have on blue paint, or I try to work around using one of the most common colours in existence.

DIPPEL: Don't you see? Your need for the elixir has become ever more pertinent. Don't worry Diesbach, I'll make sure you live to see your blue pigment!

DIESBACH: Thank you Dippel, but your promises have about as much follow through as your projects.

ACT [1]

SCENE [5]

DIPPEL BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORS OF THE CASTLE AND BOUNDS AROUND THE STAGE IN EXCITEMENT.

DIPPEL: I've done it! I've done it! I've done it! Ha, some said my goals were too lofty, now I can't hold my head high enough in this dungeon. Success favours the diligent and now I can say I am amongst them. Good fortune and notoriety have come my way! Virtue shines upon me.

DIESBACH WALKS ONTO STAGE.

DIESBACH: What's all the excitement about?

DIPPEL: Oh, Diesbach. I have the most wonderful news! A sterling, grand achievement. The breakthrough that will put me on the map! You asked me to find a way to resolve our financial problems and I have delivered, with interest.

DIESBACH: Enough talk then, out with it man.

DIPPEL: I have just inked a deal with the army. They wish to buy gallons of my 'Dippel's oil' in the event of an outbreak of war.

DIESBACH: Dippel's oil, I haven't heard of that one.

DIPPEL: You haven't heard of it? Why, it's my greatest achievement so far. Although, I will admit it was an accidental byproduct of another experiment. But success is success none the less. And my Dippel's Oil is perfect for the Army.

DIESBACH: What does it do?

DIPPEL: It is a mild irritant! The oil can be used to poison water supplies, making enemy soldiers feel quite unwell, and as an aerosol it is

rather unseemly on the eyes.

I offered to exchange the formula for the whole castle when I first created it, but our landlord, the shortsighted fool, wanted nothing to do with it. Let's see what he says when I buy and sell his pathetic castle ten times over. I will get this draft fixed for you, and then we will sail the breeze of wealth to-

DIESBACH: I'm happy for you Dippel, I really am. There's just one problem...

DIPPEL: (HIS ENTHUSIASM FLATTENS) And what's that?

DIESBACH: There are no wars on at the moment.

DIPPEL: Yes, quite right. Demand for Dippel's oil will only increase in the event of conflict. Up until then, the contract is worthless. Diesbach, get a pen handy, I wish to dictate a letter.

DIESBACH: I'll do it, but I'm not your servant.

DIPPEL: I wish to announce my recent success and impending fortune.

DIESBACH: Who should I make it out to?

DIPPEL: To Louis XIV, King of France!

DIESBACH STARES AT DIPPEL, THEN SITS
AT A WORKBENCH AND WRITES AS DIPPEL
SPEAKS.

DIPPEL: To the leader of the Great Nation of France. I have just been in the court of Joseph Clemens, Archbishop of Cologne. I know your rule has been long and formidable, and so I must inform you of this at once! Whilst in court, Clemens' generals constantly joked about how you should be dragged down to the town square, by your obvious wig, stripped of your quite common looking clothing, put in stocks, and have your nipples slapped in

public!

DIESBACH STOPS WRITING AND LOOKS AT
DIPPEL.

DIPPEL: You are a man of great honour, which is why I inform you of this. You are also a man of great pride, which is why this atrocity cannot stand! However, I must warn you, should you seek to take out remonstrations on the Electorate of Cologne, they have a dangerous new chemical weapon at their disposal which puts them at a distinct advantage. I am in the alchemical field myself, and if you ever need-

DIESBACH: Dippel.

DIPPEL: Yes?

DIESBACH: You wouldn't be trying to incite a war would you? To sell your oil?

DIPPEL: Of course not! My God, Diesbach, what a vulgar accusation! Not at all, I am just trying to rectify an injustice I witnessed- pay the rent- and spread awareness of my products.

DIESBACH: Did they really say (REFERRING TO LETTER) put in stocks and nipples slapped in public?

DIPPEL: That... may be an embellishment on my end. But I can tell you they were speaking ill of the French king.

DIESBACH: You were in the Cologne court- and he's the French king. Of course they're going to speak ill of the French king. I've heard French people speak ill of the French king. And what, you think people are just going to go into France and throw out the monarchy?

DIPPEL: No, you're right. That idea is far too radical, I give it until the turn of the century.

DIESBACH: I think you should just let wars happen naturally and make do with whatever money you get from the army in the process. Are you getting anything from them upfront? A retainer? An advance? Something to help you cover the initial cost of manufacture?

DIPPEL: I will admit, I did 'drop my trousers' a bit on this one- it was too big an opportunity to slip through my fingers. The Army will purchase from me on an 'as needed' basis.

DIESBACH: Oh, Dippel.

ACT [2]

SCENE [1]

DIPPEL IS LYING IN THE CORNER OF THE
STAGE CRYING. DIESBACH WALKS ON STAGE.

DIPPEL: I've failed. I've failed. Failed! Failed again.

DIESBACH: Whatever's the matter Dippel?

DIPPEL: I tried to use some of your red dye mixture to
make another version of the elixir, but alas!
Nothing. I've failed again. I don't think I'll
ever become a successful alchemist. All this
time, wasted. A life, wasted.

DIESBACH GOES OVER TO THE WORKBENCH TO
LOOK AT THE MIXTURE.

DIPPEL: I think you may be right, this place is haunted.
I've had nothing but misfortune since I set foot
in this place.

DIESBACH: Hold on... what did you use with this?

DIPPEL: I used some of my tools to mix your pigments.

DIESBACH: Insect extract, iron sulphate, potash... Dippel,
those are ingredients for a red dye mix. This is
blue.

DIPPEL: I know. And who would have thought? You mix red
things together- you think you'd get more red. I
can't even get that right.

DIESBACH: But hold on...

DIESBACH STIRS THE MIXTURE, HE LIFTS A
BIT UP ON A STICK AND SNIFFS IT, EVEN
GIVES IT A TASTE.

DIESBACH: Just maybe...

DIESBACH GRABS THE MIXTURE AND A
BRUSH. HE GOES OVER TO HIS EASEL AND

SPLATTERS SOME QUICK STROKES ON THE CANVAS. WHEN HE TURNS IT AROUND TO SHOW DIPPEL- ITS 'STARRY NIGHT' BY VAN GOGH.

DIESBACH: Dippel, look at this.

DIESBACH THEN RUNS BACK OVER TO THE WORKBENCH.

DIESBACH: And maybe...

DIESBACH PAINTS A WOOD BLOCK AND STAMPS IT ON SOME PAPER. HE LIFTS IT UP AND IT'S HOKUSAI'S WAVE.

DIESBACH: Look at this!

DIPPEL: Oh, who cares? We'll never be able to make a dollar off either of those until we can sell them on iPad cases. And by the time they invent the iPad it will be too late for us, without the elixir at least.

DIESBACH: Dippel, do you know what we've made?

DIPPEL: It looks like a blue paint. Good for you. Maybe if you try make a truth serum we might end up with the elixir of life.

DIESBACH: You don't understand. Current blue paint is highly toxic, extremely volatile, and gets nowhere near as dark and rich as this blue.

DIPPEL: Go paint some seascapes then.

DIESBACH: It's also incredibly expensive.

THIS PERKS DIPPEL UP.

DIPPEL: How expensive?

DIESBACH: I told you before, they make blue paint from crushed gemstones. At current rates it goes for-

DIPPEL: (POINTING AT AUDIENCE) You better adjust it for inflation or they'll never understand.

DIESBACH: Okay, modern metrics. You know how a kilo of gold costs a ton of money?

DIPPEL: Don't talk about gold, it just reminds me of my failures.

DIESBACH: Well, a kilo of blue dye sells for a bloody shit ton of money.

DIPPEL: (PERKY AND ECSTATIC) A bloody shit ton of money!

DIPPEL GETS UP, RUNS OVER TO A
WORKBENCH, GRABS A PENCIL AND PAPER
AND STARTS DOING SOME FIGURES. HE
SPEAKS OUT LOUD AS HE CALCULATES.

DIPPEL: Going off a current rate of a bloody shit ton of money for a similar product, including adjustment as we approach saturation, factoring in the potential for competitors reverse engineering the product, subtracting the legal fees to take them off the market- at each stage of the product life cycle... (FACES DIESBACH) By God, Diesbach! I'll be rich!

DIESBACH: Blue paint is more expensive than gold, and we just made the best blue paint using crushed up bugs and oil.

DIPPEL: Why, I could make a fortune off the stuff! Oh, but it's not The Elixir of Life. I'm still nowhere near achieving my goals.

DIESBACH: Dippel, with the money we could make from this pigment, you wouldn't have to worry about any expenses again- and you could pay the rent on time. You could work on your elixir for the rest of your life.

DIPPEL: I just have one problem with this.

DIESBACH: What's that?

DIPPEL: In all this talk of making money, you keep using the word 'We'. Like, (WAVING HIS HAND BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM) 'Us'

DIESBACH: Because you're the famous and talented alchemist-

DIPPEL: That I am.

DIESBACH: And I'm the artist and dye maker. I have all the connections. I can get us meetings with suppliers and artists all across Europe. In the art world I can walk through doors you can't even see.

DIPPEL: I understand. It's a partnership of convenience-until I can build up my own network. Very well, what do we do next?

DIESBACH: Let's make more of this paint, figure out how we did it so we can mass produce it, and I'll write to some nearby contacts and see if we can get some meetings.

DIPPEL: Maybe- maybe we can use this new concoction towards the elixir. Perhaps-

DIPPEL CHUCKS SOME PAINT INTO A BEAKER
AND ADDS SOME OTHER MIXTURES. IT
EXPLODES OR STARTS SMOKING. HE TURNS
TO DIESBACH, STUNNED.

DIPPEL: Diesbach, I'm happy to focus on the pigment with you for the moment.

ACT [2]

SCENE [2]

DIPPEL AND DIESBACH ARE AT A
WORKBENCH, HUDDLED OVER ALCHEMICAL
EQUIPMENT. THERE IS SIMILAR EQUIPMENT
ON TWO OTHER WORKBENCHES.

DIESBACH: Now, before we go trying to sell this pigment to
the suppliers, we need to figure out what you
did to make it, so we know it's not some
accident or some fluke. We need to get it
consistent as well, so we can sell it the same
every time-

DIPPEL: Yes, yes. Get it down to a nice formula so a
trained ape... or one of the villagers, could
just churn it out.

DIESBACH: Exactly. We painters buy a shade of paint
expecting it to always be the same. Nothing will
ruin our goodwill faster than forcing painters
to try mix and match shades every time.

DIPPEL: (LAUGHS) 'We painters'. Quaint how you include
yourself among them.

DIESBACH: Look- just show me what you did the night before
I found the paint.

DIPPEL RUNS DIESBACH THROUGH THE
PROCESS AS HE SPEAKS.

DIPPEL: So, I used some of the dye you already had, the
chochineal extract, carminic acid, and mixed it
with some of my own formula; alum, Vitriolo
Martialis, Sale alcalico Tartari (FINISHES
MIXING) ...Nothing.

DIESBACH: This looks like some nasty sludge.

DIPPEL: That can't be it. Let's try again.

DIPPEL AND DIESBACH MOVE TO ANOTHER

BENCH WITH EQUIPMENT. DIPPEL STARTS
WORKING AGAIN.

DIPPEL: Maybe a little less of my solution, or- or
maybe, I was working on more of my oil last
night for the army. Perhaps that's what did it.

DIPPEL MIXES THE DYE WITH THE OIL,
BOTH REEL BACK AT THE SMELL.

DIESBACH: Ugh! The smell... that wouldn't be it, we would
have smelt that long before this morning.

DIPPEL LOOKS INTO THE PESTLE WITH
TREPIDATION.

DIPPEL: We seem to have invented a rather pungent
coagulant. Maybe we could use it to repair
dams... or repel animals.

DIESBACH: Think, Dippel. Think! Just run me through
exactly what you did last night to make that
blue dye?

DIPPEL MOVES OVER TO ANOTHER
WORKBENCH, PICKS UP SOME ALCHEMICAL
EQUIPMENT.

DIPPEL: Well, I was working here, developing some more
of my oil. I used these instruments-

DIESBACH: Those very instruments you're holding?

DIPPEL: Yes, the very same.

DIESBACH: Did you wash them afterwards?

DIPPEL: What? No. Why would I wash my own tools when
they'll just get coated in oil again?

DIESBACH: Because I used them to make some red dye last
night as well.

DIPPEL: Diesbach! How could you use my tools? These are

mine!

DIESBACH: I needed to mix my dye, I don't have much stuff here you know.

DIPPEL: Did you wash them before you used them?

DIESBACH: I tried to, but you know how hard oil is to clean off things.

DIPPEL: Yes. Having a thinner consistency than water makes it rather tricky to be rid of.

DIESBACH: So I made some dye with tools laced in your oil... also, I borrowed some of your potash.

DIPPEL: (RUNS OVER TO CHECK HIS POTASH STOCK) You use my instruments- and my ingredients? I'm going to have to start locking things up.

DIESBACH: I needed to make some Florentine Lake, it's one of the best selling reds. If I can sell some more I can afford to buy my own equipment and ingredients.

DIPPEL: I can't believe you'd use what's mine. Not only that, my tools aren't clean enough for pigment production. All my ingredients are contaminated from my experiments. My potash will already have iron sulfate in it from the oil I was making-

DIPPEL HAS AN EPIPHANY.

DIPPEL: Diesbach, I'll be willing to overlook you using my stuff if you try something for me.

DIESBACH: What's that?

DIPPEL: Try making your red dye, using my tools and ingredients like you did before.

DIESBACH: But I thought you didn't want me using-

DIPPEL HANDS DIESBACH THE TOOLS AND

DIEBACH STARTS MIXING SOME DYE.

DIPPEL: I have a feeling we may have gone too hard in our previous experiments. Too generous with my other concoctions mixed with your dye. Perhaps just a hint of oil- ingredients with just a hint of cross contamination- will enough to turn your red paint blue.

DIEBACH FINISHES MAKING THE DYE, HE LOOKS DEJECTED.

DIEBACH: No, nothing. This is just as red as the batch I made last night. I don't know what you did to it Dippel, but we can't seem to replicate it.

DIPPEL THROWS HIMSELF INTO ANOTHER BOUT OF DEPRESSION.

DIPPEL: Oh, how nice it felt to have a bird in the hand. That fleeting sense of success. I could hear the jingling of the gold in its purses. (WALKS OVER TO THE SECOND TABLE) What cruel providence, I couldn't turn iron to gold using alchemy, why did I think I could turn blue paint to gold using commerce? I must resign myself to being seen as a permanent- (LOOKS IN THE BOWL, SPEAKS NORMALLY) Hang on.

DIEBACH GOES OVER TO DIPPEL, WHO IS HOLDING THE BOWL.

DIPPEL: Look at this, where we put too much of my oil with the dye. You can see hints of blue coming through on the edges.

DIEBACH: Yes, it's not quite as rich as the original mixture, but you can see it.

DIEBACH GOES TO LOOK AT THE MIXTURE HE JUST MADE AT THE THIRD BENCH.

DIEBACH: Dippel, come look at this! You can see it

darkening already.

DIPPEL: My God. You're right, man. Our impatience got the better of us. Neither of us noticed the blue solution in the evening, it must have transformed overnight.

DIESBACH: It would appear the secret ingredient for this blue pigment... is time.

DIPPEL: Actually, I would say it is my oil, seeing as it was the only variable introduced.

DIESBACH: Yeah, well, we just established it was me using your tools and ingredients that created the paint, not any of the experiments you did. So I think I should get the credit.

DIPPEL: Ah, but where would you have been without me, my oil, and my tools?

DIESBACH: I'm the one that discovered it only took a hint of your oil- even if it was accidentally-

DIPPEL: And without the oil at all? You'd still be hocking dead beetles.

DIESBACH: Look- we seem to be onto something. How about I make some more dye with your tools? And then we can set up some meetings with suppliers for later this month.

DIPPEL: I'm willing to keep doing business with you Diesbach. If only because half of a bloody shit ton of money- is still a lot of money.

DIPPEL WALKS OFF STAGE, DIESBACH KEEPS MIXING INGREDIENTS.

ACT [2]

SCENE [3]

DIPPEL IS ON STAGE, SITTING, READING SOMETHING, WITH A CUP OF TEA NEXT TO HIM. HE LOOKS RELAXED, A CHANGE FROM HIS PREVIOUS SELF.

DIESBACH WALKS ON STAGE HOLDING SOME PAPERS, HE'S LOOKING THROUGH THEM INTENTLY AS HE SPEAKS.

DIESBACH: Alright, I've arranged a couple of meetings with some nearby stores and suppliers. Then we'll sell it to progressively larger suppliers, and use that as leverage for the next sale. After a couple of significant orders we should be able to pay our rent, and then we can-

DIESBACH NOTICES DIPPEL'S TEA.

DIPPEL: (STILL LOOKING AT WHAT HE'S READING) Oh, I don't think we have to worry about that.

DIESBACH: What are you drinking?

DIPPEL: It's tea.

DIESBACH: But, blue tea?

DIPPEL: Yes, it's tea that's blue. Why?

DIESBACH: What is it, like the opposite of green tea?

DIPPEL: Actually, it's one and the same.

DIESBACH: What?

DIPPEL STANDS NOW, HE SMILES. MAYBE HIS TEETH ARE STAINED BLUE IF THE AUDIENCE CAN SEE IT.

DIPPEL: This pigment I discovered-

DIESBACH: I discovered.

DIPPEL: We discovered. It's so inert and tasteless, I've been able to stain this tea with it to no ill effect.

DIESBACH: I'd rather not drink blue dye.

DIPPEL: No, Diesbach, you don't understand! The applications- blue clothing, blue food, blue tea.

DIESBACH: Okay then, what are the applications of dye stained tea?

DIPPEL: Well, for one, our rent is no longer in arrears.

DIESBACH: No, Dippel. You didn't...

DIPPEL: I told the landlord it was an exotic strain of blue tea from the Far East.

DIESBACH: Dippel, that's...

DIPPEL: It's genius!

DIESBACH: It's immoral.

DIPPEL: It's immoral genius!

DIESBACH: He really fell for it? Took some of your 'exotic blue tea' and wiped our slate clean?

DIPPEL: Yes. You're right about this pigment, it has really put people into a blue fever. I never noticed it before myself, but there aren't a lot of blue things in the world, man made things at least. The prospect of blue this and blue that is driving people wild.

DIESBACH: I'm glad you're getting behind the pigment, Dippel, but don't go crazy with applications, we still need some to sell.

DIPPEL: Don't you worry about that either. We've got the formula down pat, and I've devised an alchemical

means to mass produce it consistently.

DIESBACH: I'm sorry, Dippel, but whenever you say 'don't worry', I do the opposite. It's nothing personal, just me watching every single thing you've ever done.

DIPPEL: Well, if it's nothing personal, that's alright. I suppose we are first time business partners. Tell me more about these suppliers we're meeting with.

DIESBACH AND DIPPEL WALK OFF STAGE
TOGETHER TALKING ABOUT THE UPCOMING
MEETINGS.

ACT [2]

SCENE [4]

DIPPEL AND DIESBACH WALK BACK INTO THE CASTLE, BEING HOUNDED BY VILLAGERS OUTSIDE. DIESBACH IS HOLDING A CASE TO CARRY CANVASES. THE WORKBENCHES ARE NOW COVERED IN ALCHEMICAL EQUIPMENT AND THERE IS A MANNEQUIN TORSO PAINTED BLUE NEXT TO THE WORKBENCHES REMINISCENT OF YVES KLEIN'S THE VENUS OF ALEXANDRIA. DIPPEL IS SHOUTING AT THE VILLAGERS AS THEY ENTER.

DIPPEL: (TO THE OFFSTAGE VILLAGERS) Learn to bore water! You can't talk to us like that, we're business men! What's your name? I'll come back later, buy your farm, and turn it into a dust bowl! And you, you don't need to drink, you need to stop eating. I thought you villagers were meant to be malnourished.

DIPPEL SLAMS THE CASTLE DOOR.

DIESBACH: The villagers seem extra rowdy today. Worse than normal.

DIPPEL: Yes, that's probably because I've stepped up oil production. Can never have too much- for the army, you know?

DIESBACH: I think you can stop bothering with that army contract now. We're going to be so busy in the production of this pigment you won't want any other distractions.

DIPPEL: Ah, but there is one thing I will bother with, the very reason I have chosen to pursue this endeavour with you.

DIESBACH: Of course, nothing can get in the way of your elixir. I'm happy to take care of most of the pigment production.

DIPPEL: We will be busy, won't we? That meeting went incredibly well.

DIESBACH: Yes, I've been dealing with those suppliers for years. They've been impressed with my regular paints thus far.

DIPPEL: What was it they said when you showed them the wood block transfers? Something about the paint being used in building?

DIESBACH: That by transferring schematics from one piece of paper to another it becomes easier for builders to stick to plans.

DIPPEL: Yes, I can see those blue prints becoming a stable of construction and design.

The only part where it faltered was at the end there, when you broke out some of your canvases-

DIESBACH: (PUTTING DOWN CANVAS CASE) I thought that they may be interested in some other- more artistic-practical examples.

DIPPEL: I think your work with dye is better as a pitch than a painting.

DIESBACH: Yes, well- (DIESBACH FINALLY NOTICES THE VENUS OF ALEXANDRIA) What's this?

DIPPEL: Oh, I was just playing around with applications of the dye myself. It sticks to everything, I think we could use it to stain fabrics.

DIESBACH: (CONSIDERING THE VENUS) Is that what this is?

DIPPEL: Do you like it? It could be my first artistic work.

DIESBACH: It will never catch on.

DIPPEL: See what I told you about movements. You have no foresight.

DIESBACH: (WALKING OVER TO THE WORKBENCHES) I have plenty, look at this setup!

DIPPEL: Yes, I decided to borrow a manufacturing model yet to be invented called 'the production line'. Instead of working on one single batch at a time, we can develop the dye at each stage and have multiple batches going at once.

DIESBACH: This is brilliant, (WALKING PAST EACH PIECE OF ALCHEMICAL EQUIPMENT) so we've got the insect crusher here, the iron sulphate, the potash, the oil. We could just keep producing the pigment nonstop.

DIPPEL: That's the whole point, it's the revolution of industry.

DIESBACH: We can buy all the ingredients at inconsequential rates, the margins are astronomical. We can just set traps or hire some children from the village to catch insects for us.

DIPPEL: The whole process has been designed to operate at maximum efficiency with minimal wastage.

DIESBACH: This is great. Unless something major goes wrong, there's nothing to stop us.

DIPPEL: Yes. And what's the likelihood of anything major going wrong at this point?

DIPPEL LOOKS AT THE AUDIENCE, WINKS
EVEN.

ACT [2]

SCENE [5]

A PROJECTION OF A TOWER FROM A CASTLE COLLAPSING.

AFTER THE PROJECTION DIPPEL RUNS ON STAGE COVERED IN DUST AND BOLTS TO THE OTHER SIDE. THERE IS A KNOCKING AT THE CASTLE DOOR. DIPPEL RELUCTANTLY RETURNS ON STAGE AND GOES TO ANSWER THE DOOR.

DIPPEL: Hello? Ah, how are you? You want a refund on the tea, that's why you're here, isn't it? Look, I know it tastes just like green tea, but that's part of the point-

The castle? No, nothing's wrong with the castle. (REFERRING TO HIS DUST COVERED CLOTHING) This? Oh, I was just in an old part of the castle digging through some recipes. Really, did a wing of the castle collapse? I mean, I've been here this whole time and haven't noticed anything.

Look, I understand, this happened whilst I was here, so I won't get the bond back, I'm willing to acknowledge that much. Repairs, I mean, sure, I can pitch in. Now? You want it now? You already have a quote? That was fast. Oh, you're talking about the rent.

THE SOUND OF AN ANGRY MOB SWELLS UP AND A BOOT IS THROWN FROM THE SIDE OF THE STAGE AT DIPPEL'S HEAD. IT MISSES AND DIPPEL NOW ADDRESSES THE ANGRY MOB.

DIPPEL: Hello there. Sorry, I was just in the middle of something, can I talk to your angry mob later.

ANOTHER BOOT GETS LOBBED AT DIPPEL.

DIPPEL: I can imagine your water would be in quite a state now. Did you know a whole wing of the castle collapsed? That's why you're here? Of course. Look, I know you're angry I've been doing experiments up here, doing some on... your villagers, and that I've made an awful mess of your water. I'm in the paint dye business now-manufacturing's a lot cleaner and there will be no runoff. Give the river a couple of weeks and all the residue will be flushed out and it should be fine.

THE CROWD SHOUTS LOUDER, DIPPEL DUCKS EXPECTING ANOTHER BOOT.

(TO AUDIENCE) Of course there would only be two boots. There are only two boots in the village, and they belong to different people.

(TO MOB) You want money to ship new water in? I was just in discussions with the landlords here about money. Look, how is your credit? Because I'm about to enter a very lucrative business and I'll have enough to pay you all off in no time at all. No, alright then- uh, let me get my cheque book.

DIPPEL SLAMS THE DOOR, RUNS OVER TO THE WORKBENCH AND STARTS GRABBING THE ALCHEMICAL EQUIPMENT, HE THEN STOPS.

DIPPEL: Ah, Diesbach-

DIPPEL LEANS OVER AND STARTS WRITING A NOTE.

DIPPEL: Terribly sorry...

DIPPEL THEN COLLECTS UP AS MUCH ALCHEMICAL EQUIPMENT HE CAN CARRY AND RUNS OFF THE OPPOSITE END OF THE STAGE.

THE CROWD DIES DOWN AND DIESBACH WALKS
ON STAGE.

DIESBACH: Dippel? Dippel? What the bloody hell was that noise? Why is it draftier in here now? I thought we were getting that fixed. Who was that at the door? (HE SEES THE EMPTY WORKBENCHES) Where did all the-

DIESBACH SEES THE NOTE ON THE
WORKBENCH, HE GOES OVER AND READS IT.

DIESBACH: (READING NOTE) My dearest Diesbach, terribly sorry, but I've had to take my leave of the castle. My latest version of the elixir used some combustive ingredients, which had rather disastrous effects. I need not explain it here as you'll see for yourself. The resulting explosion drew the attention of the landlords, and the ire of the townsfolk. Debts and compensation have been called on me which- you know of my finances- unless someone wishes to be paid in iron or copper, I am in scant a position to do so. I hope you understand that due to my circumstances I also had to take most of the equipment and ingredients when I left the castle. Your profession as a dye maker grants you some form of living. Seeing as I was the inventor of the dye, (DIESBACH PAUSES FOR A BEAT AFTER READING THIS) and having to abandon my workspace and lodgings, I hope you can see why I would want to take the means of production of the pigment with me. I wish you all the best in your future dye sales and hope there will be no ill will between us when we meet again.

DIESBACH PUTS DOWN THE LETTER.

DIESBACH: Oh Dippel.

DIESBACH GOES OVER TO WHAT LITTLE
EQUIPMENT REMAINS, PUTS IN SOME
INGREDIENTS, AND MIXES IT.

DIESBACH: You think you were the only one that knows how to make that pigment? You're an alchemist, I'm a dye maker, they're practically the same thing.

DIESBACH PICKS UP A BIT OF MIXTURE AND RUBS IT BETWEEN HIS THUMB AND FOREFINGER. THE MIXTURE STAINS HIS FINGERS A DARK BLUE.

DIESBACH: I'm the one with the connections in the art world, I made all the other pigments. I know how much of every ingredient goes into it. You're not the only one that knows how to make this... Prussian Blue.

THE STAGE GOES BLACK AND A PROJECTION COMES UP:

Some 100 years later.

VOICES PLAY OUT OVER THE BLACK STAGE. ONE IS A GROWN MAN AND THE OTHER IS A YOUNG GIRL.

VOICE: Look, Mary, over there is Castle Frankenstein. A mad alchemist lived there, he ran all these horrible experiments, like trying to transfer the soul of one creature into another, trying to reanimate the dead, and at one point he tried to make the elixir of life

MARY: My, sounds absolutely vile.

CURTAIN