

The Gaza Golem

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Daniel Lawrence  
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\*\*\*NOTE: All characters are speaking in Arabic, unless otherwise indicated by the script.\*\*\*

EXT. LIMBO/STREET - GAZA CITY - DAY

A massive SANDSTORM fills the frame, swirling brown clouds of dust and sand obscuring all. The wind HOWLS. Out of the dust materializes the clean-shaven face of JIBRIL BARGHOUTI. A handsome, middle-aged Palestinian man, he stares intensely, angrily at the audience. The sandstorm rages around him--

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Paradise is green. That's what my  
father said.

-- and then it thins, blowing away to reveal the modern Palestinian city of Gaza. Jibril's expression melts as well. He glances over his shoulder, checks his watch. Late!

JIBRIL  
Fuck!

He spins around and speeds down the street.

SCREEN BLACK

Sounds of a GENTLE WIND and BIRD SONG can be heard O.S..

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
My Great Uncle told my father this,  
and my father must have agreed for  
he told it to me repeatedly as I  
grew up...

FLASHBACK -- EXT. TULKAREM FARMHOUSE - DAWN

A picture-perfect rustic house sits near the side of a dirt road. Behind it, an olive grove stretches to a range of desert hills. The world is a Van Gogh painting come to life, vividly luminous, almost surreal. Two figures step out of the house: MAHMOUD, an OLD MAN and HAMZAH, a YOUNG BOY.

SUBTITLE: "BRITISH MANDATE PALESTINE, MAY 1944".

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Ah, there they are now.

The old man holds the boy's hand and carries a small duffel bag in the other. A rifle is slung over his shoulder.

As they reach the road, the old man turns and squats to adjust the boy's clothing. His face is haggard but his eyes pierce the lad with the intensity of a hawk.

MAHMOUD

Cairo is a big city. What an adventure you'll have there! Just don't forget what remains here.

From his pocket, Mahmoud lifts a loop of string tied to an old metal KEY. He hangs the key around Hamzah's neck and holds it up to his face.

MAHMOUD

What's this for?

HAMZAH

(rolling his eyes)  
The door. The front door.

MAHMOUD

When do you use it?

HAMZAH

When we come back.

MAHMOUD

And when do you come back?

No answer. This troubles Mahmoud.

MAHMOUD

(sternly)  
Whose home is this?

HAMZAH

(with steel now)  
Our home.

SCREEN BLACK

Sounds of MUFFLED FOOTSTEPS on stairs. Silence. A LATCH lifts. A DOORKNOB turns.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT (FIRST NIGHT)

A door opens and the silhouette of a man in an overcoat stands at the threshold of an unlit room. He walks towards a shrouded thing lying atop a table in the room's center. A string dangles above it-- he pulls hard.

Lights on. It's Jibril, sweating and a little disheveled; streaks of mud on his clothes. His face betrays the passage of some stretch of time. He looks upon the table with deliberation.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 (matter-of-fact)  
 When you're shut up in your home  
 for weeks, even months at a time,  
 you learn to be creative, otherwise  
 you go crazy. Not me. I'm too  
 smart for that.

Jibril steps back, pokes his head out the door. Listens carefully. He shuts it, bolts it and turns back to regard the table.

SCREEN BLACK

Sounds of a gathering CROWD and a RUMBLING car engine. A muffled MALE VOICE squawks something incomprehensible.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Of course, one man's creativity is  
 another man's poison.

VOICE #2 (O.S.)  
 What was that? What did you say?

FLASHBACK -- INT. COFFIN - DAY

P.O.V. FROM INSIDE THE COFFIN - The lid is opened and SAMER, an excited twenty-something Palestinian man stares at us.

VOICE #2/HAMDI (O.C.)  
 I said, For Palestine! For our  
 glorious martyrs!

SAMER  
 That's right! For Palestine! And  
 the forty dollars American!

HAMDI (O.C.)  
 And the fifty dollars American, you  
 thief!

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 In-laws. Surely Allah's punishment.

Samer grins mischievously. Someone's YELLING catches his attention and he SLAMS the lid back over us.

SCREEN BLACK

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Oh God, it's too humiliating.  
Let's deal with them later.

RESUME -- INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT (FIRST NIGHT)

Jibril returns to the table. He closes his eyes and says a prayer. Finished, he grabs the shroud. It's damp. He pulls it off with a sticky SLURPING sound and tosses it nearby. Jibril takes off his coat. Digs into a coat pocket. Pulls out some dirt which he sifts it through his fingers. He begins to take off his shirt.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I'll admit it, the Jews have a few good ideas. This one was put in my head by a friend of mine. Yes. A friend. You'll meet him in a bit.

A SHEET is wrapped around his torso. Unfurled, it reveals earthy clay stored in its folds. He adds it to a water-filled bucket and drops to his knees. Begins to knead it.

As he works, Jibril regards a nearby wall where PHOTOS hang: dusty fragments of childhood, family members staring back at him, a framed college degree.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The thing is, once you put something in my head, it stays there. It doesn't go away. And I'm supposed to be grateful. Sister says--

BLACK AND WHITE PHOTO: College grad Jibril at center, surrounded by family and friends. The photo comes to life as a YOUNG WOMAN next to Jibril finishes kissing his cheek--

MINA

-- top of the class, brother! That brain of yours is a gift The Bestower has blessed you with.

DIRECT ADDRESS: From within the tiny photo on the wall, she turns to Jibril in the basement, and us, the audience.

MINA

(loving)  
So don't screw up, whatever you're doing, or I swear I'll smack you!

BACK ON JIBRIL, smiling as he works.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Maybe it's a blessing... Maybe a  
 curse. All that mattered was...

He stands. His HANDS carry a misshapen grey-brown block of  
 wet CLAY which he hefts --SPLAT-- onto the table.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 The monster was coming along well.

MOVE IN - HIGH OVERHEAD ON A ROUGH, HALF-COMPLETE CLAY FIGURE  
 LYING ON THE TABLE. A TORSO WITH ONE ARM, HALF A LEG.

FLASHBACK -- EXT. GAZA CITY STREET - DAY

Jibril walks briskly the street from the opening scene. It's  
 a moonscape: bullet holes riddle cheap cinder block and Arab-  
 flavored buildings. Everything is covered in mud.

SUBTITLE: "GAZA CITY, PALESTINIAN TERRITORY - PRESENT DAY

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Like the banned flag of my beloved  
 Palestine, I held something in my  
 head that would bring pride and  
 cheer to my people. And to our  
 enemies...

Jibril slows to a stop. Across the street stands an Israeli  
 PERSONNEL CARRIER. On the sidewalk, two Israeli SOLDIERS  
 have five PALESTINIAN YOUTHS up against a wall.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 You see where I'm heading. And the  
 easiest thing was finding the raw  
 material... the right dirt. Funny,  
 no? Land being the one thing we  
 had, not so long ago.

Pedestrians are frozen with fear or walking along cautiously  
 at a distance. The sole exception is an ATTRACTIVE MIDDLE-  
 EASTERN WOMAN who stands YELLING at the soldiers.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Here's the irony. We're all after  
 the same thing when it comes to God.  
 God shield us from temptation. God  
 favor us with love. God stand with  
 us in times of war.

(beat)

(MORE)

JIBRIL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I went looking for a solution in  
the last place they would suspect.

The woman gestures at the youths. The soldiers ignore her--  
as though she's not even there. She recoils in frustration  
and catches Jibril watching her.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
If you will it, it is no dream.

Something subtle passes between them.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
(amused)  
Do you know who said that?

The moment breaks-- she returns to haranguing the soldiers.

INT. P.O.V. ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER

Dark metal surface. A HAND moves through frame and draws  
back a metal plate: the WINDOW has dusty, warped-plastic  
which distorts the street, and Jibril in its center. Sound  
of HEBREW-SPEAKING VOICES:

SOLDIER #1 (O.C.)  
Whaddayouthink? This one here  
looks like trouble.

SOLDIER #2 (O.C.)  
I'm hungry. Why do you always do  
this when I'm hungry?

SOLDIER #1 (O.C.)  
You're no fun, you know that?

SOLDIER #2 (O.C.)  
Ask yourself what Colonel Alon  
would do. He's the man... I.  
Don't. Care. It's lunch.

Sound of Soldier #2 CHEWING. A bearded ANONYMOUS PALESTINIAN  
MAN joins Jibril, taking an interest in the incident. Jibril  
and the Man regard each other for a moment. Sounds of: a  
camera's SHUTTER SNAPPING, the soldier HOISTING his machine  
gun and COCKING it...

SOLDIER #1  
Any excuse... any excuse, my  
friends.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

A small round PORTAL on the side of the carrier opens and the business end of a MACHINE GUN pokes through the hole.

The two men exchange glances. The Anonymous Palestinian Man motions straight "up" with his eyes. SOMETHING is overhead. Jibril, confused, pivots his head and hunts the sky.

SHOT OF THE STREET FROM HUNDREDS OF FEET OVERHEAD. RESUME:

A Muezzin's amplified CALL TO PRAYER whispers through the street, and the two strangers go in opposite directions.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Life may be the ultimate gift of  
God, but life as a Palestinian?  
Especially in Palestine? I can  
only laugh.

Jibril turns back to regard the receding scene. He slips in the mud, wobbles comically to steady himself. It's an awkward pose.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Wouldn't you?

ON THE MACHINE GUN MUZZLE, waiting. Jibril eyes the ground and a muddy STONE at his foot. He contemplates it a moment. Then carefully, cautiously, he walks on.

The gun muzzle is wrenched back into the carrier and the portal CLANGS shut.

EXT. SECOND GAZA CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jibril hurries along, bobbing and weaving through an insane crush of foot traffic.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

And so welcome! Welcome to my  
country. You don't know it? Don't  
worry, you'll learn.

Sound of CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER and CHATTER.

JIBRIL (O.S.)

All right then. Settle down.  
Settle. Shhhh. Okay now. Zero.



FLASHBACK -- INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

WHACK! Jibril SMACKS a NUB of chalk against a scrawl-laden board, spinning out a thick "O". He stands before a cramped class of unruly sixth-graders. The room is decorated with educational items, posters of children's faces, awards, and a map of Palestine where there is no Israel.

JIBRIL

The vacant number. The symbol for nothing. We all know what nothing is, right? Look around. Can you deny that zero best describes the world we live in? Hmmmm?

JIBRIL (V.O.)

My job, and a fine... I'm sorry, what's that?

JIBRIL

Who then is responsible for the invention of zero? Anyone? Surely it was an Arab. More than likely a Palestinian. I mean, who could know more about zero? Come now.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

What about the Occupation, you cry?  
(sighs)  
The Occupation. That again?

Several GIRLS' HANDS shoot up. Jibril calls on a pretty girl with thick glasses sitting in the back.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

(musically)  
What's your preoccupation with the Occupation? Doesn't it tire you?

SHOT OF CLAY BEING PRESSED INTO THE FOOT. RESUME:

FLASHBACK -- EXT. HAIFA MARKETPLACE - DAY

A vibrant crowded shopping district in Israel, worlds away from the Palestinian Territories. Doves of people buy from colorful food stalls; tourists sit at the cafes. A clean-shaven Orthodox Jew stands at a bus stop.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Me, I've put a... happy face on things. I've tried to be positive.  
(MORE)

JIBRIL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Ask this guy instead. He knows  
 about zero.

His expression is neutral; his face is familiar. It is the ANONYMOUS PALESTINIAN MAN in Orthodox attire, complete with a yarmulke. A local BUS appears down the street. He smiles. Shoppers gather around for its arrival.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 But I warn you, he's a complainer.  
 He's got issues.

SHOT OF THE SCULPTING KNIFE DIGGING INTO CLAY. RESUME:

The bus bounces to a stop. Hydraulic DOORS HISS open. One by one, the passengers step into the vehicle.

INT. HAIFA BUS - DAY

The Anonymous Palestinian Man waits to pay his fare near the entrance of a very full bus. An elderly passenger GAZES at him blankly. Nervous smile. He draws a DEEP BREATH and whispers to himself:

ANONYMOUS PALESTINIAN MAN  
 They will suffer until they  
 understand.

SHOT OF THE MOVING KNIFE SNAGGING ON A ROCK. RESUME:

The engine REVS and he lurches as the bus starts forward. The bus drifts into the fabric of the crowded street.

EXT. HAIFA MARKETPLACE - CONTINUOUS

MASSIVE EXPLOSION! A FIREBALL ENGULFS the front of the BUS. Flaming SHRAPNEL HURTLES in all directions. The avenue is awash in CARNAGE, and the wounded's SCREAMING is soon joined by the WAIL of emergency SIRENS.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 I don't blame him, but guys like  
 him made my life miserable too!  
 What would you choose, between a  
 hard place and a rock?

INT. JIBRIL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

JIBRIL  
 Thank you Daoud. Aziz. As all of  
 you who actually read this week's--

A sudden COMMOTION from the hallway. All attention turns to the door as YUSUF, Jibril's enthusiastic eleven year old nephew, BANGS into the room.

YUSUF  
(overlap with above)  
-- Head mistress says...

JIBRIL  
Yusuf! We don't run into a room!  
How many times...

YUSUF  
Sorry Uncle! But head mistress  
says there's a curfew coming--

Jibril snaps, SLAPPING his hand hard on his desk.

JIBRIL  
Damn!

Startled silence. He immediately regrets his outburst.

JIBRIL  
(composing himself)  
I'm sorry children.  
(to Yusuf)  
What was hit?

YUSUF  
Haifa.

JIBRIL  
Bad?

YUSUF  
(nervously happy)  
Very bad. Doctor Fatima says Alon  
will make the school a detention  
center again, so she wants us to  
leave now.

Yusuf stretches that "now" as only a child anxious to leave school can. THREE BOYS whisper with excitement.

JIBRIL  
Well don't smile. It's not funny.  
(sighs)  
Right. To the shelter. Your  
parents will be alerted and we'll  
see if we can get you home today.  
Get your books, and let's not go  
looking for trouble if you please.

Jibril locks on the three boys. They immediately sink in their chairs. The children pack their things and head for the door. Yusuf waits for The Three and falls in with them.

THROUGH THE WINDOW Jibril spies several teenage boys running to a hole in a chain link fence at the school's perimeter. Rocks in hand. He looks up at the pictures of the youths that gaze back, all blank smiles-- dates on the posters reveal all to be martyrs, killed by the Israeli army.

JIBRIL  
(without turning)  
Yusuf.

Yusuf freezes.

JIBRIL  
With me.

YUSUF  
(disappointed)  
Yes sir.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

A cavernous room teeming with children. Several teachers try to corral the most rambunctious youths. Jibril argues with DOCTOR FATIMA, dignified matriarch and head of the school.

JIBRIL  
(passionately using his  
chalk nub for emphasis)  
You're guessing again! How can you  
shut us down now if the order  
hasn't actually come in!?!

DOCTOR FATIMA  
Caution?

JIBRIL  
-- the first week of class in five  
months where I've taught for more  
than two days in a row--

DOCTOR FATIMA  
I cannot override the parents! You  
know that. School shouldn't be a--

JIBRIL  
-- don't we want them educated?  
Not lost. We can't cave on this  
now.

DOCTOR FATIMA

You're a good teacher, Jibril.  
Your enthusiasm would be wonderful,  
in other circumstance. But here,  
now, you are... reckless.

JIBRIL

When we run out of this...  
(he holds up the chalk)  
... I'm not.

DOCTOR FATIMA

Ummm yeah... speaking of which...

Doctor Fatima pulls out a CAR KEY which Jibril is not happy to see.

DOCTOR FATIMA

Not now, not now of course. But  
when it's safe.

Jibril SWIPES the key with disdain.

JIBRIL

When it's safe!

FLASHBACK -- EXT. THIRD GAZA CITY STREET - DAY

Jibril hustles along, pulls out an official-looking document.  
He glances up and greets certain persons as he goes.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

When it's safe! Everyone's a  
comedian here.

A rogue's gallery of characters return a smile, a wave, or an unfriendly grimace.

JIBRIL

(under his breath)  
There's Omar! Hey Masud! That guy  
owes me money. That guy's a  
bastard. So's that one. Hey Zia!

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The only safety in Gaza is not in  
Gaza.

FLASHBACK -- EXT. DESERT GROVE - NIGHT

Peace and quiet. A battered old CAR is parked in a grove of tall trees. Jibril sits nervously in the car when the BEEP of a cell phone jolts him. He whips it out of a pocket.

JIBRIL

Yes I'm here. When? Good.

He pockets the phone, satisfied. WHISTLES a bit of an American pop tune.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The days were crazy, and faceless.  
Unchanging. I had been searching  
for something, I didn't know what...  
(laughs)  
... until it looked me in the eyes.

TIME TRANSITION:

ANOTHER CAR

Pulls up alongside Jibril's, and NOAM GOLDSTEIN, a modest-looking Israeli peace activist, gets out. Jibril opens his own door and greets him in English:

JIBRIL

My fucking Jewish friend!

NOAM

(continuing in English)  
My fucking Arab friend!

They hug. Small talk. Noam pivots around to open his car's trunk.

JIBRIL

What do you have this time?

Noam reaches into one of several boxes and pulls out a packet of pencils.

NOAM

Jerusalem. Number 2. Excellent quality. Omega chalk. Only the finest our kibbutzim can produce.

JIBRIL

Who'd a'thought the communists could do anything well?

NOAM  
 Who'd a'thought. Staples. Glue.  
 And lots of paper.

JIBRIL  
 For all our paper needs. Much  
 appreciated.

Jibril grabs a box and begins loading his own car.

JIBRIL  
 But y'know what I really need? For  
 Doctor Fatima to get off her ass  
 and get a new car for the school...

He waves at the rust and dents on his junker.

JIBRIL  
 I can barely make it here in this  
 piece of junk. Look at this thing!

NOAM  
 My sympathies.

Noam stares thoughtfully and shakes his head. Soon he's  
 chuckling, then laughing at some internal joke.

JIBRIL  
 What?

NOAM  
 (stifling his laughter)  
 What you really need... Oh never  
 mind.

He waves away the thought, further exasperating Jibril.

JIBRIL  
 What?

NOAM  
 It's nothing.  
 (beat)  
 Hell, it's a shame you're not  
 Jewish.

JIBRIL  
 And it's a shame you're not Arab.

NOAM  
 A Golem. There. Yes. You need a  
 Golem. That would help you.

JIBRIL  
A Golem? What's a "Golem" then?

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Fuck!

FLASHBACK -- EXT. GAZA CITY STREET - DAY

Jibril races hurriedly towards a squat office building with a large crowd before it.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Me and my big mouth! If only I wasn't a curious sort. If only Noam hadn't put the idea in my head, the bastard. A Zionist plot, I'll bet. I was a fool to listen to him. A fool in a land of fools.

He approaches the mob crowded around two PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY AGENTS with machine guns. Everyone waves an "official" document similar to what he carries.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Oh ho ho, now you don't like me?  
You say I'm too too hard on my poor, long-suffering people.  
(laughs)  
Uh-huh.

The gunmen protect a BAG MAN who doles out money to the men from a BURLAP SACK. Jibril hears his name called and badgers his way through the crowd, eyes fixed on a MAN in front of him, leaving with cash. When Jibril gets to the front, the Bag Man is turning the bag inside out. He displays the empty bag to his guards.

P.A. AGENT #1  
(to the crowd)  
That's it. No more! Go home!

The crowd fumes. Presses in on the Bag Man. Accusations all around. GUNSHOTS. The crowd scatters and several unpaid workers, including Jibril, scramble after the paid ones.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
It seems self-inflicted stupidity is a national sport here. Am I a party to it? Sure, but a man has to eat...

We hear the song-like CALL of a CLERIC echo through a mosque.



INT. AL-IJLIN MOSQUE - DAY

SHEIKH BASHIR MANSUR AL-KHAYR, an elderly blind Imam kneels front and center with a packed mosque of faithful. He lifts his hands in the air and intones noon prayers to Mecca.

We find Jibril engaged as well, on his knees at the back of mosque. His expression betrays a slight lack of enthusiasm.

SHEIKH AL-KHAYR

O God, lift the siege imposed on us. O God, lift the siege imposed on our people and our Arab nation. O God, destroy the unjust Jews. O God, avenge the blood of our martyrs.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Oh God, help us get our act together! O Palestine, is that so unreasonable to ask of you?

FLASHBACK -- EXT. JABALIA REFUGEE CAMP OUTSKIRTS - DAY

Three broke-down wooden COFFINS float atop a small funeral procession. The crowds are scant. It's a low energy affair. The LEAD PALLBEARER takes a bad step and loses his balance. Down he goes, taking Samer and others with him.

The first coffin tilts and sinks. Bump. The lid slides off. Hamdi, playing dead, tumbles to the ground, shocked. He scrambles to get back in the coffin, assisted by Samer and several other men as several unaware mourners flee the rising dead man.

OVERHEAD ANGLE: The procession is snarled. The other coffins go down. It's a pathetic affair.

SAME ANGLE: NOW SHOWING ON A TELEVISION SCREEN.

ISRAELI NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

(in Hebrew)

It would be comical if it didn't underscore the problem with Palestinian society as a whole...

INT. JIBRIL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jibril's face glows from the light of a television set, his mouth agape.

He is surrounded by his sister's extended family in a middle-class living room whose walls are scarred by bullet holes.

There's MINA, an older version of his sister from the photo. YUSUF, her son, sits at a small computer desk, laughing in fitfully. MOHAMMAD HAWWASH, Mina's husband, sits next to Jibril. JAMALEH, Mohammad's grandmother sits beside him, and Mohammad's cousins HAMDI and SAMER stand, heads hung low.

YUSUF

Again, Jibril.

Jibril dejectedly grabs a remote and presses rewind. The images speed backwards and replay. He throws the remote to Yusuf, who grabs it greedily. The women are dumbfounded. The images burn in Jibril's eyes.

JIBRIL

Wow. Way to go guys.

MOHAMMAD

These schemes are... are... Where do you get these ideas?

SAMER AND HAMDI

(together)

Sorry. Uncle Mohammad.

From outside, the muffled sounds of militants yelling "God is Greatest", peppering the air with GUN FIRE.

MOHAMMAD

Omar?

JIBRIL

Azzam.

Yusuf's LAUGHTER punctures the awkward silence. Jibril is not happy.

INT. JIBRIL'S BASEMENT - NIGHT (A SECOND NIGHT)

Jibril is dressed differently. From the work on the second leg, time has passed. Tonight he's seething. He pulls more clay from the bucket, and CUTS his and on a jagged rock.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I love Samer and Hamdi, but they're idiots. At least they're not blood relatives.

He squeezes the rock hard. Blood drips from his fist.

JIBRIL

"Comical". Everywhere I look in my  
Palestine-- all heart, no brains.

FLASHBACK -- EXT. GAZA CITY STREET -- DAY

A young boy's HAND lifts a rock from the ground. PULL BACK to reveal several TEENS hurling stones from behind a rubble barricade. Further behind them, a few anxious ADULT MEN including Jibril, eye the situation.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The kids... wise-asses. Who are  
they fooling, playing at David and  
Goliath. Just a Jewish fairy tale.

The youths' target is too far to reach-- an awesome, imposing Israeli MERKAVA TANK which RUMBLES to a stop at the far corner of the street. TROOPS of Israeli soldiers with shields and grenade launchers approach from behind the tank. The head of the squad pulls out his BULLHORN and rapidly commands:

SOLDIER #1

By order of Colonel Alon, this  
section of the city is under  
curfew! You are ordered to go  
home! Go home immediately!

The boys JEER the soldiers, spitting back Colonel Alon's name with pure hatred. Jibril yells and gestures at the youths to calm down, to stop the provocations.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I say praise be to Allah, The All  
Seeing, for watching over our  
striving... But did He see how we  
were doing?

THOOMP! A gas grenade tumbles through the air and lands near a group of youths. They cover their faces against the gas and venture forth to throw rocks at the small platoon of soldiers. For each throw, a soldier lifts his rifle and POINTS it at the offending youth. When the rock falls short, he lowers his weapon. A STONE hits the helmet of one soldier, PRIVATE ISENBERG. Jolted, his rifle springs up, and he FIRES a single rubber bullet. One of the youths CRIES out and drops to the ground.

Next to Isenberg is a YOUNG RECRUIT who shakes his head sadly. The gunman sees this and leans over:

PRIVATE ISENBERG  
They will suffer until they  
understand.

P.O.V. OF THE INJURED YOUTH

The faces of his friends are a cacophony of encouragement, rage. Concerned adults, Jibril included, crowd in to check his health.

ANGLE ON THE SKIRMISH - we PULL BACK, rising above the shrinking battleground until the din can barely be heard. Almost a mile above the city, the LENS of a video camera enters frame. The camera is mounted underneath a small OBSERVATION BLIMP, parked over the site.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
(whispered, accusing)  
Coward! The martyrs are the brave  
ones.

INT. ISRAELI ARMY BASE OF OPERATIONS - DAY

VIDEO IMAGE-- HIGH OVERHEAD ANGLE of the confrontation.

A PISTOL hanging in its holster BLOCKS part of the frame, and a HAND rises, reaching for the gun. There are small BLUE NUMBERS tattooed on each knuckle. The hand casually tenses into a FIST, then relaxes. The man belonging to the fist shifts position and we PULL BACK, revealing PRIVATE TSABAROV-- a young Russian-Jewish immigrant stationed next to the monitor. He pulls off his headphones, turns to the figure standing in the shadows.

PRIVATE TSABAROV  
Lt. Tal says it's heating up. What  
do you think? Colonel Alon, sir?

The figure exhales cigarette smoke. His thick INDEX FINGER taps the monitor, a part of the image now zoomed in and fixed on the crowd.

COLONEL ALON (O.C.)  
That one, giving orders in the  
back. Who is that bastard? I  
haven't seen him before.

The pixelized Jibril is recognizable only to our eyes.

PRIVATE TSABAROV  
No mask. No scarf. Maybe Fatah or  
 Hamas? Probably just--

COLONEL ALON (O.C.)  
 -- Find out who he is. He can't be  
 too high up if he's out in the  
 open, but we might be able to  
 squeeze him...

FOOTSTEPS of Alon leaving. Tsabarov throws a skeptical look  
 around the room, at Alon's back. Like a sinister mind  
 reader, Alon stops, remains with his back to us.

COLONEL ALON  
 What? They're all terrorists you  
 know.

PRIVATE TSABAROV  
 Guilty until proven innocent?

COLONEL ALON  
 Is this America? All of them.

PRIVATE TSABAROV  
 Yes sir.

COLONEL ALON  
 You'll go far in this army, son.

Alon walks away.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Zionist bastard! Alon would never  
 get me to throw rocks. I must be  
 grateful to Noam. Truly it was a  
 smarter, better solution.

EXT. OBSERVATION BLIMP - DAY

ANGLE ON THE BLIMP'S CAMERA AND VIEW. PAN OFF the camera  
 until we are looking in the opposite direction, scanning a  
 distant portion of Israel.

TIME LAPSE: the sun sinks and twilight washes the dusty world  
 in cobalt blue.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 It was elegant, and the world loves  
 elegance.

FLASHBACK -- EXT. DESERT GROVE - NIGHT

Jibril and Noam are finishing their transfer.

NOAM

It was a creature created to protect the Jews from pogroms and idiotic blood libels. Some of your pals know about those, don't they?

JIBRIL

I thought you liked your Matzos with babies' blood?

NOAM

Only during Ramadan. Anyway, it couldn't speak, but it could do simple actions. Buy food at the market, chop wood, right? It was a simple automaton of sorts. Some, when necessary, protected the Jews from their enemies. Made them run away in fear from what I know. Killed others outright. They had extraordinary strength. They could be very, very scary.

Noam has Jibril's rapt yet amused attention.

JIBRIL

I'm liking this. This is what we need.

NOAM

(trying to put a lid on  
Jibril's enthusiasm)  
Yeaaahhh. That's what the Jews thought. I always liked it myself. Pity it's just a myth.

JIBRIL

Yeah... Yeah, pity...  
(beat)  
But so what. How would you do it if you could. I mean, this wouldn't involve sperm, would it?

NOAM

(laughs)  
Jibril, there is no way in heaven that you could even approach what is necessary to create this thing. Assuming it was even possible.

JIBRIL

So assume it was possible.

NOAM

It isn't...

(beat)

But assuming it was...

(muses)

Well, you must really be bored  
shitless to want to know this  
stuff.

JIBRIL

(crude Southern accent)

Boss man got me on lock down,  
longtime.

NOAM

(relenting)

Ever hear of Kabbalah? Jewish  
mysticism?

INT. LIBRARY STACKS - JIBRIL'S IMAGINATION

Hebrew TEXT fills the frame and a finger TRACES the words.

NOAM (V.O.)

Philosophy courtesy of my mentor,  
Rabbi Barenbaum. The Kabbalists  
were very big into figuring out how  
to construct the world, and  
eventually the whole of the cosmos.  
How's your Hebrew?

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Passable.

TIGHT ON JIBRIL writing Hebrew letters and mathematical  
symbols in combinations that resemble mathematical formulas.  
He makes marks over a copy of Da Vinci's famous drawing of  
man's anatomy.

NOAM (O.C.)

Well you better brush up. You'll  
need the Sefer Yetzilah, the Book  
of Creation. It's like the  
handbook that tried to explain  
God's creation of the universe.  
Short, cryptic. All the key ideas  
are in it. Don't forget the vowel.

Jibril works at a desk in an enormous, absurdly baroque old  
library. Ancient manuscripts surround him and Noam.

NOAM

Good. Now you absolutely have to read it in Hebrew. Language is important now. You have to treat the words as holy. Holier than your Qur-an.

JIBRIL

Blasphemy! Abomination

NOAM

You're asking to play with fire. These words are powerful. Without proper respect--

He touches the letters on Jibril's note paper and --POOF-- disappears in a puff of cheap magician's smoke. Jibril, unimpressed, picks up the paper and scans for Noam:

JIBRIL

I'm bored. This is a stupid idea. I'm sorry I asked.

NOAM (V.O.)

Skipping out of class already? How did you ever convince the college to give you that degree?

He crumples the sheet and has but a moment to register surprise before he --POOF-- disappears too.

RESUME -- EXT. SETTLER'S GROVE - NIGHT

JIBRIL

Forgive me if I'm not that interested in studying your history.

NOAM

I don't blame you. It's just a legend anyway. Fun to think about, but that's all. Stick with facts. Things your kids can use.

JIBRIL

Facts. Facts are useful. But whose facts, my friend?

A hiccup in the mood. They stand there wistfully. Jibril looks around the grove and to the desert hills beyond.



NOAM

Always forgive your enemies;  
nothing annoys them so much.  
Wilde. Oscar Wilde.

JIBRIL

The West is overrated my friend.  
And fuck you too. Time to go.

Jibril gives him a goodbye hug, gets in his car. Noam watches him drive off.

FLASHBACK -- INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jibril is talking to himself, his mind working overtime to process Noam's story.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The Jews are stereotyped as smart  
because their culture places great  
importance on learning.

The dusty road bounces before us as photographic and drawn imagery float into the sky, swallowing the whole of the frame. The scene becomes a MONTAGE of HEBREW, ARABIC, HISTORICAL DRAWINGS OF DEMONS, MONSTERS...

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The Kabbalists, being religious  
types, married learning and  
information with God. Information  
worship. Information as a life  
force? A life form. And  
information wants to be free...

... KABBALISTIC DIAGRAMS, GALAXIES, and BLOOD CELLS.

ON JIBRIL: A genuine smile grows on his face.

JIBRIL

Yes... yes! Why not? I am a good  
Muslim man. My cause is righteous.  
I'll find equivalents. An Arab  
Golem. I will make an Arab Golem!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jibril sits before Yusuf's computer, a relic of the late eighties, scanning web sites and taking down notes. Yusuf stands impatiently beside him.

YUSUF

What are you doing? Are you done yet? Get your own!

JIBRIL

Just a few more minutes if you please.

INT. JIBRIL'S BASEMENT - NIGHT (A THIRD NIGHT)

ANGLE ON THE TABLE - with the passage of more time, the clay body has progressed. Jibril works on the second arm. He makes it out-of-proportion, reaching to the golem's knees.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Noam forgets. I have what is called a photographic memory. Eidetic memory, to be scientific. My gift. My blessing.

Jibril fashions an oversized hand.

JIBRIL

So I did it. I memorized their traditions. Theories and rituals. Words and prayers. All of it. It was easy, actually.

MONTAGE -- EXT. GAZA PRINT SHOP - DAY

Jibril stares through the window of a small shop: an ELDERLY MAN takes MONEY and a TEENAGE BOY'S PHOTO from a bereaved FATHER who pours his heart out about his son.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Kabbalists saw their alphabet as divinely inspired, and so divinely "empowered". Letters are divided up into categories that mirror things like the natural elements-- fire, water, earth-- or the seasons of nature, parts of the body, the heavens...

The man leaves and The Printer then goes through the process of creating a colorful MARTYR'S POSTER. The picture is decorated with ornate phrases and printed with a beat-up printing press.

MONTAGE -- EXT. GAZA CITY - DAY

THE WALL OF A RAVAGED BUILDING WITH HEBREW GRAFFITI ON IT. A group of teenagers shellack copies of the newly created poster on the wall.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The combination of these letters  
plus the Name of God form the  
actual structure of all things.  
All things good. All things evil.

The teens spray paint slogans around the poster, praising the hero, excoriating the Israeli Prime Minister, and covering up the Hebrew words.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Imagine a mathematics table or  
better, a periodic table. Instead  
of numbers or chemical elements,  
divinely charged letters. Hebrew  
letters. All you need is the  
proper formula and you could make  
the world entire.

(beat)

The Kabbalists had several.

MONTAGE - EXT. GAZA CITY / WEST BANK - DAY

Jibril haunts scenes around Gaza and its refugee camps. He stays in the background-- an observer or member of whatever group is protesting. At each place, he casually scoops up a HANDFUL of mud which he hides in his clothing. He sees:

An indignant family watches as part of their farmland is confiscated by Israeli forces. OLIVE TREES are uprooted and destroyed.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Equivalentents. Remember the raw  
material I was telling you about  
before? Their "righteous" ones  
would say that our land is  
unusable. Dirty. Impure.

A long, unmoving line of Palestinians await a humiliating search by Israeli soldiers at a heavily fortified checkpoint.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I disagree. It's just soaked in  
blood.

A tearful family wails in frustration, unable to stop an Israeli bulldozer as it crushes their home.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

And the blood of the martyrs is pure.

SHEIKH AL-KHAYR

O God, Palestine belongs to Muslims throughout the world and no one has the right to give it up or to forsake it.

MONTAGE -- INT. AL-IJLIN MOSQUE - DAY

Once again, the elderly Imam kneels front and center with the faithful. Jibril is close to the front, deep in prayer.

SHEIKH AL-KHAYR (CONT'D)

O God, whoever does this is a traitor to the trust and is nothing but a criminal whose end shall be in hell.

INT. JIBRIL'S BASEMENT - NIGHT (A FOURTH NIGHT)

Jibril is working on the second leg for the main body.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

And so the monster was coming along well. That clever story, it kept me going for months! Which brings me to tonight. For you see, it would have stayed a mere diversion, except for one thing...

The gentle POP-POP-POP of GUNFIRE sputters again, as well as the SQUAWK of an Israeli army walkie-talkie somewhere in another room. Jibril's face is suddenly consumed by anger. He HURLS his handful of clay at the wall.

HIGH OVERHEAD ON THE GOLEM, missing only a head now. Jibril breathes deeply, settles himself, then steps out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A CLOSET DOOR silently opens and Jibril steps into the room. The television glows silently with a soccer match. Something is off. Everyone, including Yusuf, is tense, still. Jibril nods to Mina, who motions to the upstairs.

JIBRIL  
 (whispering)  
 Rafah?

This brings a weary smile to Mina, nodding in agreement.

MINA  
 Rafah.

Yusuf notes the remark, puzzled. Jibril gives Yusuf a nod and wink. There's a CREAK on floorboards, receding FOOTSTEPS. All clear. Jibril finds a spot by the coffee table, pours himself a cup of tea and sits down.

MOHAMMAD  
 (shaking his head)  
 Ten days this time...

MINA  
 We're all together. At least, when you come up from your room-- why are you so dirty?

JIBRIL  
 (casually)  
 Am I? I didn't notice...  
 (beat)  
 Ten days. It's like ten years.

HAMDI  
 Yusuf gets more play time on the computer.

SAMER  
 He may actually turn out smart.

Yusuf makes a face at Samer.

JIBRIL  
 One day he's going to make you very proud, Mohammad. Hmmm, Yusuf?

YUSUF  
 How's that Jibril?

JIBRIL  
 By going to university. Right?

JAMALEH  
 We're glad you keep an eye on him Jibril.

JIBRIL

It's tough these days, raising  
kids. Eh Mina? I do what I can.

YUSUF

(brash)

I want to be an engineer one day.

The family members are pleased at this. Jibril smiles, follows Yusuf's gaze back to the television. The soccer match has been replaced by images of Islamic Jihad protesters at a large funeral procession, faces covered in black hoods and machine guns at the ready. Serious business. He glances back to Yusuf, his smile gone.

YUSUF

(sensing displeasure)

Like you, Jibril. Not that kind of  
engineer.

JIBRIL

(melancholy)

Good. Build buildings if you can.  
A hospital. A dam. A home. I  
would have...

More GUNFIRE pops in the distance. Jibril looks to the ceiling. Mohammad nods with resignation.

JIBRIL

They're not going to leave.  
They're never going to leave!

He starts to stand, prompting Hamdi and Samer to stand as well. Mohammad tries to stay them.

MOHAMMAD

Please, please! What would you do?  
Or have us do? Boys, relax--

JIBRIL

--Can I, can I please at least  
stand up?

He shrugs off Mohammad's hand sharply. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS from upstairs herald the arrival of an ISRAELI SOLDIER. Everyone freezes. The soldier passes through the next room without so much as a nod. Jibril waits a beat.

JIBRIL

(quiet, controlled)

I'm sorry. I'm not going up there  
okay? No trouble.

A muffled toilet FLUSHES off screen, followed by the sounds of heavy BOOTS STOMPING up steps and after a moment, muffled MALE LAUGHTER.

SAMER  
Pigs!

HAMDI  
Dogs!

JAMALEH  
Be glad if they use the toilets at all. You remember how they left the top floor the last time they were here.

The old woman makes a face of exquisite disgust which brings a smile to everyone. They sit again.

JIBRIL  
(stewing)  
The nerve they have.

SAMER  
They take our homes--

HAMDI  
-- To shoot at our friends!

JIBRIL  
That's it!

Jibril leaps up and heads for the front stairwell.

MOHAMMAD  
Jibril! Jibril!

INT. UPPER STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Jibril bounds up two flights of narrow stairs, furious.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Jibril heads straight for a door across from the stairs. He slows down as he approaches. The door is ajar.

Rapidly losing steam, he steps up and-- knowing he shouldn't, but he unable to stop himself-- halfheartedly pushes the door. It CREAKS as it swings open, revealing

## INT. SNIPER'S NEST - NIGHT

Five SOLDIERS occupy a devastated apartment room. The furniture is trashed and piled into the corners with rubble. The main window wall has been blown away, exposing the second-story of the building across the street.

Two SNIPERS with high-powered rifles are in position at the edge of the exposed wall. A third SOLDIER sits with communication gear. The other TWO SOLDIERS sit away from the exposed area, playing cards.

VERY RAPIDLY - The Card Players and the Communications Man LOCK eyes on Jibril. In an instant, the Card Players are up--rifles at the ready. They are young, but their faces are masks hardened by fear.

CARD PLAYER #1 (PRIVATE BERG)  
Out of here! Out of here  
NOW!

CARD PLAYER #2 (SERGEANT OZ)  
What are you doing here?  
We're in the middle of an  
operation!

Jibril raises his arms, speechless. His rage and his nerve have deserted him.

JIBRIL  
I just... I just...

## P.O.V. THROUGH THE WINDOW OF AN APARTMENT DOWN THE STREET--

We see Jibril threatened by the soldier. A SHADOWY FIGURE moves through frame.

PALESTINIAN SNIPER #1 (O.S.)  
What the hell is Jibril doing?

## INT. SNIPER'S NEST - CONTINUOUS

The Snipers add their voices to the chorus without even turning their heads.

SNIPER #1  
Get him outta here. Get him  
outta here now. Do it Zev!  
You know what the Colonel  
will do to you.

SNIPER #2  
Zev, you screwed up again!  
How many times we gotta tell  
you to watch the door!

Sergeant Oz marches towards Jibril. The barrel of the rifle touches Jibril's chest, forcing him to step backwards.



SERGEANT OZ

Get back to your room. When we're  
here, THIS IS OURS!

He SLAMS the door in Jibril's face.

Jibril stands there breathing deeply, heart in his mouth.  
Turns to walk downstairs. Through the door-- muted CURSES of  
the soldiers, and then more LAUGHTER. Jibril fumes as he  
sinks down the steps into darkness.

DREAM - INT. CAVE BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jibril steps out of blackness into a dimly-lit, enormous cave-  
like space. An abstract version of his basement, with tools,  
a work table, storage boxes, etcetera, all where they should  
be - but no walls. Jibril is in a pool of light. Opposite  
him is Great Uncle Mahmoud. Well-dressed, but with the same  
piercing stare.

MAHMOUD

Whose home is this?

JIBRIL

Ours, Uncle.

A sheet of unearthly WHITE FLAMES envelops Mahmoud, veiling  
his face. He intones the question again, his voice deeper  
and accusatory.

MAHMOUD

WHOSE HOME IS THIS!

Jibril's face contorts with horror and shame in the intense  
glow of the flames. He falls to his knees.

JIBRIL

(muttering halfheartedly)  
Help me, Uncle, help me!

MAHMOUD

WHAT DID YOU SAY!?!

Jibril is blown backwards by the force of the words. He  
looks transformed, his eyes now filled with the same burning  
rage of his Uncle.

JIBRIL

(screaming)  
OUR HOME! IT'S OUR HOME!!!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

YELLING, Jibril bolts upright on the living room couch. Samer and Hamdi sit opposite him, teacups in hand, staring with curiosity. Jibril gets his bearings.

JIBRIL

Oh!?! I'm sorry. What about...  
(he motions upstairs)

SAMER

Gone.

HAMDI

Left earlier in the morning.

Jibril sits up. He does a mental calculation, appears satisfied with his conclusion.

JIBRIL

(matter-of-fact)  
Good. They must never return.

Samer and Hamdi look at each other, puzzled by the comment. And then burst out LAUGHING. Jibril is confused. He's serious! Then he starts to chuckle, and breaks into laughter with them.

EXT. GAZA STREET - DAY

Jibril and Yusuf advance along a rubble strewn sidewalk. The street itself is a maze of tank-stopping barricades-- dirt mounds piled high with the jagged remains of walls, furniture, barbed wire, and oil drums. MARTYRS' POSTERS and MURALS plaster the walls.

YUSUF (O.S.)

What did you mean about Rafah? The other night?

JIBRIL (O.S.)

Oh that. Well your mother and I, when we were growing up in Cairo... Our father, your Grandfather Hamzah, he'd take us on these trips to Rafah, on the Egyptian side.

Yusuf bounces along, at once beyond and behind Jibril, picking things up for which Jibril promptly chides him, wrests from him and discards.

JIBRIL (O.S.)

We didn't try to cross the border into Gaza, or walk the no-man's zone and yell to our countrymen. We just walked around, shopped, ate. We were young. It was nice.

YUSUF (O.S.)

So? Big deal.

An AH-64 Apache helicopter WHOOSHES over their heads. Friendly greetings as they pass several storekeepers who gaze in the direction of a not-too-distant battle.

JIBRIL (O.S.)

See, even though it was cut up by Egypt and Israel, the Egyptian part was still Palestine. No one wants barbed wire and smuggling tunnels. And I think to him, where he took us was a tiny piece of Palestine he could live in again. And he did.

Jibril turns a corner but Yusuf hangs there, drawn to the SOUNDS of the fighting. Jibril's HAND reaches out and yanks Yusuf into the alleyway.

JIBRIL (O.S.)

That's what your mother and I remind each other when the Army comes to our home.

EXT. CASBAH - CONTINUOUS

A garbage-strewn maze of narrow alleys, cramped squares, and hawkers PACKING UP makeshift carts of cheap goods. Jibril is on his cell phone. People hurriedly buy supplies as shopkeepers pull METAL GATES across their storefronts. The two stop before a sidewalk vendor and Jibril points at several objects. He haggles with the man, comes to an agreement, pulls out money.

YUSUF (O.S.)

That our home is Rafah?

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Jibril and Yusuf walk side by side again. Jibril swings an oversized bucket with a rusty shovel poking out over the lip. Yusuf carries a similar-sized empty bucket.

JIBRIL

That our home is still nice.

YUSUF

Okay... I guess.

(beat)

We're gonna get in trouble if we don't get home soon.

JIBRIL

I cleared it with your father.  
Don't worry. We won't be too long.

YUSUF

Cool! Where are we going?

EXT. GAZA HARBOR - DUSK

Jibril and Yusuf's silhouettes rise up against a pink-and-orange sky. They stand on a picturesque berm, framed by tall palms. Before them, the Gaza beach and the Mediterranean. Only the lapping of waves to be heard.

JIBRIL

Untouched! A virgin piece of land.  
Isn't this a beautiful place? Huh?  
Do me a favor. Pick a spot.

YUSUF

(pointing to a patch of  
ground)

There, I guess.

Jibril begins to dig next to an exposed rivulet that runs from the outlying scrub down to the sea. He removes the top layers of sand and soil. Yusuf looks on with curiosity.

JIBRIL

Almost there... Almost there.

YUSUF

Is this why you've been down in  
your basement so much?

Jibril avoids answering. The shovel strikes a rock and Jibril stoops to examine the earth. He scoops out a mixture of mud and clay.

JIBRIL

This is it. Perfect.

The sky is turning an ominous shade of red. Thunder BOOMS in the distance and heat lightning illuminates the whole of the sky. Jibril reacts with excitement. He turns to Yusuf and offers the shovel.

JIBRIL

Storm's coming. Can you fill both buckets? Quickly? We'll just make by nightfall.

YUSUF

All right!

Yusuf grabs the shovel and digs with youthful eagerness.

JIBRIL

Watch out for rocks. Try to get the clay. That's it... there you go. Let me know when you're done.

Jibril turns to face the sea with a devilish gleam in his eye, looking very much the man whose time has come.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Tonight... tonight I will make a weapon. A Jewish weapon for my Jewish enemy.

EXT. JIBRIL'S HOME - NIGHT

P.O.V. THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE APARTMENT ACROSS THE STREET:

Lightning illuminates two rain-soaked figures as they struggle along the street. Jibril bears the weight of two clay-filled buckets. Every few feet, he stops and tips out the excess rainwater.

A shadow CROSSES FRAME revealing that we are watching from a sniper's vantage point. The dark figure moves a bit, revealing the glint of a semi-automatic rifle.

PALESTINIAN SNIPER #1 (O.S.)

Who is it?

PALESTINIAN SNIPER #2 (O.S.)

Jibril and Yusuf.

Sniper #1 raises up a HAND in the darkness, giving the "hold on" sign several times. Jibril doesn't catch this. He draws Yusuf to the nearest wall, looks up at the open space of the Israeli sniper's nest. Clear. Jibril ushers Yusuf up to the door who promptly BANGS it open

INT. FOYER - NIGHT

and they enter--

YUSUF

Guess what we got!

Yusuf's enthusiasm sinks. Four SNIPER'S NEST TROOPS have already arrived and are giving instructions to the family, huddled meekly in the living room. All eyes turn to Yusuf and Jibril, who is disappointed but less than surprised.

MINA

There you are! We were getting worried. You're soaked!

She moves to Yusuf but is stopped by a soldier. Sergeant Oz, the Card Player who badgered Jibril previously, eyes Jibril with suspicion. Points his weapon at Jibril's buckets.

SERGEANT OZ

(severe)

You. Where have you been? What's in those? Drop'em, drop'em now!

Jibril puts the buckets down, raising a hand meekly in surrender and protecting Yusuf with his other arm.

JIBRIL

(stammering)

The rain... I decided to get something to plug the cracks in the walls of my room. When it rains like this, it leaks so bad it floods all my things.

(beat)

It's clay. Just clay.

(gestures at a bucket)

YUSUF

Yeah. Come downstairs and I'll show you.

The last thing Jibril wants to hear, but he puts on a false front. Oz looms over Jibril. He barks out an order in Hebrew. PRIVATE BERG snaps to attention, hustles over, and upends the two buckets. The clay mounds retain their shape, like the contents of soup cans, but the excess water and soil spills out to the surrounding floor. Yusuf runs to Mina.

Oz BARKS another order. The soldier whips out a bayonet and slices absurdly, violently, hatefully into the clay.

He tears at it methodically, crushes it with his boot, searching... searching... No luck.

PRIVATE BERG

Nothing. He's telling the truth.

A soldier's walkie-talkie SQUAWKS an order-- they're on! Now the entire squad heads upstairs. Oz looms over Jibril.

SERGEANT OZ

We could bulldoze this home, you know. You should clean this up.  
 (turning to the family)  
 Stay down here. Stay out of our way and there will be no trouble. Okay? Understand?

Nods of understanding. Oz stomps upstairs. As soon as he's out of sight, Mina moves to Yusuf and wipes the wet from his hair.

MINA

What are you thinking? Where have you been?

JIBRIL

I'm very sorry Mina, Mohammad. It's my fault. I shouldn't have brought him with me. I thought I wouldn't take so long.  
 (beat)  
 I'll clean this up.

Dejected, Jibril bends down and collects the clay back into the buckets. Yusuf comes over to help. They share a "well that was a close one" look. Jibril's attention drifts to the ground and after a moment, his expression starts to brighten.

JIBRIL

I was wrong. Now it's perfect.  
 (turning to Yusuf)  
 Yusuf. Dry yourself off and come downstairs.  
 (to himself)  
 He will never forget.

MOVE IN ON a flat clump of clay with a perfect BOOT PRINT in it. Jibril carefully picks it up

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

and presses it on the back of a malformed upright HEAD. With his thumbs, Jibril smooths the seams of the piece until at last the head is whole. Crude facial features have already been roughed-in-- an open mouth, a jaw and chin, a nose and a hint of the eyes. It has a blank yet vaguely disturbing expression. Lightning FLASHES from a street-level window. Suddenly, Yusuf bursts into the room--

YUSUF

I got the paper you wa-- Wow!

Jibril jumps! His finger makes an ugly scar across the neck.

JIBRIL

(calming himself)

Yusuf, didn't I tell you you can't just "bang" into rooms? Hmmm?

YUSUF

Sorry Jibril.

Jibril smooths out the mistake and steps over to Yusuf, tousles his hair.

JIBRIL

Thank you.

Jibril has dried off and dressed up - as much as he can. He wears a nice suit coat - a half-size too small, and a yarmulke. Yusuf, transfixed, doesn't notice. He takes the stationary, a beautiful gilded sheet of paper, and puts it aside. They both stare at the figure on the table, covered once more by the water-soaked shroud. Yusuf spies a long arm, a giant hand with thick fingers. Yusuf is wide-eyed with amazement. He steps closer, puts a hand out--

JIBRIL

You can lift the cloth, but don't touch, okay?

Yusuf nods. Jibril goes back to the head, and begins detailing the face. Yusuf walks slowly around the lifeless figure, lifting the shroud at various points, taking in the scale of it, eventually stopping next to Jibril. He stares at Jibril and the head until Jibril loses his concentration. Jibril puts down the awl and crouches at Yusuf's height.



JIBRIL

Okay. I know I promised you could look. I know it's even better than the internet and being upstairs.

YUSUF

(seeing where this is headed)

Awww...

JIBRIL

But this stuff is hard work.

(taps his temple)

I need to do it alone. For now. When I'm done, you can come back down. Okay?

YUSUF

How long will that be?

JIBRIL

I don't know... it could be a couple of hours. It could be days. But you can help me, yeah? You can be my guard. Don't let your family come down here. The soldiers, well, don't mess with them, but nobody else, okay?

YUSUF

Okay Jibril.

Yusuf mopes out of the room, stealing a look from the door. Jibril comes over, ushers him upstairs, and closes the door, locking it. The head beckons, illuminated by a lightning FLASH from a small street level window.

Jibril restarts the process of sculpting the head. He works his way bottom-to-top from the lower neck to the top of the skull, leaving the boot print untouched. The face gains detail.

TIME TRANSITION:

The dense muddy-clay body of the golem, now drying, has been righted and leans against a wall. Jibril moistens the clay of the neck area and seats the HEAD gently on the shoulders, making everything seamless.

A small motor WHIRS. The overhead light FLICKERS from the power drain. Jibril is blow drying the neck area. He checks several times to make sure it is securely on the body.

Jibril splashes the entire golem with water. He picks up an awl and begins a painstaking process of scribing Hebrew phrases neatly all over the body and head. We hear him RECITING Hebrew prayers.

TIME TRANSITION:

The golem is back on the table, its entire body covered in ornate webs of Hebrew writing. Jibril takes in his work. Incomplete. Slowly, Jibril reaches into his shirt and pulls out an object hanging around his neck-- the KEY that Mahmoud gave to Jibril's father. He takes the key, breaks the string, and reverently presses it to the center of the golem's chest. It completes the text pattern perfectly.

All at once, the enterprise has some gravity. Jibril is sweating. He hears GUNFIRE sound through the walls. He hears the STORM outside pound down on the building.

Jibril backs up, closes his eyes, and begins to intone the ancient Kabbalistic alphabet patterns. He starts walking around the table, TOUCHING various parts of the golem's body. Without translating, we can still hear the repetitions of words and sounds, a musical quality rising up from the sing-song nature of process. The ritual changes over time, going from constant forward movement to stopping at certain places, to walking backwards...

Jibril recites and walks, faster and faster. The "walking paths" and "stopping points" of the ritual begin to GLOW and DISSIPATE.

OVERHEAD ON THE GOLEM-- Jibril is a blur of action. Soon Jibril is generating outlines of HEBREW LETTERS, KABBALISTIC DIAGRAMS floating above the screen. They are similar to what we saw when he was doing research.

SUPERIMPOSE: JIBRIL'S FACE, DEEP IN MEDITATIVE RECITATION.  
SUPERIMPOSE: YUSUF COMING TO THE DOOR AND LISTENING, GOING AWAY DISAPPOINTED.

The glowing characters and patterns are created with so much speed that the frame is engulfed in WHITE HOT ENERGY.

BURN TO WHITE:

BACK TO: Jibril stands gaunt before the golem: eyes closed, hands raised. He's been through an ordeal. We don't know how much time has passed. All is quiet. Jibril opens his eyes and looks at his creation. It seems no different.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
One last thing.

He goes to the little tool bench where Yusuf's PAPER sits. Grabs an awl and wipes it clean. Strokes the point with his right thumb. PRESSES down firmly. Jibril examines the digit. He squeezes it, draws out a deep red bead of blood. Next he gathers a bit of blood around the awl's sharp point and scrawls a long Hebrew word on a small section of paper, adding numbers next to certain letters and connecting all in an ornate flow-chart like design.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
The Name of God.

Jibril sucks on his thumb to staunch the flow of blood. He tears the inscription from the larger piece of paper and walks back to the golem.

Standing over the head, he carefully adjusts the clay jaw, opening it slightly. Folding the scrap of parchment, he lifts a crude tongue he has fashioned and places the paper underneath it. Done, he closes the mouth, careful to avoid smearing the inscriptions he has scribed all over the body. One last prayer.

He steps back. Silence.

JIBRIL  
Well?

Nothing. Pause. The moment breaks. The sounds of the GUNFIRE and the STORM creep back. Jibril looks disappointed but satisfied.

JIBRIL  
Well that's one way to kill an evening.

He steps over to the tool bench, reaches into the bucket of water, splashes his face. Takes a swig from a small water bottle. While his back is turned, we can see the figure lying inert on the table. Suddenly The Golem SITS UPRIGHT! Jibril is oblivious, chugging down water. Slowly... Slowly... he SENSES something. He turns and see The Golem staring at him with blank CLAY EYES.

Jibril is flabbergasted! Miracle of miracles! Simultaneously horrified and exhilarated, he drops his bottle, staggering backwards until he hits the door and sags to the floor. The Golem takes no action.

Jibril slowly comes to grips with this new reality. He regains his composure, inching his way towards The Golem. The Golem remains impassive, blankly looking at Jibril. Jibril is very close now, fascinated. His fear is abating.

JIBRIL  
 (stutters)  
 You understand me? Arabic?

The Golem gives the barest nod of its head.

JIBRIL  
 Stand up.

The Golem slides off the table and stands. Jibril is overjoyed! It's the happiest we've ever seen him. He does a little dance, hardly containing himself. Settles down.

JIBRIL  
 Do as I do.

Jibril raises his right arm. The Golem raises its right arm. He does an American salute. The Golem mirrors him again. He spins around. The Golem follows suit. Jibril is elated.

JIBRIL  
 I must say, you are not the  
 prettiest of Allah's flowers, but  
 still...

The GUNFIRE gets worse. Jibril's eyes shift skyward and he wags his forefinger to scold his uninvited guests upstairs. A bitter smile grows on his face. The Golem, still following Jibril's lead, unemotionally mirrors his action, wagging a scolding finger in Jibril's direction. Jibril catches this--

JIBRIL  
 Stop that, stop that!

The Golem stops. Jibril takes a deep breath. The old hatred has replaced his joy with a wrathful clarity.

JIBRIL  
 What to say, what to say? Since  
 you can't speak, there's no asking  
 questions, hmmm?  
 (beat)  
 You are a golem. A servant. You  
 know what that is?

The Golem nods yes.

JIBRIL  
 Not just a servant. My servant. I  
 made you. You're not a man. I...  
 I am a man.

He spins around, presents himself to The Golem.

JIBRIL

Understand? Yes? Right now there are other men upstairs. You understand "upstairs"? You understand house, home?

The Golem nods yes.

JIBRIL

You're smarter than you look. There are bad men upstairs. You understand bad? Evil?

The Golem does nothing.

JIBRIL

These men, they have guns... bang bang?

(mimes firing pistols and a machine)

Very very bad. Simple equation. There's two kinds of men in this world. Good men and bad men. I am a good man. The good men you serve. You help. You protect. The bad men you don't help. You protect us from them.

Nothing. The Golem is inscrutable.

JIBRIL

I want you to stop the bad men upstairs. The bad men with the bad guns. These men, they kill with their guns. You understand kill? Women, and children too.

(beat)

They take. They take without asking.

MAHMOUD (V.O.)

(a whisper)

Whose home is this?

Jibril's eyes betray his heart. He sidles close to the Golem and whispers in his ear.

JIBRIL

(darkly)

I want you to kill these soldiers. Dead. You understand kill? You understand dead?

The Golem nods affirmatively. Jibril smiles corruptly.

JIBRIL

You understand everything I'm saying, don't you?

No answer. The Golem is a closed book but Jibril remains oblivious to The Golem's non-answers. He heads for the door.

JIBRIL

Go upstairs. Past the family in the big room. And you do not harm the family. Ever! Right? You go upstairs to the room with the bad men, and you kill them. As quietly as you can. Quietly. Shhhh.

(he makes a choking gesture; a "dead" face)

And when you're done, you get rid of the bodies. You hide them outside of the house, far away. Understand?

The Golem bows "yes". Jibril slides the door's dead bolt to one side, savoring the sound. He grabs the knob--

JIBRIL

Like so.

-- and turns, pulling the door open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark. The family is, remarkably enough, peacefully asleep. Sprawled out on chairs, the couch, or the floor. Jibril moves stealthily through the room. Halfway across, he turns and gives a wave.

YUSUF'S EYES open with a snap as a shadow falls across his face. He looks up and sees the silhouette of The Golem floating through the room like an ocean liner. His footfalls sound like FAR DISTANT THUNDER, and yet nobody else wakes up. Yusuf shuts his eyes tightly.

The Golem stops at the foot of the stairs. Jibril points upwards.

JIBRIL

(whispering)

That's the way. Far end of the hall. Bang bang... phhhht!

He fires an imaginary gun and draws his finger across his throat. The Golem nods and begins to climb.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Golem ascends, his weight causing the steps to CREAK.

INT. SNIPER'S NEST - NIGHT

The odd bullet whizzes past three snipers in front line positions. Sergeant Oz is in the rear manning a small computer and barking information into a cell phone.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The Golem creeps closer to the top.

ON JIBRIL, leaning in anticipation. A tank RUMBLES outside.

INT. SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

The Golem hears the gunfire and turns towards

The DOOR. Closed, and GUNFIRE is erupting more frequently as we CLOSE IN on it. The tank RUMBLE increases. The Golem's footsteps BOOM more loudly...

The Golem stops before the door and rehearses grabbing the door and politely pulling it open. Once, twice...

INT. SNIPER'S NEST - NIGHT

The DOOR is torn from its hinges!

SERGEANT OZ  
(shouting)  
What the hell!

In a heartbeat, Oz's pistol is up. The snipers turn around, everyone targeting The Golem. For a moment, Oz is thrown aback by the sight of the creature, then he pumps round after round into The Golem's body. The creature jerks as it absorbs each bullet hit, but it does not fall.

SERGEANT OZ  
(quietly, disturbed)  
What the--

For the first time, The Golem's chest swells, as though it is breathing. It straightens itself out. Steps forward. The men have a look of growing terror. One sniper averts his eyes. Another drops his weapon. Even Oz is overcome by some primitive fear. The Golem raises its hands and points its fingers like guns, imitating Jibril. BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! Four bullets fly from its fingers and the four soldiers are dead, shot through the heart. The Golem registers no emotion. It looks straight ahead, takes its hand and touches the bullet holes on its body. Some of the Hebrew writing has been destroyed at the points of impact. The Golem presses clay from the surrounding areas into the holes, wiping out more writing.

A BULLET zips past! The Palestinian Snipers across the way. A FOOTSTEP. The Golem pivots. Jibril, dumbfounded, is in the doorway. Another bullet whizzes by. Jibril ducks.

Immediately, The Golem spins around. It marches to the opening in the wall and picks up two of the soldiers by their uniforms, one in each hand.

P.O.V. THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE APARTMENT ACROSS THE STREET:

The Palestinian snipers are now at the window.

PALESTINIAN SNIPER #1

What the... What's that guy doing?

PALESTINIAN SNIPER #2

He wants to die a hero, is all.

The Snipers take several shots at The Golem, hitting him in the back.

RESUME: THE SNIPERS' NEST

CLOSE ON The Golem's face, emotionless as the bullets hit. The Golem marches towards Jibril with surprising speed. Jibril back-peddles into the hallway.

JIBRIL

Wait a minute? What are you doing?  
Where are you going? Where are you  
going?

The Golem forces Jibril to the edge of the stairs.

JIBRIL

Whoa!

He wobbles a bit, then falls, TUMBLING wildly through a BLACK VOID. He hits the bottom and SHATTERS like a clay pot!



INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

YELLING, Jibril bolts upright from the living room floor. Mohammad, Samer and Hamdi sit opposite him, teacups in hand, staring intently. Yusuf is in his corner on the computer while the women are quietly praying. Jibril gets his bearings.

JIBRIL

Oh!?! I'm sorry. What about...  
(he motions upstairs)

SAMER

Gone. Didn't hear them leave.

HAMDI

I slept like a baby last night.

SAMER

Have some tea.  
(beat)  
Do you know what happened last night?

HAMDI

Because we don't know.  
(beat)  
Sugar?

JIBRIL

I had the strangest dream.

MOHAMMAD

All I know is that they're gone.

JIBRIL

You seem more cheerful than usual.

MOHAMMAD

I can't explain why. Usually I am grateful when they're gone. Like how it would feel to bang my head against a wall and then stop. The pain is gone. I'm grateful, glad, but not happy. Today I feel... happy. I can't explain it.

YUSUF

I know, I know what--

Jibril gives Yusuf the "don't-you-say-a-word" look. Yusuf turns back to the computer.

Mina comes in with a colorful tray of breakfast foods.

MINA

(beaming)

I'm so happy! Fresh eggs! Fresh eggs, Mohammad! And hummus. The pantry is full. How did this get here?

(suddenly leery)

Samer, Hamdi? Did you steal this? We haven't had fresh eggs for months.

The men offer quizzical looks of denial, all the while anticipating the arrival of the tray.

JAMALEH

Praise be to The Provider, we are blessed.

Everyone chimes in with similar thanks, and takes a portion. Jibril sits up, distrustful of the bounty, but not above eating good food.

SAMER

I'd still like to know what happened. Usually they rub our faces in their exit. This time, nothing.

YUSUF

I know I know. Jibril made a monster!

JIBRIL

Yusuf--

YUSUF

That's what kicked the soldiers out. I saw it!

The family CHUCKLES, SCOFFS at this.

JIBRIL

Yusuf is using his imagination again--

YUSUF

I saw it. It was huge, with huge arms like this...

(gestures with childlike over-exaggeration)

JAMALEH

Yusuf, that's enough.

She starts praying to ward off any evil.

JIBRIL

It's okay. He's just pretending.  
I'd like to think I wished them  
away. But I couldn't do that.

MINA

Jibril, what were you doing with  
all that earth that you brought in?  
And don't tell me that you are  
repairing leaks, because you have  
never fixed anything in this home.

Laughter, agreement all around. Jibril eats a hardboiled egg

JIBRIL

This food, Mina, mmmmm! Don't you  
think?

He looks around and the men agree. The question is avoided. Conversation quiets as the family savors the meal. Yusuf eyes Jibril, making a face that pleads for him to "c'mon, reveal The Big Secret". The more Jibril chews, the more he grins, until he can no longer hold it in.

JIBRIL

Mina, would you like to see what  
I've been doing? Would you all  
like to see?

Mina and Mohammad look at each other. Yusuf approves.

JIBRIL

Follow me.

Samer and Hamdi look from Jibril to the food and keep eating.

INT. BASEMENT - MORNING

DARKNESS. Sounds of FOOTSTEPS clumping down stairs, and the muffled, cheerful VOICE of JIBRIL making preparatory statements. The door opens and the silhouettes of Jibril, Yusuf, and his parents, crowd the threshold. Jibril STOPS TALKING mid-sentence. Unlit in the foreground is an OUT-OF-FOCUS shape.

Jibril rushes to the table and turns on the light, revealing the top of one of several PILES of dried clay pieces.

OVERHEAD ANGLE-- clay chips are scattered about the table and the floor, vaguely in the shape of a body.

Jibril grabs a fistful of chips, pours them back onto the table. Examines one. They are small, irregularly-shaped; some blank, some with Hebrew letters or whole words on them.

The family steps into the room.

MOHAMMAD

(jovial)

What is this Jibril?

(examines a clay chip)

You going to decorate the place?

Mohammad sees the Hebrew writing, his demeanor becoming a little more reserved. Jibril is pale, sweating.

JIBRIL

Sorry, Mohammad. My mistake...  
let's go back upstairs, enjoy that  
breakfast of Mina's.

Yusuf approaches.

YUSUF

Jibril?

Suddenly there is COMMOTION from upstairs. All heads shoot upwards. Sound of a door KICKED IN, VOICES SHOUTING. Yusuf clings to his father.

JIBRIL

Hamdi, Samer...

Jibril bolts for the door

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

and comes out of the stairwell to: Hamdi and Samer pushed to their knees and handcuffed by two leather jacketed ISRAELI SECURITY AGENTS. The boys PROTEST their innocence. A third AGENT is at Yusuf's computer, rifling through the disks on the desk. Jamaleh PLEADS with him; he gruffly shoves her aside.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Heavy... Israeli security. You  
know the one in the room who's  
ready to bring the party down?

YUSUF (O.C.)  
What's going on Jibril?

JIBRIL  
Don't come up here Yusuf!

Hand on mouth-- big mistake made. No thinking. He pivots and launches himself downstairs. Agent Metz turns just in time to see Jibril's head disappearing...

AGENT METZ  
You! Freeze! Arms up!

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jibril lands at the threshold and crowds into the basement.

JIBRIL  
Shin Bet... Or Mossad, I don't know which. Upstairs! Stay calm.

AGENT METZ (O.C.)  
(overlapping)  
Everybody on your knees! Now! You have five seconds! I'm coming in!

Everyone drops to their knees as Agent Metz appears in the doorway, pistol drawn. He rapidly scans the room, searching for anything suspicious. Moves past the family to the table, puzzled by the clay chips. He examines one, then SMASHES the piles on the table, showering the room with them! Agent Metz collars Jibril and Mohammad and shoves them towards the door.

AGENT METZ  
You and you! Upstairs, now! NOW!

EXT. APARTMENT - MORNING

YELLING AND ORDERS echo from inside the doorway of Jibril's apartment building. Jibril and the men of the Hawwash household are forced outside. Mina and Jamallah are right behind, yelling at the agents.

An agitated CROWD down the street watches the bodies of the Palestinian Snipers being loaded into an ambulance. There are few eyes on Metz and his prisoners except...

An ATTENTIVE PALESTINIAN YOUTH in a Nike "Just Do It" tee-shirt discreetly places a call on his cell phone as the four are rushed into the back of a featureless brown van.

Jibril barely makes eye contact with Mina before Agent Metz climbs in, SLAMS the door shut.

INT. VAN - MORNING

The men sit staring at one another as the van bounces along Gaza City streets. Agent Metz casts an unsympathetic eye on the group, pulls out a cell phone and makes a call.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 How did I get here? After last  
 night -- what I did, what I saw...  
 I know I am not mad.

EXT. GAZA STREETS (VARIOUS SHOTS) - MORNING

The van marks its way out of the city center, unceremoniously passing shuttered shops and pedestrians.

Jibril takes in the sights from a prisoner's point-of-view. Behind curtained windows, the EYES of residents and shopkeepers peer out at the passing truck.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 But I think the only difference  
 between a madman and myself...

EXT. MILITARY CHECKPOINT - MORNING

The van arrives at a fortified military checkpoint. Agent Metz gets out and meets a soldier who has been waiting next to a tank. A personnel carrier pulls up. Metz motions to the men in the van. Jibril steps out, followed by Mohammad, Hamdi and Samer.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 ... is that I am not mad.

The soldier takes each one by the arm and leads him into the carrier. When all the men are loaded, the soldier half-salutes Agent Metz and steps into the carrier. Metz bangs on the carrier's side panel and it pulls away.

INT. PERSONNEL CARRIER - MORNING

Jibril and the men sit on a small bench that lines one side of the carrier. On the other side sits a YOUNG SOLDIER with an Uzi on his lap. The sides of this carrier are wooden framed wire mesh.

Jibril watches with interest as the carrier passes through the El Tuffah neighborhood, moving towards the outer edge of Gaza City.

HAMDI  
(in Arabic)  
Where are we going?

The soldier stares at them indifferently.

HAMDI  
Hey. Hey you, Mister Soldier...

Jibril keeps his eyes outside. They pass another crossing where soldiers are checking personal papers.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
So you think I've been seeing things? Not me, I'm too smart for that.

Jibril catches sight of a woman outside the head of the line. She is arguing with the soldier, pointedly gesturing to her papers and the others in line, once again being completely ignored. He recognizes her as the Attractive Middle-Eastern Woman he saw earlier. The truck pulls away and she is obscured by traffic.

JIBRIL  
(to soldier, in Hebrew)  
You know what I love about the Israeli Army?

YOUNG SOLDIER  
What?

JIBRIL  
You've improved traffic conditions so much in Gaza.

The men chuckle. Even the Private cracks a smile.

EXT. NAHAL 'OZ CROSSING - LATE MORNING

The truck stops at one more checkpoint. Beyond this, the road heads into open desert.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

The carrier follows a lonely stretch of highway through the plains of central Israel.

INT. PERSONNEL CARRIER - DAY

The men are staring intently at the soldier as he tries to complete his sentence.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
 (in broken Arabic)  
 ... and the guy says, uh... uh...  
 "that's all you do? Uh... uh...  
 Bird... uh uh...bird imitations?"

A beat. The men break into polite chuckles. The soldier joins them. Samer repeats the soldier's punch line, improving the delivery and they all LAUGH HEARTILY. The soldier beams. Jibril smiles as well.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

SLOW MOTION, MOVE IN ON: a small grey interrogation room. SILENT, save for the faint BUZZ of the fluorescent lights. A disheveled Jibril sits silently at a table. Behind him, a MAN IN ARMY FATIGUES is pacing back and forth. His voice is BARELY AUDIBLE. He wags his finger and otherwise gestures pointedly.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 And they say that the Palestinians  
 never miss an opportunity to miss  
 an opportunity?

SHOT OF A NARROW GAZA ALLEYWAY, PASSERSBY CROSS THE FOREGROUND AND FAR END. RESUME:

JIBRIL sits stolidly, wooden.

JIBRIL  
 It's the Israelis never miss an  
 opportunity to crush Palestinian  
 hope.  
 (beat)  
 Oh, that's not so clever is it? If  
 you felt how I looked about now.  
 If only...  
 (beat)  
 Where was my Golem?

MOVE PAST ALLEY WALL, OBSERVING THE STONE TEXTURE. RESUME:

The MILITARY MAN leaves the room and Jibril sags in relief.



JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Was he causing trouble for my  
 "friends" in the Israeli Occupying  
 Forces? Was he having an average  
 day in Palestine? Maybe he's in  
 Jerusalem? He had no permits or  
 papers though...

He hears the door open and looks up to see:

END OF MOVE ON ALLEY WALL. A PAIR OF BLACK EYES OPEN FROM  
 THE STONE OF THE WALL. CHAMELEON-LIKE, THE GOLEM REVEALS  
 ITSELF, EXTRUDING FROM AND INTERMINGLED WITH THE WALL.  
 SOUNDS OF PASSERSBY. THE GOLEM SINKS BACK INTO THE BUILDING  
 AND CLOSES ITS EYES. RESUME:

Colonel Alon is standing at the door, a dossier in his hand.  
 He is a late-40's bulldog of a man, dressed in standard issue  
 fatigues with a few well-placed medals. He enters and seats  
 himself, casually tossing the dossier on the table. Lights a  
 cigarette and offers one to Jibril. Jibril refuses. The two  
 sit, sizing up each other. Alon is relaxed, almost friendly.

JIBRIL  
 You're making a mis--

Colonel Alon nods understandingly. He gives the dossier a  
 few "it's all in here" taps and starts to slide it towards  
 Jibril. Jibril's eye quickly goes from the dossier to Alon's  
 HAND. He notices the small tattooed number on each knuckle.  
 He seeks out the other hand, finds the other set.

Alon catches Jibril looking. He makes two fists and puts  
 them out for display.

COLONEL ALON  
 My father's number. Birkenau.

JIBRIL  
 (nodding)  
 You need it that much?

COLONEL ALON  
 Need it? No. But I wanted it. I  
 wanted to change its legacy.

JIBRIL  
 And after all that, you can go and  
 do this--  
 (lifts his hands, still in  
 plastic binders)  
 --to us.

Alon raps on the dossier again.

COLONEL ALON  
 (smiling)  
 Many uses for numbers.  
 (drums his fingers)  
 They remind me to keep you from  
 "doing this"--  
 (he raises a fist)  
 --to us.

He slides the dossier the rest of the way across the table.  
 Jibril opens it and immediately snaps to attention.

PHOTOGRAPHS. Black and white images that find Jibril in "hot spots" where the Israeli army intelligence must have been-- Jibril and Yusuf carrying buckets on a rainy street... grease pencil CIRCLES around the buckets; Jibril in the crowd watching youths skirmish with tanks and soldiers and a WILD-EYED EXPRESSION on his face; photos of Jibril's apartment building and a series on the dead bodies of Sergeant Oz and his men, sprawled out in the apartment of the Palestinian Snipers, also dead. Lastly, Jibril across from the personnel carrier with the Anonymous Palestinian Man... a circle around each of their faces.

Jibril looks up, tongue-tied.

COLONEL ALON  
 You know who that is?

JIBRIL  
 (earnest)  
 Him? No. Who? Who is this man?

COLONEL ALON  
 His name is Ghassan Abu Zeineh. He  
 blew up bus number nineteen in  
 Haifa yesterday.

The blood drains from Jibril's face.

JIBRIL  
 (astonished)  
 I tell you I do not... I did not  
 know him. That we're standing on a  
 street corner together, it's  
 coincidence! And if I knew what he  
 was going to do, I would have  
 stopped... I would have stopped...

Jibril is tangled up in his thoughts, cannot finish.

COLONEL ALON

(pulls the dossier back  
and reads from paperwork)

Would have, would have... You're a nice guy Mr. Barghouti. You live a clean life... correction, mostly clean life. Little stint in Nafha a few years back?

JIBRIL

Name a Palestinian who hasn't spent time in... I mean, doesn't it seem strange to you that Israel keeps jailing teachers and doctors?

The colonel stops for a beat, taking in Jibril's reaction. A wry smile. He begins again, very even-tempered.

COLONEL ALON

In my job, I can't afford even one coincidence, so two my friend...

(shakes his negatively)

Four soldiers stationed in your home were killed last night. They ended up dead in the apartment of the men they were trying to capture. Who are also dead. Doesn't that seem strange to you?

JIBRIL

(laughing in disbelief)

When those soldiers come in, we're always downstairs! You know your own army's procedures.

COLONEL ALON

Do you know who these gunmen were? The ones who the IDF troops were found with? Azzam and Omar Khayyat. Islamic Jihad. Wanted a long time by IDF.

JIBRIL

I do not know them. I swear. But then you're suggesting that I snuck up there and killed all of them, myself? You think I have a suicide wish? Do I look like an assassin? You, of all people, know how things are in Gaza.

COLONEL ALON

Sure. So you're helping someone. Maybe Fatah, maybe PFLP. You're one of the little people who makes lunch for the terrorists while they work hard building their bombs.

JIBRIL

(casually dismissive)

You're crazy. I'm a teacher! My job is with children--

COLONEL ALON

(pressing him)

-- You're a Fatah sympathizer and you helped set up the Khayyat brothers for execution because they've been taking potshots at IDF for two years and they brought us back into Ramallah. So if you take out some Jews too, all the better.

JIBRIL

No no no! Have you talked to Mr. Hawwash? Or his cousins!?! They will say the same. Mohammad has a son... you can't... You keep talking about people I don't know! You're conjuring things to satisfy some quota for putting Palestinians in detention. That's where you'd put us all if you had your way. I can't imagine where you come up with these ideas!

FLASHBACK - EXT. BARGHOUTI RESIDENCE - THAT MORNING

ANGLE ON Jibril's building and the Israeli VAN from the side of the angry crowd and the ambulance. MOVE IN ON the Nike "Just Do It" Youth making his cell phone call.

NIKE YOUTH

Both of them. From the Hawwash place? All the guys. Yeah the teacher too. Barghouti, Jibril Barghouti's his name I think.

CLOSE SHOT OF ANALOG VU METERS, THE NEEDLES DEFLECTING TO THE RHYTHM OF THE YOUTH'S VOICE.

INT. NIKE YOUTH'S HOME - DAY

The youth's older brother, a LARGE MAN dressed in sweats and tank-top underwear sits on a couch, cell phone pressed to his ear. A soccer match ROARS on the television. Far too many children are SCREAMING playfully around him while his WIFE YELLS at him from off screen.

MUSTAPHA

No shit? No shit! Barghouti too?

Hey hold on.

(hits the flash button)

Yeah? Sa'id? I just heard. Yes.

Some guy named Barghouti too. Hey

hold on--

(leans in to the

television)

Goooooaaaaaaaalllllll!!!!!!

CLOSER SHOT OF SAME VU METERS, THE NEEDLES PEGGING THE RED.

ECU SHOT OF AN EARPHONE BEING WHIPPED OFF AN EAR. A FINGER PLUGGING THE EAR HOLE.

INT. SA'ID HOME - DAY

SA'ID YAMEEN, an intellectual type in spectacles sits in a small corrugated metal shack -- pamphlets, militant Islam posters everywhere. He holds the phone away from his ear, wincing. Hangs up and presses another number.

SA'ID

Hallohallo. It's me. Yeah it's

true. Just heard. Both of them.

The Hawwashes, yeah. I don't know

about this Barghouti guy.

SHOT OF A COMPUTER GENERATED VOICE-PRINT, THE WAVE FORM CREATING A SPECIFIC SIGNATURE AT JIBRIL'S NAME. SPOKES FROM AN AUDIO TAPE REEL SPINS RHYTHMICALLY ON A RECORDER.

INT. ISLAMIC JIHAD SAFE HOUSE - DAY

A stark room. The LEADER of a cell of Islamic Jihad reads through documents on a couch surrounded by several armed MILITANTS. One of the MILITANTS whispers into a cell phone.

MILITANT  
 I can't hear you...  
 (bangs phone)  
 Stupid piece of shit.

SHOT OF A SECOND VOICE-PRINT.

MILITANT (O.S., PHONE-FUTZED)  
 What? They got Omar? Who's this  
 Barghouti? Yeah, Barrrrr ghouuuu  
 tiiii...

ITS ENERGY PLOT MATCHING SEVERAL WAVE FORMS WHICH PLAY BELOW  
 IT ON SCREEN. GRAPHICS DANCE AND TRIANGULATE AROUND THE  
 VOICE PRINTS.

MILITANT  
 (bangs phone again)  
 Junk! Junk! I'll call you back.

He grabs his compatriot's phone and tosses his own in the  
 trash.

SHOT OF THE COMPUTER GRAPHIC FLATLINING. "BARGHOUTI" IS  
 WRITTEN ON A NOTE PAD AND CIRCLED.

The Cell Leader looks up from his work.

MILITANT LEADER  
 Who the hell are you talking about?

RESUME - INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

COLONEL ALON  
 We have our ways. Shall we put you  
 away for a long time?

JIBRIL  
 Just for thinking that I like  
 Arafat? Why not put a bomb in my  
 cell phone? Take me out like Abu  
 Nidal. Just say I was trying to  
 make an explosive device--  
 (enraged)  
 -- because that's what we do!  
 That's all we Palestinians do!

COLONEL ALON  
 You can do better than that.

Alon stands and circles behind Jibril. He gets very close,  
 whispering in his ear:

COLONEL ALON

This is where I tell you that we can do this the easy way or the hard way. Either one will suit me just fine. You help me out, I can keep you out of Nafha... or Ketziot.

Jibril flinches ever-so-slightly at that last word.

COLONEL ALON

Open for business again... so many nice places to visit in Israel.

Alon walks back to face Jibril, who has made a decision that has him trying to suppress a smile. He contains himself.

JIBRIL

(calm, pleasant at first)

You want to know what happened last night? The truth, and may Allah punish me a thousand lifetimes over if I am lying, is that I made a monster last night. A golem. You understand that word, I know. I raised it up just so I could kill all the Zionist occupiers. I told him to kill those soldiers and that's what he did. And that's just for starters. He's a mean motherfucker. Strength of twenty men. Bulletproof. Able to blend in anywhere. Right now he's probably out there, sending your men to hell, one at a time. Your tanks, your Apache helicopters... useless. He's unstoppable. And he's coming for you personally. If I were you, I would leave our lands before he finds you. Because he will find you. Death is coming, Major Alon.

(beat)

Death is coming for you.

Jibril, believing his own hype by now, gives Alon a withering look. Alon stands in stunned silence. Then snorts with LAUGHTER. Jibril deflates at this. Alon takes a good moment to compose himself.

COLONEL ALON

(very genial)

Oh that's good. Really good.

(MORE)

COLONEL ALON (cont'd)  
 A golem? That's original. You really are a special case. Okay then... we do this the easy way.

INT. SOLDIERS' BATHROOM - DAY

MOVE PAST cramped, industrial cubicles. A military-strength SHOWER blasts down on Jibril's back. He stands in a steam-filled grey stall, luxuriating in the hot water.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Water pressure! Yeah! When we talk of having our own state, this is what I want. At this moment, I didn't care about my in-laws. Where were they now? If they were in detention camp, they'd get a bucket, and have to share with fifteen people. At this moment I think, Fuck Palestine! I want my Palestine out of my head. I'm sick of fighting for this land. Who cares what the land is called. I just want a good shower. I didn't care how much how much water the Jews were stealing from my people to keep their soldiers clean. I would become an American, if that's what it took. God bless the United States of America! I would become a Jew, if that's what it took... of course it would have to be a self-hating Jew. God bless Israel!

An AFRICAN-ISRAELI SOLDIER BANGS on one of the stall walls, bringing Jibril back to reality.

SOLDIER  
 Let's go!

Jibril shuts off the water.

EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - DAY

A freshly scrubbed Jibril steps out of a low-slung building. He takes in his surroundings as a soldier escorts him to the front of the camp. Watchtowers lord over the landscape. Razor-wire fences partition small areas into a grid of prisoners' pens. Beyond the nearest fence, an open air tent with Palestinian prisoners gathered beneath it. Some stand in the sun, talking together in small groups.



Jibril stares beyond this sector, and sees that the fencing grid repeats well into the distance.

TWO PRISONERS from the nearest sector turn and see Jibril. Mohammad and Samer, both looking roughed up. The three are shocked, bewildered at each other's appearance. They wave meekly at him. Jibril starts towards them but is cut short. His escort pulls him over to a dusty Mercedes-Benz sedan and shoves him inside.

INT. CAR - LATER

The desert landscape speeds past Jibril's window. He turns his attention inside. A TOUGH MOSSAD AGENT sits silently beside him. The interior is extravagant. Jibril adjusts his position, SQUEAKING the leather seat just because he can. The driver EYES him in the rear-view mirror.

DRIVER

The Colonel's car, you know?

JIBRIL

(trying not be impressed)  
Very nice.

TOUGH AGENT

Only the best for Alon's guests.

Jibril gives him a contemptuous smile.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

It's a hearse. A deluxe hearse  
just for me.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The car cuts through a curtain of dust, screams over the desert road.

EXT. GAZA CITY CHECKPOINT/INT. CAR - DAY

The car travels along a road for Israeli vehicles. It passes a checkpoint without stopping. The Palestinian side of the checkpoint is an endless procession of parked old cars and buses floats past Jibril's face. No people anywhere.

JIBRIL

Where are we going?

TOUGH AGENT

What is this, an information desk?

The Agent cleans his fingernails.

JIBRIL

You know, if we just made an effort... You and I... we could...

Frustrated, Jibril leans forward to the driver.

JIBRIL

How about you?

The Tough Agent pushes Jibril back into his seat.

TOUGH AGENT

Relax.

Jibril coils tightly, about to lash out. An approving smile creeps onto the Tough Agent's face and Jibril stands down.

EXT. GAZA CITY STREETS (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

The Mercedes-Benz works its way from the outer hills to the narrow old streets at Gaza's heart. The car looks more and more out-of-place here.

INT. CAR

Jibril is happy to be in familiar territory. The driver is bouncing, anxious, and the Tough Agent is paying close attention to the landscape. Enemy territory. The engine REVS down as the car slows to a stop.

JIBRIL

My home is further on--

The Tough Agent moves at Jibril and pulls the door latch.

EXT. BUSY GAZA STREET - DAY

The car door opens and Jibril is unceremoniously shoved onto the street.

TOUGH AGENT

What do you think this is, a taxi service? Call yourself a cab.

The door shuts and the Mercedes-Benz speeds off.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Mossad. Very shrewd bastards.  
They know how to work The Street.  
Might as well tape a sign to my  
back.

Jibril senses a suspicious buzz rippling through the few people on the street and the shopkeepers in their stores.

He stands and dusts himself off. A copper minaret gleams in the sun, catching Jibril's eye. It is the top of a mosque blocks away, peering out from a landscape of hideously modern buildings. Jibril is drawn to it, but he notices the street is ominously empty. He orients himself and withdraws in the opposite direction.

EXT. GAZA STREETS (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

Jibril making his way through crowds of people. Those who make eye contact are unfriendly, turning away from him. He senses the hostility.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Not for the first time in my life,  
I was afraid of my own people.

EXT. STREET - JIBRIL'S HOME - DAY

Jibril heads towards his home, an uneasy calm in the air. The street is empty. Coming into view: Mina at the edge of the blasted-out second-story room. She's a million miles away. A car's engine REVS HARD. He turns to see a sleek BMW scream past the corner. When he turns back, she's gone. He approaches

THE FRONT DOOR

Jibril's hand traces the damaged frame. He moves to push the door when Mina swings it open violently. They stand silently, hug. An emotional reunion. Then she backs up and SLAPS him hard. He rubs his jaw, confused.

JIBRIL

What's that for?

MINA

Bring them back!

JIBRIL

What!?!

MINA

Allah is not pleased! You brought them down on us, and now you're here and they're not!

JIBRIL

Well that hurts!

(beat)

I saw Mohammad and Samer. They were okay. Okay?

MINA

Hamdi?

JIBRIL

I don't know. Look, can I please come in? The curfew...

She regards him a moment, then steps inside. SLAMS the broken door abruptly. It doesn't shut properly though and Jibril pushes back-- a battle royale follows for control.

MINA

Don't you dare! Not one step.

JIBRIL

Mina. Mina! Don't do this!

MINA

We were doing okay! Mohammad is a good man...

(beat)

They did nothing! Why are they not here? What did they do!?!

JIBRIL

I'm sorry. It's complicated...  
Where's Jamallah? Yusuf?

Mina opens the door, drying her eyes. A severe, penetrating expression blossoms on her face.

MINA

(incredulous)

It's complicated? I see through you. You are guilty of something. They're over at Maja's, but I don't want you seeing him till you come back with his father.

JIBRIL

Oh Mina! Don't be ridiculous. How am I supposed to do that?

MINA

Then come back when you've figured out what to tell Yusuf. He worships you and I'm not going to have him hear that Mohammad has become a martyr... that Hamdi and Samer... Not from me, or you. This family has all worked too hard to see that Yusuf gets a childhood.

JIBRIL

(very angry)

Where have you been living all this time? Yusuf's smart. You can't... you shouldn't keep him from hating people who deserve to be hated.

MINA

(coldly)

Get out of here.

Enough said. He backs up slowly and walks away.

EXT. AL SHATI REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

A sector where the buildings are uninhabitable. Piles of cinder blocks and twisted, corrugated metal sheets are all that Israeli bulldozers have left of a plot of shanties.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

(bitter)

If you will it, it is no dream.  
Smart Jew! That thing is supposed  
to be helping me! Why didn't it  
bust me out of that prison camp?  
Why isn't it at my beck and call  
now?

MOVE IN ON A WALL WITH a martyr's poster and the ubiquitous Arabic graffiti. The Martyr stares out at us with a burning rage. Abruptly, his EYES stretch from the wall, and his face follows suit. The Golem emerges, its clay-like muscular body holding the image of the martyr superimposed on it, but slightly out-of sync with The Golem's facial features. The Golem SHAKES his body. A blur of movement and he has transformed into The Martyr, complete with clothes.

The Golem unemotionally regards the poster and The Martyr's burning stare. Several children WHOOP and HOLLER in the distance. The Golem hears this, moves towards the sound.

## EXT. GAZA STREETS (VARIOUS) - DAY

Jibril wanders deserted streets, stewing sourly. He passes into El Sabra, a more modern residential district.

Once again, a glint of sun on metal catches his eye. The CALL of a Muezzin starts up. He finds a copper minaret beckoning from the distance. He recognizes it as the same one he saw when the Mossad agents dumped him, but now it sits wedged between two different buildings. Curious, Jibril heads for it.

## EXT. AL-WAZEERI MOSQUE - DAY

MOVE WITH JIBRIL ALONG THE STREET. The first of the modern buildings around the mosque shows extensive damage from an explosion. The mosque is revealed to have been hit as well. As Jibril approaches we can see that there are cracks in the masonry, a gaping hole in the dome of the building.

## INT. AL-WAZEERI MOSQUE - DAY

A shaft of light pierces the gloom of a darkened prayer room through the hole in the dome. It strikes a lone figure at the center of the rubble-strewn floor. SHEIKH IBN AL-HALLAJ, a wizened Sufi cleric, kneels in prayer-- his eyes closed, his voice as creaky as his hands are gnarled.

Jibril stands at the back, observing silently. The old man seems unaware. He repeats his prayers hypnotically, rising in energy with the repetitions and drawing in Jibril, step by step. The old man stops mid-phrase. Opens his eyes.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
(quietly, without turning)  
Peace be with you, my friend.

JIBRIL  
And peace be with you.  
(beat)  
Why is nobody here?

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
Nobody here?  
(laughs)  
Am I nobody? Are you? I know why  
I'm here. Why are you here?

Jibril looks around the empty room.

JIBRIL

The call. I heard the call.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ

Did you? Good. People say they can't hear me without loudspeakers. The traffic is too loud these days, or something. I say nonsense. Allah speaks clearly, strongly, to those who are open to hear him. All praise be to The Pardoner, and all blessings be upon him, he knows that people are afraid, and he forgives them.

JIBRIL

Afraid?

Al-Hallaj faces Jibril for the first time.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ

(gesturing to the dome)

A rocket attack hits the next building and the mosque is what suffers. No electricity. Do we need that to pray? The authorities say it's unsafe. So no public prayers. Sometimes I don't understand Allah's will, but that doesn't mean that I stop doing it.

(beat)

You're not from this district. Are you lost?

JIBRIL

From El-Daraj.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ

Welcome.

JIBRIL

This place... I don't know it.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ

(mysteriously)

It has been around for a long time. A very long time. As have I.

(beat)

But you didn't brave the curfew or choose death by falling masonry on a whim. Can I help you? You seem... upset. Why are you angry?

Jibril is caught off guard--

JIBRIL  
(yells)  
I'm not angry!

A long moment.

JIBRIL  
(embarrassed)  
I'm sorry. May I ask you  
something?

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
Of course.

JIBRIL  
The damage to the mosque is Allah's  
will. Was the rocket attack as  
well?

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
(laughs)  
No no. Of course not.

JIBRIL  
So then Allah would approve of...  
*punishing* those who go against his  
will.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
Punishing? Ah, I see.  
(contemplative)  
Our suffering will be addressed in  
time, but not through the deaths of  
Israelis. You'll see. One day,  
they will take down these  
checkpoints. They'll dismantle all  
the settlements. That wall that  
they're building will crumble to  
dust.

JIBRIL  
(almost in a trance)  
And our boys will put down their  
stones, and our men will throw away  
their guns.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
And there will be peace. Peace.



JIBRIL  
 (snaps out of it)  
 And until then, we should ignore  
 our suffering.

The cleric sharpens his focus on Jibril. He looks puzzled,  
 as though he sees something that he hadn't noticed before.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
 Come closer.

Jibril approaches the old man. Al-Hallaj reaches up and  
 inspects Jibril's face with his hands. Steps back.

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 Aha! You have been influenced by  
 one of the Jinn.

JIBRIL  
 Jinn?

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 (darkly, with mystery)  
 The angels and devils of the  
 smokeless fire. Ghul... 'ifrit...  
 si'la. There are some who will try  
 to lead you astray. It's in their  
 nature. They will sit on your  
 shoulder and whisper things to you.  
 Bad things. Things you really  
 should not do.

JIBRIL  
 Cheat on a wife. Steal from a  
 Muslim brother? That sort of  
 thing?

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 Yes, exactly.

JIBRIL  
 What about... murder?

The Sufi raises an eyebrow at the statement.

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 Yes, even murder. Some can be that  
 tempting. Indeed, some are  
 treacherous. Very dangerous.  
 (he smiles again)  
 But come... you look like a  
 reasonable man.

(MORE)

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ (cont'd)  
 You don't look or sound like an  
 extremist in the least. Did you  
 have a fight with someone?

JIBRIL  
 I've...

Jibril starts to breaks down, clutches his chest,  
 hyperventilating. Al-Hallaj reaches out.

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 (helpful, sympathetic)  
 Or maybe with your wife?

JIBRIL  
 I've... I've killed two men. No...  
 four men!

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 Killed? Oh my.

JIBRIL  
 Not by own hand... but by my order.

SHEIKL AL-HALLAJ  
 (concerned)  
 Well that makes you no less guilty,  
 if true. But mercy and judgement  
 are qualities exercised equally by  
 The Most Holy.  
 (soothing now)  
 Really, what have you done? I am  
 sure it's nothing so terrible that  
 you cannot repent. Murder? Come  
 now. Do you have a family? Where  
 is your family?

JIBRIL  
 (thousand yard stare)  
 It's my fault. They're still out  
 there... he's still out there.

Jibril puts hand to forehead, pained. We start to hear a  
 SCRATCHING, SKITTERING sound-- like someone dragging their  
 NAILS against stone.

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
 Who?

JIBRIL  
 Out there somewhere, doing...  
 (trails off)

SHEIKH AL-HALLAJ  
Doing what?

JIBRIL  
I don't know.  
(gets worked up)  
I don't know!

Jibril panics. He turns and flies from the cleric, his footsteps ECHOING through the hall.

EXT. AL-WAZEERI MOSQUE - LATE AFTERNOON

Jibril bursts out the front door of the mosque, palms squeezed against his temples.

JIBRIL  
My god, my god!

A Comanche helicopter thunders overhead and the distinct RUMBLE of tanks permeates the atmosphere.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
The old man sounded so reasonable.  
And yet... the planes, the tanks!  
My formula had been simple,  
elegant... and now undecipherable.  
Had I made a mistake somewhere?

He orients himself and begins to walk down the street.

EXT. AL SHATI REFUGEE CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

The Golem, in the form of Martyr from the poster, follows behind THREE PRETEEN YOUTHS. One carries a small kite and the other two play at "Palestinians and Israeli soldiers", throwing stones and miming shooting one another. The kids lead The Golem into the heart of Al Shati camp.

The Golem slogs along in the center of an unpaved street, splashing through mud. It's an unremitting, densely packed parade of Third World hovels, shanties and lean-to's. Carbon scoring from firefights mark many of the buildings. Sandbags are everywhere-- a failed defense against rain water that has turned dirt floors to mud. SQUALLING babies and random bursts of YELLING punctuate the air. A pack of wild dogs feast on the carcass of a baby goat. They SNARL at The Golem as it passes. The children on the street play happily, but as The Golem passes by, they look on curiously, pointing and whispering.

Several BORED MEN sit around a broken-down car commiserating. When they notice The Golem, they immediately begin laughing and pointing as well. The Golem sees this, but does not react. It continues taking things in, stopping only when one of its feet is caught in a mud hole. It reaches down, grabs some mud, squeezes it through its fingers. The men LAUGH harder. One of the group is annoyed at the ribbing.

SYMPATHETIC MAN

Get out of the sewer, idiot!

Everyone laughs again. Seeing that The Golem is oblivious, the man steps into the street and pulls The Golem aside.

SYMPATHETIC MAN

What's wrong with you, man? Don't you have any dignity?

The Golem remains mute, begins to walk away.

SYMPATHETIC MAN

(keeping up)

Hey, don't I know you? What's your name?

(begins to recognize the face)

Wait a minute. You're...

Horror floods his face. He backs away, slowly at first, but soon breaks into a run down the street, screaming:

SYMPATHETIC MAN

Iyyad Al Masri is alive! Iyyad Al Masri is alive!

The men at the car see this and stand up, several pulling out guns. The Golem pays no attention. Keeps walking.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

You're not real. You're not real!

EXT. GAZA STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

Jibril walks fast, keeping aware of everything around him.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

A mistake? Think Jibril, think, I hear you cry. The reason you were leaned on by an army goon was because you're dangerous. Palestine is the father of all assassin!

(MORE)

JIBRIL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 You killed those soldiers. You do  
 that sort of thing in your sleep.  
 That's it! Another dream...

A tank rumbles by the far end of the street. He ducks into  
 an alley, stops cold.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Now you are laughing at me? Oh ho  
 ho! Look what you've gotten  
 yourself into Jibril! A mistake?  
 No. I know what I saw. It's real.  
 I'm just not thinking properly.

All clear. He takes off again.

JIBRIL  
 A robot, Noam called it. A servant  
 of my will. If only I give it the  
 order, it can save Mohammad... even  
 my idiot cousins! I'll show Mina!  
 (beat)  
 I only have to find it.

EXT. AL SHATI REFUGEE CAMP - LATE AFTERNOON

The Golem is up the street, followed by the men from the car.  
 They taunt and bait him with glee. Another crowd is  
 gathering behind the men, all curious about the stranger in  
 their midst. Even further back, several MILITANT TYPES in  
 olive fatigues are watching the gathering with growing  
 interest.

<p>MAN #1          (points with his gun)          Iyyad Al Masri is dead! Who          are you?</p>	<p>MAN #2          Son of a dog! Bastard!</p>
---	---

MAN #3  
 You don't scare us. What are you  
 doing in Shati?

MAN #4  
 (threatening with a shoe)  
 A trick! It's secret police!

MAN #1  
 Son of a whore! Jew! Show  
 yourself.

The Golem stops. Turns. The men are shocked but The Golem  
 remains inexpressive.

MAN #4 AND MAN #2  
 (together)  
 It is Iyyad Al Masri!

MAN #1  
 (aiming his gun)  
 Idiots! Al Masri is dead.

He fires three times, point blank! Clouds of colored sand explode where the bullets enter The Golem. The Martyr facade ripples and melts. The Golem swallows its "skin" through the bullet holes and its body swells to nine feet in size! The giant red disc of the setting sun renders it a silhouette of grotesquely disproportionate appendages and a primitive human head with cold black eyes. Like inverted tattoos, the sun's rays seem to shine through The Golem, illuminating the Hebrew patterns that Jibril had carefully inscribed. The men are slack-jawed with astonishment.

The Golem SHOTS Man #1 dead, pumping all three bullets back into him with the "gun gesture" he used before. SCREAMS and GASPS run through the crowd. Man #4 scrambles to replace his shoe and flees. Pandemonium! Bystanders trample one another underfoot as they try to escape! The remaining men, blinded by a primitive fury, rush The Golem. No match! The Golem catches Man #2 by the head and snaps his neck with a sickening CRUNCH. Man #3 rushes the creature's torso but The Golem catches him by his leg and neck, hefting him skyward, SNAPPING his back in one move. His shadow folds like a straw dummy and he's hurled to the ground!

Two bullets WHIZ past. The Golem looks up and sees the Militants from the crowd firing from behind two cars. They hit the creature many times and like a demon gunslinger, The Golem returns their bullets with deadly accuracy.

The street is empty now. Silent, save for the occasional baby's cry. The Golem examines his "wounds", once again filling in the holes with clay from the surrounding area. An INDEX FINGER WIPES away more writing and The Golem's hand twitches slightly in response. It surveys the landscape, regards the dead bodies and the twisted expressions on their FACES.

ON THE GOLEM'S FACE. It shifts its gaze from point to point with an alien, insect-like precision. It goes from complete emotional neutrality to --SNAP-- smiling maniacally to --SNAP-- teeth-gritting anger to --SNAP-- wide-eyed, pursed-lips puzzlement to --SNAP-- closed-eyes childish pouting to --SNAP-- open-mouthed silent laughing to --SNAP-- complete neutrality again.

OVERHEAD ON THE GOLEM as it walks down the street passing body after body. The horror and fear of the moment recedes with it like a deadly tide. The residents of the block come out from their shacks, surrounding the dead bodies and filling the air with SHRIEKS AND SOBS. Their cries of lamentation continue over:

EXT. GAZA CITY STREET (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DUSK

The Golem walking slowly down street after devastated street. A solitary figure in a landscape of damaged apartment complexes and ancient souks.

The survivors in the refugee camp have gone from mourning to rage, vociferously spouting ideas about what happened and what is to be done.

MOURNERS

MILIANTS

MOTHER (O.S.)  
My Farouq is dead! It was a  
Jewish soldier!

ANGRY MAN (O.S.)  
A massacre! Another  
massacre!

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)  
It was the Army! Ten  
soldiers... I saw! They were  
testing new weapons!

ANGRY YOUTH (O.S.)  
Do we lie back and take  
this!?! They must pay! The  
Jews must pay!

BLOCK LEADER

God is greatest! God is greatest!  
God will avenge us. We shall be  
the sword of The Avenger! And we  
will coat our swords with their  
blood!

HIGH OVERHEAD ON THE GOLEM. A small figure in the urban grid. An Israeli attack helicopter passes beneath us.

ON THE GOLEM as it looks up to see the helicopter. It turns the corner.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

As to those Snipers that Alon said  
were killed? Did I care? My  
Palestinian brothers?

EXT. ANOTHER CITY STREET

Jibril sees the helicopter pass by.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Doesn't Allah welcome all martyrs  
to paradise? Wouldn't The All-  
Embracing welcome me if I came  
before him?

(forceful)

He would. All praise be to Him.

He picks up his pace.

EXT. MARTYR'S ALLEY - NIGHT

The Golem hears a deafening RUMBLE and LEAPS INTO the wall where it sees a martyr poster. A TANK passes the alley. The Golem separates itself from the wall in the form of this new martyr. It takes a few steps and sees another poster, looks down the alley and sees a whole row of them.

The Golem turns back to this poster. It studies the features of the martyr's face. It closes its eyes and we can see the ornamental writing GLOW faintly beneath its surface. The Golem shudders and transforms into the second martyr. It starts to walk, passes the third martyr poster. Slowing, but not stopping, it turns its head to the side and when it looks forward again, it has assumed the third martyr's face. As it walks further on, it changes its identity with each new image. The Golem's footsteps boom like FAR DISTANT THUNDERCLAPS. It turns into another alley.

INT. GAZA APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small PORTRAIT of a dead son sits on a bedside table of a Palestinian Mother. She hears the footsteps and peers out her window. The FIGURE down in the alley... the face is hard to read. Her hand covers her mouth.

SAD MOTHER

Khaled, my Khaled...

INT. ANOTHER APARTMENT - NIGHT

An overwhelmed Elderly Aunt has her hands full with a gaggle of seven CHILDREN, all screaming and teasing one another. She admonishes them repeatedly. The distant thunderclaps barely rise above the din, but catch the attention of a HAPPY LITTLE GIRL. She turns her head as if her name had been called. Walks to the window and stares, quieted by a sudden melancholy.



INT. A THIRD APARTMENT - NIGHT

A decrepit old man sits in his chair by the window, his face lost in memory. He catches sight of the FIGURE walking through the alley and his eyes come alive, tears welling up in them.

LOST FATHER

Ismaeel...

EXT. THE ALLEY - NIGHT

The Golem looks up at the apartments, walks faster. It leaves the alley.

EXT. GAZA STREET - NIGHT

Jibril walks as fast as he can without running. He hugs the walls of corner buildings, scanning for signs of trouble.

No trouble. He keeps on moving.

EXT. A DIFFERENT GAZA STREET - NIGHT

The Golem's FEET take long strides, increasing its speed as it goes.

EXT. GAZA CASBAH - NIGHT

Jibril spins through a deserted square.

EXT. ANOTHER GAZA STREET - NIGHT

The Golem lopes along swiftly, its arms behind its back. It looks to be brooding. A military flare lights up the sky.

ON JIBRIL'S LEGS moving as swiftly as The Golem's. Jibril is illuminated by the flare, looks up to view it as he's walking. Without thinking, he turns a corner and runs straight into The Golem.

JIBRIL

(startled, thrown  
backwards)

Augh!

Jibril composes himself.

JIBRIL

I'm sorry, are you all right...

He looks at The Golem and sees the face of suicide bomber he was shown earlier today. The Golem stands still, unblinking.

JIBRIL

You!  
(points at him)  
You're dead!

The Golem takes a step towards him. Shakes his head "no". Jibril recoils in horror.

JIBRIL

You're dead, you're dead! You blew yourself up! What devilry is this? A Zionist trick?

The Golem makes a superhuman MOVE forward, at once is standing uncomfortably close to Jibril.

JIBRIL

(fast, praying)  
Ah ah ah! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!  
Save me, save me oh Most Forgiving,  
Most Glorious, Most Powerful! I'm  
very very sorry!

Jibril cowers before The Golem, hands above his face. Yet The Golem doesn't do anything. Jibril senses that he isn't going to die just yet. Lowers his hands, looks back into the face of the dead man.

JIBRIL

(suspicious)  
You're not Ghassan Abu Zeineh.

The Golem shakes his head very slowly. No. It moves its fingers slightly and we hear a SCRATCHING, SKITTERING sound of nails CLICKING.

JIBRIL

(tentatively)  
Golem?

The Golem's face swells in size slightly, goes slack and lets go of the dust that colors its skin. Its eyes roll up in its head. What's left is a clay mask of Abu Zeineh, perfect except for the black, unblinking eyes. Jibril clutches his chest again, astonished at the transformation.

JIBRIL  
 I thought I had lost you.  
 (fatherly, disapproving)  
 What have you done? Where have you  
 been?

The Golem's face hovers before his own, mute. It crooks its head slightly, then GRINS, horrifically, LEERING as hard as it can. Once, twice. It's teeth black and gleaming. The Golem repeatedly chomps its jaw, biting the air with a queerly skeletal sound. Then it adds lip movements, but it makes no sound, nor seems to be making words. Jibril stands before it more than a little fearful, yet mystified and intrigued by the grotesque display. He takes a step backwards, and The Golem follows.

JIBRIL  
 Stop!

The Golem stops. Becomes expressionless again.

JIBRIL  
 Good.

Pause. Jibril finds himself at a loss for what to say.

JIBRIL  
 You've done well. You've done what  
 you were told to do.

The Golem gives Jibril its over-the-top grin that it made in the camp.

JIBRIL  
 That's right. Good. Now, a new  
 task.

The Golem goes blank.

JIBRIL  
 Perhaps first we get off the  
 street. Home then?

He turns and walks but The Golem is stubbornly still.

JIBRIL  
 Home!  
 (sensing trouble)  
 Who is the master here?

The Golem bows its head, showing the footprint in its skull.

JIBRIL  
 (pointing)  
 That's right. You obey me.

The Golem raises his hand and begins wagging his finger slowly, parochially at Jibril. Jibril repeats this action.

JIBRIL  
 Don't you... don't you shake your  
 finger at me. You're worse than my  
 students.

Jibril catches himself and the creature mirroring each other and begins to chuckle. The Golem begins to make "chuckling" mouth movements. Its head seems to grow in size. Jibril catches this. We can see the gears in his mind turning.

He keeps making a "laughing" face, which The Golem emulates in exaggerated fashion. The Golem's head, arms and legs are getting even larger.

JIBRIL  
 Very nice teeth you have there.

He leers at The Golem, who leers right back, pushing its face forward, stretching its mouth extra wide. By now, The Golem is transformed from a man-sized, man-shaped creature, to a surreal, distorted monster. Jibril opens his mouth wide. The Golem follows suit, its head almost large enough to swallow Jibril whole. Jibril pays this transformation no notice.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 That's it.

Keeping his jaw agape, Jibril slowly raises his right hand then THRUSTS it forward swiftly, trying to reach under The Golem's tongue.

The Golem SNAPS its mouth shut, stepping backwards and instantaneously becoming its original size. For the first time, The Golem's face expresses an original thought: suspicion. A hint of anger in its eyes.

JIBRIL  
 Who is master here?

The Golem takes one step backwards, then another. Jibril follows suit.

JIBRIL  
 I order you, I order you!

The Golem bolts. Jibril SPRINTS as fast as he can but the Golem puts on a burst of speed and disappears into the night. Jibril straggles to a stop, dumbfounded by this turn of events. He stares into the darkness, his expression wilting as the magnitude of what has gone wrong sinks in.

JIBRIL

Fuck!

He paces. He has a thought. He reaches into his coat pocket... pulls out a handful of DIRT.

JIBRIL

Damn.

He searches his other pockets. Finds his CELL PHONE. Presses a few buttons and waits anxiously...

JIBRIL (V.O.)

(chanting softly)

The enemy of my enemy is my friend.  
The enemy of my enemy is my  
friend...

The line picks up.

JIBRIL

Noam? I... I need your help.

EXT. UPSCALE GAZAN STREET - NIGHT

Northern El-Remal neighborhood. Nicer individual homes, some two stories high, are interspersed with run-down units. The unpaved road is free of tank tracks. People with money live here. Jibril approaches a more modest house.

AT THE DOOR

He knocks quietly, politely. No answer. Knocks again. DOCTOR FATIMA opens the door a crack. A television newscast BLARES in the background. She is not pleased to see him. Abruptly closes the door. Jibril is irked. He knocks again, harder. A beat. She cracks the door again.

JIBRIL

Second time today. What?

DOCTOR FATIMA

I don't like it.

JIBRIL

Don't change your mind on me now.

DOCTOR FATIMA  
I don't like this at all. Not at  
all. You're in trouble aren't you.

JIBRIL  
Why would you think that?

DOCTOR FATIMA  
There's word on the street.

JIBRIL  
Word? What word.

SHOT OF JIBRIL THROWN OUT OF ALON'S CAR, SEEN FROM AFAR.  
RESUME:

DOCTOR FATIMA (V.O.)  
Word! Word!

QUICK SHOTS OF: MULTIPLE MOUTHS TALKING TO PHONE RECEIVERS;  
INTERCUT WITH SCREAMING FAST SHOTS TRACKING THE PHONE LINES  
ABOVE GAZA'S STREETS. RESUME:

DOCTOR FATIMA  
You know what word.

She looks out the door with more than a tinge of paranoia.

DOCTOR FATIMA  
They beat up Laela today. Laela  
Qadri five doors down. She signed  
that stupid peace petition. We all  
did. I can't believe I was so  
foolish.  
(beat)  
Are you... Are you collaborating?

JIBRIL  
NO!

DOCTOR FATIMA  
Then why do you need the school's  
car? Why now? Do you know what's  
been going on today? The massacre.

JIBRIL  
Massacre?

DOCTOR FATIMA  
In Al Shati. They never stop!  
They can't just let us live. Six  
dead...

Jibril is wounded at this. She begins to cry quietly.

DOCTOR FATIMA

They say it was an Israeli soldier.  
They think he was helped in.

(beat)

I can't.

Jibril's mind races. She tries to shut the door but he gets a quick foot inside.

JIBRIL

(desperate)

You know me! Never. Never! I would kill myself before I would do that to our people. Look at me. You never asked questions before. How many curfews? When it's been really bad, I always come back. The car, your car, always comes back. Is that what you're worried about?

That hits home.

DOCTOR FATIMA

(insulted)

No.

(resigned)

This is bad, Jibril. Really bad.  
You better watch yourself.

She presents her hand, revealing a CAR KEY that she has been holding the whole time.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

The hole in the chain link fence on the grounds of Jibril's school has been repaired. Makeshift tents are set up next to the small classroom buildings. An Israeli soldier escorts four men, their hands bound behind their backs, into one of the classrooms.

MOVE BACK FROM THE SCENE until we are far away, viewing it from outside the driver's side window of Doctor Fatima's car. Jibril eases up to the door and silently opens it. He undoes the parking brake, positions his hands on the steering wheel and the back edge of the door.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Yusuf was right. I'll have to tell him so.

He stares ruefully at the scene for a moment, then bears down on the car and strains vigorously. It starts to roll.

EXT. CAR - GAZA CITY OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

The car roars over untouched desert terrain, catching some air on low hills and tearing up scrub brush in its way.

INT. CAR

Jibril bounces violently in his seat as he steers through a natural obstacle course.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I was wandering the desert like Moses, peace be upon him. But Moses was a prophet of God. Wasn't I a prophet too? Spreading a message that was clear, and perfect...

EXT. CAR - GAZA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

A moonlit sea of hills. Headlights trace the car's path in wasteland as it intersects a dirt road. The car picks up speed.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The Kabbalist knowledge, the heavy water of my experiment, whispered sweetly in my head. I thought I could control The Golem. Fix it. At this late hour, I still believed it could be Palestine's champion.

EXT. DUGIT SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

FOUR MILITANTS arrive at a chain link fence that is the camp's security border. Army fatigues, black hoods, AK-47's are the order of the day. The fence cutter works quickly.

AL-AQSA MAN #2

Hurry up, they'll spot us!

The last wire is SNIPPED.

AL-AQSA MILITANT #1

Got it.

(to all)

(MORE)



AL-AQSA MILITANT #1 (cont'd)  
 Show them no mercy. They are  
 criminals, dogs! They are an  
 insult to The Most Magnificent!

AL-AQSA MILITANT #3  
 Remember Al Shati! Remember they  
 assassinated the Khayyats! Make  
 them pay!

AL-AQSA MILITANT #1  
 Let's go let's go let's go!

AL-AQSA MILITANT #4 pulls down the cut flap. The men  
 scramble through and split apart as they run into the camp.  
 The fourth man lags behind. Sounds of DISTANT SCREAMING AND  
 YELLING are followed by MACHINE GUN FIRE.

CLOSE ON AL-AQSA MILITANT #4's HOODED FACE. It shakes  
 violently for a moment and The Golem's head is revealed. It  
 walks into the unfolding slaughter.

EXT. SETTLER'S GROVE - NIGHT

Jibril arrives and parks his car next to Noam's. The trunk  
 is open. Noam is standing at the Grove's edge looking out on  
 the hills. Jibril approaches him. When Noam turns around,  
 he reveals an Uzi strapped to his shoulder. He looks  
 worried. Jibril is startled and saddened.

JIBRIL  
 (gestures at the Uzi)  
 That's new.

NOAM  
 Get in the trunk.

JIBRIL  
 It's not your style, that's all.

NOAM  
 Don't get me started. I'm  
 borrowing it from Shlomo. You  
 heard about Shati? We think  
 Nezarim or Nisanit will be hit.

JIBRIL  
 Uh-huh. So now you're going to  
 become the mighty Zionist warrior-  
 protector? Do you know how to fire  
 that thing?

NOAM

I did my two years. Get in the trunk.

Jibril moves towards Noam's car.

JIBRIL

You're quite happy to do this, this way, aren't you?

NOAM

Don't give me any shit! Not even in jest. You know the score! I dunno. I had to call in a serious favor to do this. He'll see you, the Rabbi will. No promises to what he'll say though.

(beat)

I think you're crazy, you know? Really. Unhinged. You tell me you made a golem? A real golem? What am I supposed to think? You pull this tonight? Tonight!?! C'mon, what's really going on...

JIBRIL

(sincere, desperate)

What should I say? Have I ever lied to you?

NOAM

(angry)

How many of my friends have cut themselves off from your friends, and vice-versa, just because an idiot with a bomb does something stupid, and then some idiot in our country, some idiot with an army does something stupid in return?

(softening)

So I guess we have to be better than that. I won't give up on you that easily. I respect you. Now will you please get in the trunk.

JIBRIL

(bowing)

My fucking Jewish friend.

Jibril steps into the trunk of Noam's car.

ON NOAM, FROM JIBRIL'S P.O.V. IN THE TRUNK:

NOAM

In academic circles, I believe this was called the "position of power". And no, I'm not quite happy to do this, this way. Well, maybe just a little happy...  
 (wryly)  
 ... my friend.

He SLAMS the trunk lid closed.

SCREEN BLACK.

The dull RUMBLE of the engine, the THUMPING of tires on road tell us that the car is moving. Muffled CLASSICAL MUSIC wafts in. Jibril LAUGHS.

NOAM (O.S.)

Comfortable back there? What's so funny?

JIBRIL (O.S.)

I was just thinking about family.

INT. TRUNK

The tail lights come on, casting JIBRIL'S FACE in hues of red and white. He bounces in rhythm to the bumps of the road. Between the music and the rocking the car, his eyes begin to flutter. The tail lights fade out.

BLACK

The car engine drones. The music fades. Then a whisper:

MAHMOUD (V.O.)

Whose home is this?

HAMZAH (V.O.)

Our home.

FLASHBACK/DREAM -- EXT. TULKAREM FARMHOUSE - DAWN

We're back in Jibril's father's story, picking up from the last moment we saw: Mahmoud crouching before Hamzah.

MAHMOUD

And when will you come back?

Hamzah's eyes sparkle defiantly.

HAMZAH

I want to fight them. I want to fight them with you.

MAHMOUD

And I want you to fight with me. But you are too young! And what would your mother say?

Mahmoud tucks the key under Hamzah's shirt.

HAMZAH

Father wants to stay. He says the Zionists will have to kill him before he leaves and he won't stand for that. He'll get them first.

MAHMOUD

The British arm the Jews, but not us. We are not allowed. I am lucky to still have this.

(pats his rifle)

Your father will not keep out the damned Jews. Your mother knows this. That's why she wins the arguments. And that is why you are leaving. For now.

HAMZAH

Mother says it's not the Jews who we hate, just the Zionists.

MAHMOUD

Mmmm. You know I had Jewish friends once. And then they got religion! I'll tell you a secret. Allah has a special place reserved for the British. It was they who came and divided up our land... our land! As if it were theirs to do with as They chose. And They gave it to strangers. Europeans. Usurpers. You know what I say? God keep them safe...

HAMZAH

(joining in)

And keep them far from us.

MAHMOUD

Grow big, grow strong. And come back when all is right again, Allah be praised.

An old CAR appears on the horizon. Mahmoud and Hamzah turn. It raises a tremendous cloud of DUST in its wake.

Mahmoud picks up a handful of earth.

MAHMOUD

Never forget this. Do you hear me  
Hamzah? This is your birthright.

The DUST sifts through Mahmoud's fingers, past Hamzah's watchful eyes.

MAHMOUD

This land is your history. And  
your son's. And his son's. It is  
your future.

Mahmoud stands to greet the car. Hamzah grabs some earth as Mahmoud has done, and letting it fall through his fingers, is left with a rock. He inspects it approvingly and puts it in his pocket.

From Hamzah's vantage point, the small car draws near. The ambience of the scene fades out, replaced by the rumble of Noam's car and the SKITTERING, FORAGING sound Jibril heard in the mosque.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Something was digging. Was it The Golem? It was going deeper, and to catch it I had to follow... what I would find? Another way out of Palestine? Clever Golem! The checkpoints couldn't stop you.

The DIGGING dissolves into the rising sound of AUDIO STATIC. Then: news station "ALERT" TONES and a sonorous VOICE speaking in Hebrew:

ISRAELI NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We're interrupting our program to bring you this late breaking news. There has been an attack on the kibbutz at Ele Sinai...

INT. TRUNK - NIGHT

A moment of black, then red light bathes Jibril's tormented face.

RADIO NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Nine persons were shot dead by four masked assailants, three of whom were killed in the attack. The fourth escaped under disputed circumstances. Several families suffered...

(continues)

NOAM (O.S.)

Oy! You hearing this?

JIBRIL

Yes.

SHOT OF THE HOODED GOLEM, HIS EYES CATCHING THE BRIGHT WHITE-BLUE MUZZLE FLASHES OF A MACHINE GUN. RESUME:

The growl of the engine announces that they're slowing down. One bounce. Then another. The engine cuts out and Jibril lurches forward. Full stop.

NOAM (V.O.)

We're here.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The trunk lid pops open and Jibril climbs out. Noam is MUTTERING about the news on the radio. He's flustered, in a state that seems out of character for what we've seen of him.

NOAM

It's crazy, just crazy. After Jenin, never so bad again I thought...

Jibril looks around and finds himself in the driveway of what looks like an upscale American-style Craftsman home. Three stories tall. A mansion by the standards of this world. By Jibril's expression, they have truly landed on the moon. Around them, a hilly, winding street of tract housing that could have been plucked from an Arizona suburb, complete with manicured palms and cacti. They walk to the

FRONT DOOR

NOAM

This time... this time... I didn't think it could... something different this time...

(MORE)

NOAM (cont'd)  
 (he knocks)  
 Maybe you're right Jibril. It's  
 not just going from bad to worse.  
 We're in trouble.

Footsteps. The door is UNLOCKED.

JIBRIL  
 (looking at Noam)  
 Big trouble.

The door opens and standing before them is the Attractive Middle-Eastern woman that Jibril has been seeing throughout the story. She is dressed in an Orthodox Jewish woman's garb. They speak HEBREW to one-another.

NOAM  
 Jibril, this is Rivka, Rivka  
 Barenbaum. Rivka, this is Jibril  
 Barghouti, the friend I was telling  
 you about.

Her eyes meet Jibril's, the barest hint of recognition in them. She smiles.

RIVKA  
 Hello.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 An angel...

She gives Noam a friendly hug.

RIVKA  
 (sobering up)  
 You made it. You've been hearing  
 what's happening?

NOAM  
 Yes. Just awful.

RIVKA  
 (to both)  
 Forgive me. Please, come in.

They step into the house.

INT. RABBI BARENBAUM'S HOUSE

Rivka is leading them through the house. She carries herself with both a grace and modesty that are in stark contrast to the woman Jibril saw earlier.

RIVKA

... Noam always was my father's  
favorite pupil back at Yeshiva.

Through the family room-- past its ebony grand piano, art on the walls, shelves lined with books, and photos which mingle the family's personal history with that of the Israeli state.

RIVKA

Frankly, Mr. Barghouti, when Noam called, I didn't know what to think. The occult is not quite where my father's studies were focused.

(aping her father's voice)

"The spiritual... the spiritual..."

(normal again)

He has a different philosophy. But Noam insisted. He's very good at that. He said it was important.

Down a hallway lined with family photos: smiling faces, the patriarch with his wife, children, and grandchildren. All getting older as we move further along.

RIVKA

When I told my father who you were, he was very curious.

(quietly, delicately)

My father seldom gets visitors at the house. If his manners get a little...

She makes the "iffy" hand gesture...

RIVKA

... it's not you. Really.

(knocks)

Father? They're here. Noam and his friend.

A muffled GREETING from the room. She opens the door, revealing--

INT. RABBI'S STUDY - NIGHT

A dark room, panelled entirely in dark woods. It overflows with ancient books and maps, a large globe, Judaica of every sort. RABBI BARENBAUM, all in black, stands before a window. He is a large man, but at seventy-five, ancient compared to the photos just seen. Nonetheless, he exudes charisma.



Rivka leans dangerously close to Jibril to Jibril's ear.

RIVKA  
 (whispering playfully)  
 Watch out. He's got his show  
 costume on.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Shut the door, Rivka.

RIVKA  
 (suddenly obedient)  
 Yes Father.

Rivka steps out and closes the door.

A pause.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 (distant, thoughtful)  
 I get a good view of Sderot from  
 here. I think I've seen every  
 Qassam Rocket that's been fired  
 from Gaza in the last few years. I  
 used to think there would be  
 progress... well we keep trying,  
 don't we?

He turns to the two, give the globe a spin.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Noam! A long time. Good to see  
 you. Mister... Barghouti, is it?

JIBRIL  
 Yes sir.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 You speak Hebrew? Good. You've  
 come a short distance, but a long  
 way, haven't you?

JIBRIL  
 Yes.

The rabbi sits. They find seats on a small couch.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 You know what they say about the  
 desert don't you?

JIBRIL  
 What's that?

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 When the heat gets really intense,  
 mirages sometimes appear--

JIBRIL  
 (verbally jumping on him)  
 -- You don't believe me either!  
 (to Noam)  
 This was a waste of time!

Jibril starts to rise but Noam forces him back down.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Wait a minute. Did I say I didn't  
 believe you?

JIBRIL  
 Then what did you just say? I'm  
 not stupid.

The rabbi looks a little pained, as if he's dealing with a  
 temperamental child. Noam looks back and forth between the  
 two. This isn't going well.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Calm down Mister Barghouti, calm  
 down.

Noam tries to mollify Jibril, who settles in a huff. As the  
 scene continues, the lighting in the already dark room begins  
 to diminish, until the room resembles the basement of  
 Jibril's dream.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 I'm sorry... words can be  
 troublemakers, yes? I got us both  
 in trouble there.  
 (beat)  
 A mirage is an illusion, yes. But  
 it is still something. Yes? Yes?

JIBRIL  
 (begrudgingly)  
 Yes.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 So what you have is like that  
 mirage. Something that's come out  
 of intense heat, or pressure.  
 (beat)  
 Your life, it's hard isn't it?

JIBRIL  
 (resentfully)  
 No.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 You're under pressure every single  
 day. Real pressure.

JIBRIL  
 (sarcastic)  
 I live a happy life. Every day I'm  
 grateful to be alive.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Noam says you have quite an  
 intelligence. A gifted mind. And  
 gifted minds need stimulus. So I  
 think it's wonderful that you took  
 it upon yourself to study Kabbalah.  
 A wonderfully rich and fulfilling  
 element of our culture. But--

JIBRIL  
 (exploding)  
 But you're going to tell me that  
 I'm crazy. I know what I did, and  
 what I've seen!

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Mister Barghouti, I've been  
 studying Kabbalah my whole life. I  
 believe in much of what it has to  
 teach us--

JIBRIL  
 --You're jealous.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Nonsense--

NOAM  
 Hold on Jibril--

JIBRIL  
 Shut up! You brought me to a  
 psychiatrist--

RABBI BARENBAUM  
 Sir, I am a real rabbi.

JIBRIL  
 You're jealous!

RABBI BARENBAUM  
A Muslim telling a Jew about  
Kabbalah? Really, now.

JIBRIL  
I did it, and that galls you.

NOAM  
Now Jibril, you're really pushing  
it.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
It's not a spell book. The  
spiritual, the spiritual aspects--

JIBRIL  
(cuts him off)  
It galls you to admit that a  
Muslim, a Muslim could acquire the  
skills that only the holiest of  
holies should have. You never did  
it and you never will!

The Rabbi is suddenly, strangely, converted to Jibril's  
argument.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
The empty vessel, hmmm... of course  
if you--

JIBRIL  
(overlapping)  
I came here to ask for your help.  
Because it's killing my people as  
well as yours!

RABBI BARENBAUM  
A golem won't kill unless--

JIBRIL  
You won't even listen to my story.

RABBI BARENBAUM  
I am listening Mister Barghouti.  
Did you actually read the Golem  
stories. They usually turn out  
very badly.

JIBRIL

You can just live here on your little patch of "holy land", waiting to die, knowing that it was I, Jibril Barghouti, who captured your God and made him walk the earth as a Palestinian, whose only reason to exist is to kill Jews!

RABBI BARENBAUM

(incensed)

For shame! For shame! You dare to take the sweetest, holiest of mysteries and twist it so!?! Corruptor! Idolator! Shame, SHAME, SHAME!!!

Something catches his eye.

RABBI BARENBAUM

Rivka, what are you doing here?

Rivka stands silently at the door, looking concerned.

RABBI BARENBAUM

Rivka, show these men out at once!

Rivka strides past Jibril and Noam to her father. Raises her hand to caress his cheek. Raises the other hand. The rabbi grows terrified.

RABBI BARENBAUM

Rivka! Rivka, no!

The rabbi begins to SCREAM. She turns her head, her father's head still in her hands and coughs a monstrous, LOW-THROATED LAUGH. Her eyes and teeth the shiny black of The Golem.

INT. TRUNK

Jibril wakes up SCREAMING. Bangs his head on the trunk lid.

NOAM (V.O.)

What was that? How are you back there?

JIBRIL

My god, I fell asleep. Aren't we there yet?

A beat. The engine DRONES, the tires THUMP. No reply.

JIBRIL

Noam?

NOAM (V.O.)

We didn't make it.

Jibril shrinks, anticipating what's next.

NOAM (V.O.)

I had to turn us around. They had tanks on the road between Sa'ad and Mefalsim. Something big is up. There was nothing I could do.

(beat)

I'm sorry Jibril.

Jibril looks wrecked, like he's been punched in the stomach. He presses his hands to his temples, squeezes hard.

JIBRIL

It's all right, Noam. You tried.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Did you think I was running away? I can't escape you, my Palestine. so I'll dig deeper, deeper into you, as my Golem has taught me to do. I've learned so much...

The lights glow red on his face, then white, then fade to

BLACK. On the radio we hear snatches of a report detailing an escalation of violence.

ISRAELI RADIO NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

... massive strikes in the West Bank. Though the security fence surrounds the enclave, Gaza has been segmented, like Ramallah, with tanks heading to the settlements in Morag, Nezarim, and Erez...

EXT. SETTLER'S GROVE - PRE-DAWN

JIBRIL'S P.O.V. FROM IN THE TRUNK: The lid pops open and we see Noam staring at us, disconsolate and nervous. He offers his hand, pulls Jibril out of the car.

ISRAELI RADIO NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The overnight attacks seem to be work of militant groups working in coordination.

(MORE)

## ISRAELI RADIO NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

This after both Hamas and Islamic Jihad reported the assassination of leaders from their groups by an Israeli commando. The army denies any knowledge of these attacks...

MASTER ANGLE ON two small figures in the grove. The sky is turning from dark blue to pink at the horizon. The two stand in silence a moment. A brief hug and they get in their respective cars. The engines come to life.

## ISRAELI RADIO NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...Given the flare-ups in recent weeks, it would seem to be a new stage in the intifada and much worse one, since they seem to be pushing for an all out war...

(speech continues)

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JIBRIL'S CAR - DAWN

P.O.V. THROUGH WINDSHIELD. Scrub and bushes fly by as we follow an unpaved path through desert hills.

Jibril is wasted, wild-eyed behind the wheel. The car bounces up and down like a ship at sea. The Israeli newscaster's voice CROSS FADES to an ARAB BROADCASTER describing military action around the Gaza Strip. A dramatic situation spiraling downwards...

## ARAB BROADCASTER (V.O.)

... at Palestine Square, where we will honor the martyrs of the latest criminal Zionist attack! There will be thousands in the streets. Show them your fists. The racist occupiers cannot keep us down. Show them your swords. Do their tanks and planes matter? No! Because we are we are The Just and we are The Judge...

(speech continues)

## JIBRIL (V.O.)

I knew what he was up to. Over land or underground... Had he travelled to Ramallah, to Nablus, to Jerusalem? Everywhere I turned, I saw his work. My work. I was choking in it. At least I knew where to find him now.

EXT. CAR - MORNING

AERIAL VIEWS of the car as it approaches Gaza City.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 And Allah The Reckoner demanded  
 that I stop him.

SOUNDS of a funeral rally: chanting, arguing, gunfire.

EXT. GAZA STREET - MORNING

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 How could I go against His will?

A crowd of several thousand people, headed by ARMED MILITANTS, is moving slowly up a Gaza street towards a large, multi-domed mosque. There is a hyperreal quality to the scene-- the sunlight a little too bright, people's clothing a little too colorful.

CLOSE ON JIBRIL in the thick of the procession, chanting and pounding his fist in the air. One of the crowd. And yet, is there something different about him? We PULL AWAY, lose him in the enormous sea of faces and hands. An Israeli helicopter ROARS overhead, riling the masses.

CONTINUE SHOT as we pass over flag-covered coffins, working our way to the back of the crowd. Come to rest near the back of the procession and find

JIBRIL'S CAR pulling up to a side street. The REAL JIBRIL steps out. He looks wired, frayed to the breaking point. His natty suit is threadbare. He surveys the crowd, begins to skirt its edge, moving towards the front in the distance.

GOLEM/JIBRIL senses his presence. He continues to move with the throngs. Jibril is shoving his way through the marchers, searching, staring at faces as he chants along with them. The Golem begins to move sideways. It turns around and spots Jibril. Jibril catches his doppelganger's face mocking Jibril with a knowing smile. This ignites Jibril. He tries to close the gap, but catches the ire of several protesters who shove back. The Golem faces front again. Jibril is apologizing, trying to keep an eye on the back of The Golem's head. Jibril is stuck with the Annoyed Men. The Golem takes a beat, drops from sight, and stands up with a NEW FACE. The protestors dealing with Jibril have attracted the attention of other protestors. A new eruption of accusations and pushing...



Jibril frees himself and moves to the side of the procession. He's confused, just keeps moving forward though he's lost his man. The Golem has detached itself from the crowd and mouths "Barghouti" as it passes an ordinary-looking MAN sitting on a sleek BWM. It points in Jibril's direction and then disappears into the background. The man immediately rises, turns to TWO THUGS standing at a distance from the car.

Jibril arrives at the spot where we last saw The Golem when the ORDINARY MAN bumps into him. He tries to apologize and move on, but the TWO THUGS grab his arms. Jibril resists but the clamor of the procession hides his cries. No one pays any attention. The Thugs drag him over to the car. One of the them pummels him in the face and stomach, and shoves him into the back. The men jump in and the car peels away.

INT. MILITANTS' CAR

Arab-flavored DISCO MUSIC pounds through the speakers. Jibril is wedged between the thugs, arms pinned behind his back, his lip split open. He is morose, resigned. Looks up and sees that the DRIVER is wearing a black hood with a green bandana. The other men are putting on similar hoods and shirts, and elbowing Jibril in the process.

DRIVER (RADICAL THUG #1)

How about now? Right now?

FRONT PASSENGER (RADICAL LEADER)

Not in my car! No blood on my leather seats, you fucks!

RADICAL THUG #2

Zionist dog! Traitor! You've been talking to the wrong people.

He slaps the back of Jibril's head, pinches his ear.

RADICAL THUG #3

What were you thinking?

Thug #2 is squeezing his fist before Jibril, making his knuckles CRACK.

DRIVER

Fuck the motherfucker! Take him to the orchard. Make him suffer--

RADICAL THUG #3

Fuck that! I say now. Kill the Jew-lover--

The car careens wildly down the narrow alleyways of Old Gaza.

RADICAL LEADER

Take him home. Kill him in his own bed. Teach the fucking third district a lesson. Fucking Alon always gets his collaborators from Daraj and Sabra! Fuck Alon!

RADICAL THUG #2

Fuck Alon!

RADICAL THUG #1

Fuck yeah!

The men roar with LAUGHTER.

EXT. GAZA STREETS (VARIOUS SHOTS) - DAY

The car wends its way through the city. Overhead, a helicopter gunship traces the car's path.

EXT. JIBRIL'S HOME - DAY

The car turns the corner onto Jibril's block, speeds towards Jibril's apartment. The entire street is different from before. It is strangely empty. The buildings are damaged much more than we previously saw. Everything is a cancerous grey in color, the color of The Golem's dried clay skin.

The car screeches to a stop before Jibril's apartment. Jibril looks out and sees bullet holes riddle the front. Someone has roughly tried to spell out the Hebrew letters for A - r - a - f - a - t. The car doors open. The men step out. The street exudes the silence of fear. Somewhere in the distance, a child's VOICE sounds out "pretend war", making airplane nose-dive sounds and explosions. The voice stops abruptly.

FROM THE P.O.V. OF VARIOUS APARTMENT WINDOWS: four hooded men hustle a battered Jibril out of the car and towards his

FRONT DOOR

Jibril is surrounded by the thugs. His head hangs low. He is taunted, slapped upside the head. Jibril tests the door. It's unlocked. He is shoved in and discovers that

INT. FOYER - DAY

The home has been trashed. Pictures shattered, furniture upended, personal items and papers strewn about the floor. The thugs are right behind. They close the door and push Jibril forward.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jibril sees Yusuf's computer, smashed. The television, smashed. One of the men walks toward the foot of the stairs.

RADICAL THUG #2

Look at this place! In Jabalia, I lived a shack size of the toilet over here! The motherfucker!

RADICAL THUG #1

Probably Israeli payroll.

JIBRIL

(meekly)

Yusuf? Mina?

Thug #2 punches him in the side. He doubles over. Thug #1 hits him again. Jibril cries out, drops to his knees. The men fan out around Jibril. Thug #2 pulls Jibril's jacket down around his shoulders. The leader leans in to Jibril's face.

RADICAL LEADER

(businesslike)

You know, in Ramallah, the Al Aqsa Brigade, they just carry out the sentence of death and "pgghew"--

(makes the gun gesture)

--shoot you. Right on the street. And if you're really bad, sometimes they hang the body in the main square for others to see. But that's too good for you. Al Aqsa, they're pussies. In Gaza, we like to fuck you up first. Yeah?

He looks to the men for approval. Laughter and nods of "yup".

JIBRIL (V.O.)

To be so brave in the face of death! Here are men to admire. Allah, give me their indifference.

And then the leader wallops Jibril on the jaw! Thug #2 pushes him to the ground and three of the four proceed to beat him mercilessly, stomping and kicking.

P.O.V. FROM TOP OF THE STAIRS-- we can see a fragment of the living room and the beating Jibril is taking. A SILHOUETTE creeps into the edge of frame, watches silently. The bodies shift out of view.

RADICAL LEADER (O.S.)  
Stand him up!

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM

Jibril's bloody face SLAMS up against a wall. Thug #1 spins him around, punches him once more for good measure, and takes a breather.

RADICAL THUG #2 (O.S.)  
Tools! There's a shop down here!

FOOTSTEPS sound from the basement stairwell. Thug #2 is at the doorway, looking like a kid who's been given new toys.

The men smile wickedly to one another, then look to Jibril. Too beaten to react. The leader approaches him, gives him a friendly slap on the face. He makes a motion with his head and

Thug #1 muscles Jibril, barely able to walk, to the stairwell. Down they go. We follow The leader down the steps. Catch a glimpse of the basement-- one Thug holds Jibril while the other two are setting up the table on which The Golem was created-- before the door is SLAMMED SHUT.

SCREEN BLACK

Instantaneously: A GUTTURAL GROWL, deep like an enormous lion or tiger. The most horrifying SCREAMS of pure unadulterated terror. BONE-CRUNCHING, BODY-SLAMMING noises. Silence.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

MOVE IN ON: a light bulb swinging to and fro over Jibril, splayed out on his table as The Golem once was. The string it hangs from stretches to a higher ceiling than we have seen before. The dimension of the basement have changed. Visible in the corners of the room are the twisted, lifeless bodies of the radicals. Jibril's hand TWITCHES just a bit.

SCREEN BLACK

Silence. The AMBIENCE from the outside world begins to bleed in. An Apache HELICOPTER somewhere upon high... The RUMBLE of tank treads on ground... In response to the sounds of the world, the same GUTTURAL GROWL-- a primitive, resonating threat. And then, a baritone VOICE, smooth and ominous. It stretches out two words, luxuriating in their transcendental simplicity.

THE GOLEM

I AM.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

ECU JIBRIL'S EYES SNAPPING OPEN.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Nonononono. Against the rules...

Jibril struggles to sit up. He immediately sees the dead bodies on the floor. His shock is mixed with relief. But he's forgotten what roused him, and only now does Jibril fix his attention straight ahead.

FROM BEHIND JIBRIL: We MOVE towards the small tool bench that sits against the wall... but the wall is practically gone! The Golem has indeed been digging. It looks as though a hand has grabbed the stone wall like a piece of paper and torn it away, leaving a frame of jagged rock and a scooped-out hole beyond... a dark cave that extends into blackness.

Sounds of more ENGINE RUMBLES from heavy vehicles outside the home.

The Golem stands in the center of the blackness, the bulb above Jibril barely gives off enough light to paint its form. Its arms are crossed, its head downcast. Its shape rendered discernible by the glowing patterns of Hebrew-- they pulse and smolder. They ripple through heat waves, red as dying embers.

Plainly visible are the remains of bullet hits, random streaks of blankness where The Golem repaired itself by smearing the scribed letters. The patterns run straighter than we've previously seen. Its body, once humanoid and curved musculature, is now one of edges and flat surfaces.

Jibril slides himself off the table. Takes a step forward, his fascination overcoming pain, and dread.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Here but for the grace of God--

THE GOLEM  
I AM.

JIBRIL  
No! A golem! A servant...

The Golem raises an accusatory finger to Jibril...

An EXPLOSION sounds in the distance. The room TREMBLES and dust flakes from the ceiling.

JIBRIL  
You've gone too far. You will submit!

With a GROWL, The Golem slowly takes an earthshaking step out of the shadows. Its head is recognizable, but it is framed by a body like some infernal machine. Every part, every limb has been flattened and riveted. It has fashioned itself into a bizarre robotic man, wearing its clay skin like tank armor. It stares at Jibril with its unblinking black eyes. It takes another BOOMING footstep.

THE GOLEM  
(insulted)  
Submit?

It bows its head, showing the boot print with which Jibril branded it.

THE GOLEM  
If thine "I" offend thee...

The Golem creeps forward another step, its head still bowed. More tank engines RUMBLE in the background.

THE GOLEM  
I AM... to kill.

JIBRIL  
(very nervous)  
No. To serve. To kill? A few bad men. Not everyone. Not my people! You're mistaken!

THE GOLEM  
Bad men... With guns.

The Golem stretches its arms wide, points to the dead radicals.

JIBRIL

Wait a minute. All the places  
you've gone? Not all "bad men"!  
You've done terrible things. You  
don't feel ter--

THE GOLEM

(overlapping)  
I AM... not to feel.

JIBRIL

(overlapping)  
Murdering innocents?

THE GOLEM

I walked this land. I am Ever  
Watching. I am All Hearing.  
(beat)  
I learn to feel.

JIBRIL

Okay. That's good. It makes you  
more--

THE GOLEM

I feel HATE. I feel ALIVE. All  
that, I am. Murder innocents?  
More hate.

The Golem looks up, its mouth twisted in a sick smile. It stands straighter, swollen in size. Suddenly, Jibril is a man who is in way over his head, literally. The Golem dwarfs him, forced to crouch to stand in the room.

JIBRIL

That's a mistake! You're a  
mistake!

The Golem stalks forward again. Jibril hits the table.

THE GOLEM

More hate... More life!

The table gives, Jibril slips, and The Golem lunges forward, pinning Jibril to the back wall. There is POUNDING coming from the front door upstairs. A garbled VOICE sends orders through a megaphone.

THE GOLEM

I go... person to person...

JIBRIL  
 (carrying the thought)  
 Place to place... Jenin to Al  
 Shati, Ramallah to Dugit...

THE GOLEM  
 And make more hate. So easy to do--

JIBRIL  
 -- and when will you stop?

THE GOLEM  
 When I AM is all that there is.

The Golem backs Jibril against the wall. The room shakes.  
 The Golem's footsteps sound like the explosions outside.

JIBRIL  
 No! Without my approval? Without  
 my blessing?

THE GOLEM  
 Without you!

The Golem tosses Jibril aside like a rag doll, turns towards  
 him crumpled up by the door.

JIBRIL  
 (goading him)  
 Kill me! Kill me then!

The Golem lifts Jibril off the ground with one oversized  
 hand. Pins him against the wall by his neck. Jibril is red-  
 faced, supporting himself by holding onto The Golem's massive  
 forearm. It looks like The Golem wants to choke Jibril, but  
 some invisible hand stays it. It expends more and more  
 effort but Jibril remains alive.

JIBRIL  
 You see... you can't. Choke me!  
 Break my bones! You can't do it!  
 You need me alive and you know it.  
 You'd have no purpose otherwise!  
 All your hate is for me. And now I  
 reject it!

The Golem has shrunk a little in size as Jibril has shown  
 more will. He lets go of The Golem's arm and reaches with  
 both hands for The Golem's mouth, prying at its jaws. The  
 Golem tries to fight, but its mouth opens a crack. Jibril's  
 hand goes in--



JIBRIL

And now I send you back to the  
dust!

YUSUF (O.S.)

Jibril Jibril! Soldiers! They've  
come to demolish--

The door BANGS open and Yusuf bursts in.

Jibril is startled. The Golem turns its head and with a lightning fast reflex, grabs the boy's neck. A PIERCING SHRIEK fills the room.

The Golem turns back to JIBRIL, still pinned to the wall. We can see by The Golem's shoulder that it is lifting Yusuf high off the ground. Yusuf's arms flail helplessly, a frightening SHADOW PLAY on the wall.

Jibril locks angry, tearful eyes with The Golem. The Golem stares back with evil intention, its mouth a cruel grimace.

ON JIBRIL'S FACE as Yusuf's SCREAMING reaches fever pitch.

CRACK.

SILENCE. The Golem drops Yusuf's limp body.

THE GOLEM

I am the dust.

The Golem drops Jibril. It backs up, and looks out the door, listening. The distant UPHEAVAL growing. It smiles and thunders up the stairs.

Jibril sits where he fell, devastated.

He sees Yusuf's body and crawls to him. He moves to unbend the tangled limbs, to brush the hair from his face. Slowly, he finds himself pounding furiously, first himself, and then the ground.

It all pours out: a lifetime of pain, a world of untold slights and humiliations. The countless deaths watched and known, and locked away in his mind and heart, left unfelt because to do so would be beyond unbearable. He weeps until he is spent, a look of numb shock on his ruined face.

A long beat.

Then a sweet, familiar voice breaks the stillness.

RIVKA (O.C.)

Even Satan has not yet invented the  
revenge for the blood of a little  
child.

(beat)

Do you know who said that?

Jibril looks up.

At the door is Rivka Barenbaum, dressed in a beautiful,  
traditional Palestinian garb. She has a serene detachment,  
an angelic smile on her face.

JIBRIL

No.

RIVKA

Bialik, the Hebrew poet. He wrote  
a hundred years ago, after the  
Kishinev pogrom.

Jibril nods, stares into the middle distance.

JIBRIL

You aren't real, are you.

She blushes.

RIVKA

You see me? Isn't that proof  
enough?

JIBRIL

All I've seen, everywhere I've gone  
is...

(breaks down)

But you... you're beautiful.

RIVKA

(cryptically)

Would our Fathers be so upset to  
see us together?

(beat)

I help, where I can. Some of us  
want to. You... I've been watching  
you.

She smiles warmly again.

RIVKA

You I don't have to help.

JIBRIL

Why not?

RIVKA

Because you already know what to do. Don't you? You do want to stop it, yes?

Jibril looks to Yusuf, then back again.

JIBRIL

Yes.

RIVKA

Then what are you afraid of?

JIBRIL

I'm not.

RIVKA

Good. Don't be afraid. You're stronger than it. You always were and you always will be.

JIBRIL

Yes.

RIVKA

You have all that you need, right here. The Most Glorious One has provided all.

Jibril looks around the ruined basement.

CLOSE ON THE WRECKAGE OF THE TOOL BENCH: BROKEN CLAY PIECES, OVERTURNED TOOLS, SCATTERED CLOTS OF NAILS, POWDERS SPILLED ACROSS THE FLOOR. A MAKESHIFT BOMB FACTORY IN DISARRAY.  
RESUME:

JIBRIL

I have nothing.

RIVKA

Ah, but your mind! Truly a gift. It is as Allah has pleased.

He slaps the top of his head, squeezes, shakes his head in disagreement.

JIBRIL

It's nothing.

RIVKA

How much of a weapon is the steel,  
or the stone? And how much is the  
will that builds it, and wields it?

JIBRIL

(ironic)  
If you will it, it is no dream.

RIVKA

Look what you accomplished! With  
no more than--

JIBRIL

Yes, look what I did.

Jibril looks again at Yusuf. He realizes that he is holding something. He opens his hand and sees the slip of paper that he put under The Golem's tongue. A scrawl of Hebrew letters and numbers, written in his blood.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The Name of God...

He crumples the paper slowly, throws it away.

A pause.

RIVKA

Many uses for numbers, you know.

This gets Jibril's attention.

JIBRIL

What?

MOVE IN ON JIBRIL, puzzling over what he's heard.

JIBRIL

(musing)  
Many uses... he said "many uses"...

FLASHBACK - INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

QUICK SHOTS OF COLONEL ALON MAKING A FIST, RAPPING HIS  
FINGERS.

COLONEL ALON (V.O.)

Many uses for numbers...

CLOSE ON THE NUMBERS TATTOOED ON HIS KNUCKLES. RESUME:

INT. BASEMENT

Jibril's mind races--

JIBRIL

Of course.

He fumbles through his coat pockets and pulls out his cell phone.

JIBRIL

Yes. Yes! Thank you!

He looks up to Rivka, but she is gone. Jibril rises. His mind is suddenly sure of purpose, his eyes clear.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

No more questions to ask. The knowledge that chattered in my brain all this time? I thanked Allah for providing and let it go.

The room reverberates with the shock wave of another explosion. He wobbles a bit. The megaphone is barking ORDERS again, and now DISTANT SCREAMS are heard.

He shoots up the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SLOW-MOTION AS Jibril enters and walks through the living room, now devastated by an missile attack. Small fires are burning amidst the plaster and concrete rubble.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

I couldn't battle The Golem on its terms, but I knew how to fight it on mine.

A HOLE has been punched through the main wall, opening onto the street. Through it we can see what looks like a military operation in action. The Golem's mighty ROAR shakes the room. Jibril remains calm as he walks to the opening and steps into--

EXT. JIBRIL'S APARTMENT - DAY

--an insane melee amongst the Israeli army and the Palestinians.

SLOW MOTION AS Jibril is immediately grabbed by TWO SOLDIER who escort him towards a personnel carrier, SHOUTING accusations at him.

Jibril looks around and sees that his street has become a war zone. The Thugs' BMW is a flaming wreck. All around, buildings are in ruins. Barricades of dirt and rubble have been mysteriously erected; barbed wire and burning tires complete the scene. Overhead, a helicopter gunship circles like a bird of prey.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

An equation is cold. A formula is cold. So I would be cold.

A crowd of Palestinian men women and children are running panicked through the street towards a tank which sits on one end. Armored personnel carriers are behind it, and a squad of soldiers with shields and clubs who hold the angry, frightened residents on the block. Jibril looks in the opposite direction and sees

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The Golem was slow. I would be fast.

A large MILITARY BULLDOZER grinding down the middle of the street, taking out barriers, clearing the way for tanks behind it. The Golem, big as the bulldozer, lumbers next it doing the same. The ROAR of its engine merges with the ROAR of The Golem. Infuriated Palestinians, men and boys alike, attack the bulldozer with no regard for The Golem-- only to be picked up and broken like twigs, or hurled headlong into a building.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

The rage I felt for my foe... my foe... Too heavy. I let it go. The hurt, and pain, gone too. They weighed me down.

Jibril is hustled near the carrier now, past neighbors who try and pull him from the soldiers. He sees the FACES of Palestinians and Israelis, contorted identically in their mutual fury and hatred.

JIBRIL (V.O.)

Joy and love? They fled long ago.

The soldier reaches for a PLASTIC BINDER. In the press of the crowd and the confusion, Jibril breaks free. He runs hard. The soldiers have their hands full with the people around them and Jibril gets some distance.

He heads back to the barricade. Bullets WHIZ over his head from both directions.

JIBRIL'S P.O.V.: The bulldozer grinds forward mercilessly. The Golem ROARS and throws off more attackers.

Jibril pulls out his cell phone and begins to punch numbers.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Hatred? It's the heaviest.

Jibril breaches the barricade and runs up his side of the street. Bullets throw concrete as he takes cover behind a car. He shakes from the adrenaline rush, his face has a desperate lucidity. The Golem ROARS again, flames billowing from the Hebrew on its "skin".

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
But I saw clearly now. I couldn't run fast enough with it.

Jibril sees Israeli soldiers advancing on the sidewalk behind the bulldozer. Their progress slowed by snipers' bullets. Jibril punches in a second batch of numbers.

SHOT OF THE CELL PHONE SCREEN. THE LCD NUMBERS MATCH COLONEL ALON'S TATTOOED NUMBERS. RESUME:

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
I couldn't beat The Golem with it.

Jibril closes his eyes...

JIBRIL  
(to himself)  
God is greatest, God is greatest,  
God is greatest...

He opens his eyes, readies himself, and turns--

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
So I cast it out at last. And  
turned my heart to sand...

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - MORNING

Hamzah squirms next to his parents in the tiny backseat. His mother's eyes are red from crying. She smiles through her tears at Hamzah.

RESUME:

JIBRIL speeding into the street.

THE BULLDOZER rumbles forward. The Golem, twenty feet tall now, rages beside it! It stamps its foot and the earth trembles. Jibril, undeterred, runs straight for the behemoth.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
Now a heart of sand is heavy...

FLASHBACK - EXT. CAR - MORNING

ON THE CAR, MAHMOUD IN FOREGROUND: Hamzah turns, peering through the backseat window. Mahmoud waves, and he waves back. The engine RUMBLES to life and the car pulls away.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
But I didn't know that...

RESUME:

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS EARLIER

The same scene, this time with sober realism: an Israeli military bulldozer in the middle of battle-torn Arab street, tanks behind it. Its engine ROARS The Golem's roar, but there is no Golem. A lone figure comes running out from a building, trying to reach the cab of the bulldozer. Bullets dance at his feet.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
So I could run swiftly. Swift as a  
lost child running to his parent.

P.O.V. THROUGH BULLDOZER DRIVER'S WINDOW ON THE STREET

Jibril comes into frame and spreads his arms wide open. He wears an explosives vest. We can hear him praying to God. The driver DUCKS and

ANGLE ON THE SIDE OF THE BULLDOZER FROM THE STREET

Jibril pushes the "call" button on his cell phone-- the detonator that he holds in his right hand...

The IMAGE BURSTS INTO FLAME, BURNS TO A BRILLIANT

WHITE VOID

A pause.



JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 I was thinking of my Great Uncle.  
 I never met him, you know?

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - MORNING

Hamzah looks through the back window of the car, still waving good-bye.

THROUGH THE WINDOW we can see Mahmoud waving farewell. He shrinks in size and is swallowed up by the distance and the sun-dappled dust, until the dust alone fills the screen.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - GAZA CITY - DAY

A massive SANDSTORM filling the frame. The wind howls. Swirling brown clouds of earth and sand obscure all.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 I had his image in my head from the stories my father told me. One in particular, over and over as I grew up. That story and the Holy Qur-an.

Ever-so-slowly, a FACE materializes out of the dust. It looks like Jibril. But it's not. Call him ZAFEER. Almost Jibril's doppelganger. He stares directly at us. Intense, serious, but different-- an anger tempered by sadness.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Were we robbed of something? Sure.  
 Don't talk to me about injustice.

The sandstorm rages all around him, then thins again and blows away. The familiar Gaza landscape. Hold on Zafeer a beat. Suddenly, he spins around and walks--

EXT. STREET - GAZA CITY - DAY

-- down the same moonscape of a street. The same mix of cheap cinder block and Arab-flavored architecture. Bullet holes riddle the walls. Everything is still covered in mud. Zafeer even wears the same clothing that Jibril was wearing.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Is there a Palestine? I know it's here, somewhere. I've found pieces.

(MORE)

JIBRIL (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 And yet I can't see it clearly.  
 Something's always in my eye.  
 Maybe it's the dust.

Across the street from Zafeer stands an Israeli PERSONNEL CARRIER. On the sidewalk, two Israeli SOLDIERS have five PALESTINIAN YOUTHS up against a wall.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 It's that damned story of theirs.  
 That story never ends happily. In  
 fact, it still hasn't ended.

Pedestrians are frozen with fear or walking along cautiously. The sole exception is the same attractive Middle-Eastern Woman we've seen before. She stands YELLING at the soldiers.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Will it ever end? I wish it would  
 end. Once and for all. Was this  
 their legacy to us then?

The woman gestures at the youths. The soldiers are ignoring her completely and she recoils in frustration. She turns her head for a moment and catches Zafeer eyeing her.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Some trick of those angels of the  
 smokeless fire! Those treacherous  
 Jinn! Were you one of them, Great  
 Uncle? What about you, father?

Something subtle passes between them.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 Angels and devils, they all look  
 alike in this world. To learn to  
 tell the difference. That's it...

The moment breaks-- she returns to haranguing the soldiers. A Muezzin's amplified CALL TO PRAYER whispers through the street.

Zafeer stares at the scene for a moment. The Call again.

JIBRIL (V.O.)  
 If only I could tell. I could make  
 a difference. I would make a  
 difference. I swear to God.

Zafeer raises his hand as if to speak. He hesitates a moment. Clears his throat...

ZAFEER

Excuse me. What is the problem?

... and steps towards the soldiers.

CUT TO:

BLACK.

THE END