

## Consider Me a Dream

(SINCE I AM A KAFKALOGIST A FEW WORDS OF INTRODUCTION TO THIS MOVIE. KAFKA DREAMS ALMOST EVERY SCENE IN A MOMENT BEFORE HIS DEATH. FOR THAT REASON, LIKE THE TORAH ITSELF, THE MOVIE IS NOT NECESSARILY IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER. ONE FINDS ALMOST EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW ABOUT KAFKA IN THIS SCREENPLAY.)

**FADE IN:**

Exterior Prague, Czechoslovakia, night just before dawn.

A series of aerial angles of Prague, Capitol of Bohemia, as dawn is breaking, including the statues on the Charles bridge. We see the words 'Holy, Holy, Holy' over the third statue on the right. A crucifixion. Hold.

We see figures parading around the facade of the old Town Hall as the clock strikes the hour. Sustain.

We see a 16th century two-toned rose-colored rococo clock on the old Jewish town hall. The hands move counter-clockwise. Sustain as the clock moves from three o'clock to three o-one. Towering above the Hebrew clock, we see a Roman numeral clock that reads six o-one. Sustain.

Directly across from the clock side of the town hall we see the Alt-Neu (Old-New) Synagogue.

Interior of Old—New Synagogue at dawn: We explore the interior of this ancient synagogue moving up towards the early Gothic five ribbed, vaulted ceiling. We follow the stairs up to the attic. The door is covered in cobwebs. We see into the room through the webs and are greeted by the sight of a giant cocoon pulsating light in a heartbeat-rhythm.

Exterior Jewish cemetery—day: Just beyond the Old—New Synagogue on a small, oddly shaped lot, we see the Jewish cemetery with over ten thousand graves. Sustain on the tombstone of Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, Talmudic scientist and creator of the first Frankenstein's Monster, the Golem. Hold.

Exterior Olsony Prague Jewish cemetery (2)—Day: We hear a faint, slow, and plaintive Mourner's Kaddish as Max Brod finishes his eulogy. We see the tombstone of the Kafka family. Next to the stone is an enlarged photograph of Franz Kafka.

Interior close shot face of Kafka at the Kierling Sanitarium. Day, June 1924: Kafka's eyes open from a deep and death-like sleep. His body is completely covered by white sheets and blankets tightly tucked into the bed on all sides. The outline of Kafka's body is skeletal under the blanket. The overall effect is of a white coffin, which is surrounded by lilacs, peonies, columbines, scarlet hawthorn. We see movement under the blanket as Kafka awakens.

A nurse with a starchy face and demeanor enters the room.

Kafka is fumbling around with something beneath his blankets. The nurse fills Kafka's water glass, making a point to ignore the patient. Kafka pulls a leather set of

*Tefillin* from beneath the blankets. He tries to place them on his forehead, but the head strap is too large and they drop around his neck.

NURSE (in German)

Herr Kafka—What in the world are you doing?

Kafka attempts to tighten the tefillin so they will fit on his forehead, but instead, the leather straps tighten around his neck.

NURSE (screaming)

Herr Doktor, Herr Doktor! He is trying to kill himself!

Nurses and doctors enter with Dora Dyamant, Kafka's fiancée.

DORA

No No, Franz is practicing his religion.

DORA'S comment is met with skepticism by the staff.

DORA

He is praying.

Kafka smiles secretly. All but Dora leave.

KAFKA (raspy, tubercular)

The fall—our wedding.

DORA

My father said I must marry a Rabbi.

KAFKA touches the *tefillin* around his neck and kisses the tips of his fingers.

And live in the Promised Land.

KAFKA lifts his head off of the pillow and closes his eyes and nods his head.

Yes Yes.

And be a Chassid  
mastering the Kabballah,  
The secrets of our Torah,  
our tradition.

KAFKA pulls some of his hair down into a sidelock and begins to twirl it around his finger.

But your writings, my love.

**The Rebbe, my father,  
considers them profane.**

**KAFKA's lips move, "Burn them."**

**DORA looks at the manuscripts piled high in the corner of the room.**

**DORA**

**Franz, darling, I - Father is -  
may be - wrong.  
The story of the black dung beetle,  
The Child in the City,  
America, they are art,  
Franz, art.**

**KAFKA**

**Burn them. Burn them. Brod will betray me.**

**Dora is reluctant. Kafka hands her a box of matches. She turns away. Kafka opens his mouth to speak, and blood flows down one side of his mouth.**

**KAFKA (raspy)**

**Burn.**

**DORA sees the blood. She goes to the corner and lights the pile of manuscripts. Smoke fills the room and Kafka has a coughing fit.**

**KAFKA—gasping**

**Now tell your father.  
The wedding.  
The fall.**

**FADE IN: DREAM SEQUENCES**

**EXTERIOR SHOT OLD PRAGUE CZECH KAFKA GROUP NIGHT 1912**

**We hear Chassidic wedding music and we see the movement of shadows and candle flames down a narrow lane moving East. The streets of old Prague and the multi-tiered menorah design of the roof of the Old-New Synagogue are illuminated by the moving flames. The Hebrew clock on the roof has no hour or second hand. The lights continue East toward the countryside. All the characters stand in the shadows.**

**FRANZ KAFKA (VO)**

**Love and marriage.  
Nothing is more important.**

**JULIE KAFKA (VO)**

**And your parents?  
Franz Amschel**

**My son, when my father died,  
I had to hold on the toes of his corpse,  
while asking his forgiveness  
for all the wrongs I had done him.**

**FRANZ KAFKA (VO)**

**Genesis Two: Twenty-four.  
She will be flesh of my flesh.**

**Oh yes, and more.  
My very life**

**This is why I am leaving  
You, father and mother, and joining  
with my wife.**

**HERMANN KAFKA (VO)**

**And you call yourself a rabbi?  
we are the people  
who honor their mothers and fathers.**

**We are your family.**

**FRANZ KAFKA (VO)**

**What I have to do  
I can only do alone**

**to see with clarity  
the ultimate.**

**Those who are unclear  
have no right to marry.**

#### **EXTERIOR FULL SHOT VILLAGE OF BELZ, GALACIA NIGHT 1912**

**We hear the same Chassidic wedding music and see the movement of candle flames through the enclosed synagogue square moving West. The synagogue, rabbinic parsonage, and house of study are illuminated by the moving flames. The lights continue West towards Prague.**

**THE GRAND REBBE (RABBI) OF BELZ (VO)  
You will obey.**

**We see a glimpse of a shadow of a head. The head is shaking 'No'.**

**THE GRAND REBBE (RABBI) OF BELZ (VO) cont.  
There is still time.**

**Break your engagement.  
This time you will obey.**

**DEVOROLAH (DORA)—THE BRIDE AND THE REBBE'S DAUGHTER. (VO)**

**And what of love? I will not obey.**

**REBBE (VO)**

**Do not speak without respect.  
Honor. The fifth commandment.  
Love. What do you know of love?**

**REBBE (VO)(cont.)**

**Falling in love is like falling into a pit.**

**DORA (VO)**

**Love. Love is everything  
that enhances  
that widens  
that enriches  
our lives.**

**REBBE (VO)**

**To love—in religion  
and marriage  
is to honor and obey.**

**DORA (VO)**

**I will not cut my hair.**

**REBBE (VO)**

**You will obey.  
You are still my daughter.  
There will be no wedding**

**REBBE (VO) cont.**

**without the cutting  
of the bride's  
wedlocks.**

**Eve, the first bride  
had her locks cut  
by God himself  
before she was given  
to Adam.**

The two groups of candle flames converge and form one group, moving forward. They stop in an open field with one empty chair. The BRIDE is lead to the chair. Concentric circles of light surround her. The inner circle of light illuminates the center.

**CLOSE SHOT OF FRANZ KAFKA'S FACE.**

It appears as a half shadow and half fire. He wears all white, His white fur hat acts as a halo.

KAFKA is beardless with long side locks. He has large, wide-open eyes with dark lashes. He plays with his side curls with long ethereal fingers.

KAFKA'S parents emerge next from the shadows—at the same time. They are each holding one of their son's arms. HERMANN is uncomfortable in his skullcap. It keeps falling off. He is sixty-ish and looks like an old style bare fisted boxer—complete with a twirled, waxed mustache.

JULIE KAFKA, also in her sixties, is bloated and bent from a lifetime of serving the men in her life. She has let herself go, and is a dowdy hausfrau with a striking face.

OTTLA, KAFKAS SISTER, is seen next, and looks like JULIE might have looked at a younger age. OTTLA is tall and attractive. She wears a black veil, suggesting that she is a widow.

We see the face of the BELZER REBBE, half in the shadow, half in the fire. He looks like the Sultan in a Dore illustration of the Munchausen stories, a Maharaja from India. He is broad, of medium height, had a long white beard, and unusually long, uncurled white side locks. One of the REBBE'S eyes is blind and blank, and the other stares intensely and judgmentally. The epitome of all patriarchs, the REBBE has a twisted mouth which gives the impression of irony and enigma. He wears a caftan of the shiniest purple-black silk, and white leggings with Chassidic loafers. The REBBE is crowned with a *shtriemel*, a tall round fur hat from which hangs exactly thirteen short sable tails. He wears a gartel (sash) around his waist.

**CLOSE SHOT OF REBBE'S WIFE.** All in light. She is as dark and mysterious looking as a Gypsy princess. She wears no make-up and has no wrinkles. Her eyes, brows, pupils, and lashes are all coal black. She wears a jet-black scarf pulled tightly around her shaven head. Her black-gloved hand and arm are looped tightly through the arm of her daughter. Her face stiffens and looks frozen, dead.

Their daughter DEVOROLAH (DORA) is dressed all in white and wears a thick veil that is semi-transparent. She is seated by her parents.

The men approach for the lifting of the veil.

NATA SAMAL steps forward, a 19 year old miniature REBBE in black.

JOSEPH GOLEM, the best man, is dressed all in white, like KAFKA. He is beardless and built like a fullback.

**GOLEM lifts the veil. DORA looks like her mother, but soft and cherubic, innocent and attractive. She is seated by her parents.**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH is a beardless, slick, stylized Rabbi who wears the most modern, expensive suits.**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH**

**May you see children  
and your children's children  
as did Sarah, Rebeccah, Rachel, and Leah.  
May God bless you and guard you.**

**REBBE**

**Unbraid your hair.**

**DORA sits still, glaring at the REBBE.**

**REBBE'S WIFE**

**Dora!**

**The GUESTS raise their candles to get a better look at what is happening in the inner circle.**

**We see that one half of the GUESTS, MEN and WOMEN, are dressed in traditional black Chassidic garb. They look like clones of the REBBE and the REBBETZIN, his wife. The other MEN and WOMEN are dressed all in white, including fur hats for both the MEN and WOMEN.**

**We see the backs of the REBBE and his WIFE. A shimmer of light is caught revolving around the two as they simultaneously grab a braid and cut off Dora's braids with their giant swords.**

**DORA, devastated, cries out in horror. Her MOTHER wraps her head tightly in a black scarf. The mother then tightly grips Dora's shoulder.**

**DORA'S MOTHER**

**There, there.**

**The BRIDE, in shame, drops the veil back over her face.**

**Their PARENTS let the GROOM and BRIDE to the nuptial canopy. The crowd splits like the Red Sea in front of the REBBE. All regroup tightly around the couple**

**CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA wearing a white tefillin box on his head. The straps that hold the tefillin are also white (Jewish law requires that tefillin be black, and that they never be worn at night.) Traditionally a second black box is worn on the bicep opposite the heart. KAFKA's arm tefillin is white with a long white strap. He holds it in his hand.**

**GOLEM walks out of the shadows carrying a tall white hatbox. GOLEM takes out a white fur hat exactly like the one KAFKA is wearing and gives it to KAFKA. KAFKA, with great ceremony, walks to DORA and crowns her with the hat. The KAFKAN CHASSIDIM cheer.**

**REBBE**

**Meshugena!**

We HEAR MURMURING from all the black CHASSIDIM. We see Goethe, standing behind HERMANN, holding a leash. We follow the leash down to the coal black large standard POODLE that GOETHE is leading. The POODLE stares at KAFKA. HERMANN pushes the DOG with his foot. The dog growls. Exactly to the right of the BRIDE behind her parents we see MILENA dressed in white like a bride. She is maternal yet erotic. Her eyes reflect a world of suffering. She looks like the Angel of Death, and is a former lover of KAFKA's.

To MILENA's right is FELICE, KAFKA's former fiance, looking remarkably like OTTLA. FELICE is sexless and looks dejected. She looks away from KAFKA.

In Chassidic tradition the BRIDE circles the GROOM seven times. She is led by her parents.

As DORA is led in the first circle KAFKA wraps the white strap once around his arm.

**KAFKA**

**I wed you forever.**

We see DORA's face shining through the veil, radiant and smiling.

The second encircling, we see the BRIDE covered by her veil—no face. KAFKA wraps the strap around his arm once again.

**KAFKA**

**I wed you in truth.**

On the third circle, KAFKA wraps the strap one more time around his arm.

We see DORA's body from KAFKA's point of view with OTTLA's face under the veil. KAFKA gasps.

We see the BRIDE from the GUEST's point of view. Her face is in the shadows.

**KAFKA**

**I wed you in judgment.**

The fourth circle we see MILENA's face under the veil from KAFKA's point of view. KAFKA wraps the tefillin one more time.

**KAFKA (under his breath)**

**Milena.**

He hears HERMANN and the REBBE mutter. "shiksa." He looks at them and they glare at him stone silent.



**KAFKA**

**I wed you in love.**

**The fifth circle we see FELICE. KAFKA looks away and wraps the strap for the fifth time. We see a veil.**

**KAFKA misses the sixth circle, wrapping the strap tightly, slightly above his wrist. CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA'S ARM.**

**Before the seventh circle, KAFKA walks up to the bride and lifts her veil. He sees DORA and gives her a lingering full mouth kiss. The GUESTS dressed in white sigh, Those dressed in black gasp.**

**KAFKA**

**My Love.  
To what may I compare you?**

**You fragrant thighs  
opening and closing  
as heaven's gates.**

**The scent of nard and musk  
rising as the sacred incense  
of the Ancient Temple?**

**Your heart shaped haunch  
more graceful than the gazelles**

**That which is beautiful  
I can only compare to you.**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH (VO) (hurriedly)  
Ecstatic Joy, this loving couple  
Eve and Adam again in Eden**

**WE HEAR A GLASS BREAKING.**

**CROWD (OS)**

**Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov.**

**INT DORA'S DINER, PRAGUE COUNTRYSIDE, JUDEAN HILLS, DAY 1948.**

**We see a broken glass at the feet of a young Chassidic BOY in black garb. He is afraid and waiting for an adult reprimand. KAFKA is an old Chassidic Rebbe all in white.**

**KAFKA (lovingly)  
*Boychuckle*—be careful. Don't step.**

The boy is surprised. He helps KAFKA clean up by holding the dust pan. They throw the glass into a milk container which KAFKA carefully folds around the glass.

**KAFKA (with English subtitles)**

*Hi man da Mahave Chassedey. Who wants to be a Chassid?*

All PATRONS stroke their beards and the WOMEN stroke their chins.

**PATRONS AND WOMEN (with English subtitles)**

*Laki-aim Melay Da-Nazeekaan. Careful not to harm others.*

KAFKA gives the young BOY a fatherly embrace. They stand, looking out the window. We see a sign that says, "Kfar Kafka," and underneath in Arabic and Hebrew, "Kafka Village. Jerusalem 20 K.M."

MEN and WOMEN are working the land together. Some men are farming, some are watching the children. Some WOMEN are farming, others are watching the children. The rows of crops are neatly flowing on terraced hills. The village breathes the harmony and beauty before the Fall.

**CHASSIDIC BOY**

You are a Rebbe—why do you serve food in the communal dining hall?

DORA watches the scene from the kitchen. All CHASSIDIM listen intently.

**KAFKA**

I serve my fellow Chassidim and my God.

**BOY**

I have to return to Jerusalem to get my belongings. May I join?

KAFKA smiles at the BOY. The BOY helps KAFKA bus the tables. GOLEM gets up from a table.

**GOLEM**

This afternoon the Rebbe will give his driving lesson.  
All women are required—excuse me—asked to attend.

**EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE COUNTRYSIDE JUDEAN HILLS KAFKA DAY.**

KAFKA is standing with a pointer in front of a diagram with a new 1948 Cadillac behind him.

**KAFKA**

The Kabbalah of driving is quite practical.

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 2* of the diagram. Each circle represents a *Sephira*.**

**KAFKA**

**Cochma: The concept of the vehicle. Revelation.**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 1*.**

**And Binah: The design of the vehicle. Reason.**

**KAFKA points to the circle in between 1 and 2.**

**Mediated by your inner knowledge of driving. Plus...**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 4*.**

**Controls, *gevurah*. Plus power...**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 5*.**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 7*.**

**Monitoring systems. *Hod*.**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 8*.**

***Netzach*: Cycles of operating systems.**

**KAFKA points to *Sephira 6*.**

**Plus: *Teafairit* The beautiful driver in control. There you have it.**

**DORA is at the wheel, nervous. She drives on the ridge overlooking Jerusalem. We see the Temple Mount of Moriah to Mt. Zion.**

**DORA**

**Am I driving in beauty?**

**KAFKA**

**Oh yes. You are in *Teafairit***

**DORA**

**Franz, my Rebbe, why are you insisting that all the other women, and I learn to drive?**

**KAFKA**

**Soon I will die.**

**DORA (disturbed)**

**Moses lived to be one hundred and twenty.**

**KAFKA**

No, my love, my time to cross over into the Promised Land will be soon.

DORA dries the tears from her eyes.

**DORA**

But my love, my fair one, you are in the Promised Land. In Jerusalem. In Zion.

**KAFKA**

There is only one place for me. All my life I have been on the path to the Promised Land.

On the Mountain of Death Moses saw, (hesitates).

Do you know why he did not enter the physical earthbound Promised Land?

DORA shakes her head 'no'.

**KAFKA**

Not because his life was too short, but because it was a human life.

For me there is only one Promised Land.

**INT CLOSE SHOT FACE SANITARIUM KAFKA DAY JUNE 1924**

**KAFKA'S** eyes are fixed in a deathlike gaze. **CAMERA RAISES**, revealing **KAFKA'S** body, which is covered to the neck in a white garment. He lies in his coffin like bed. **CAMERA RAISES** even further, revealing thousands of lilacs, peonies, columbines and scarlet hawthorns which surround his bed. **KAFKA** holds a bright red apple in his hand.

**PAN** across the room. Light flutters throughout the sanitarium, at first covering the gray ceiling, then exposing its drabness. Reflections of clouds and blue skies intensely fill the ceiling, and then disappear. Light penetrates through once again and swallows the grayness of the ceiling.

**KAFKA (VO)**

Go over.

The fabulous—over—there

Cross over  
into Promised Lands.

The words of the wise are parables  
to guide our everyday lives.

That which is not knowable  
you will not know.

The Tree of Knowledge  
The Tree of Life  
and the Tree of Death.

**What is knowable  
know.**

**CAMERA focuses on a MEDIUM SHOT of KAFKA lying in his coffin like bed. KAFKA's hand, holding the shiny red apple, slowly moves to his mouth. He takes a bite out of the apple, chewing slowly, savoring the taste. KAFKA's hand moves back over his chest. KAFKA smiles.**

**KAFKA's Point of View: Light gradually intensifies until it becomes blinding. A slow darkening, a linear shadow, moves downward, as the coffin is closing.**

**MEDIUM SHOT OF KAFKA. His eyes close. We hear thumping sounds of earth on wood as the grave is being filled, shovelful by shovelful, matching the rhythm of a heartbeat.**

**KAFKA (VO)**

**(the simultaneous chanting of the Mourner's Kaddish, a Hebrew prayer, is blended with the English interpretation.)**

**The beginning of understanding  
The wish to die**

**This life—unbearable  
Another—unattainable.**

**Leaving Eden. Paradise  
Life in this world  
is unavoidable.**

**Eternal repetition  
makes it possible  
that we may  
in fact  
be in Paradise.**

**Whether we know it  
here  
or not.**

**EXT AERIAL SHOT ATLANTIC OCEAN DAY**

**We move West Along the Atlantic Ocean, revealing its tremendous power.**

**KAFKA (VO) (we hear the chanting of the Hebrew  
funeral service simultaneously with its English translation)**

**God is a perfect being  
who dare say  
why this one  
and why this day.**

**God says and does**

**and Mercy shows.**

**Even Isaac,  
on the alter, like a lamb.  
In the end,  
Isaac was not slain.**

**Hear our prayer.  
Fulfill your plan.**

**KAFKA (cont.)**

**If one lives one a day  
or a thousand years  
what is the gain?**

**In the end  
it will be  
as if  
they had never been.**

**We bless the True Judge  
Lord of Death  
Lord of Life.**

**A JACKDAW (Blackbird. In Czech, a Kafka.) flies toward the New York harbor. The JACKDAW circles the Statue of Liberty, who holds the torch in one hand, and a sword in the other. Lady Liberty moves the sword, revolving it once around her head.**

**EXT FULL SHOT BASE STATUE OF LIBERTY KAFKA'S FUNERAL DAY.**

**PAN the backs of the crowd attending the funeral. They wear the European dress of Prague in the 1920's GOETHE, the FAUSTIAN creator, attends the funeral wearing only his stylish 18th century hat, boots and underpants. Faust's coal black standard POODLE sits next to GOETHE.**

**KAFKA stands alone. He turns and faces the camera. He wears the traditional garb of a Belzer Chassidic Jew: the broad black felt hat, shiny black silk jacket, white shirt buttoned to the neck, no tie, beard, and sidelocks. His beard is wispy.**

**CLOSE IN on KAFKA'S FACE.**

**RABBI KAFKA (VO)**

**Dearly beloved.  
We are gathered here today to wed—**

**CLOSE IN on RABBI KAFKA's face even further. He blushes. We hear the sound of glass falling and smashing. RABBI KAFKA looks down at the glass. He looks up again.**

**CROWD**

**Mazel Tov. Mazel Tov.**

**RABBI KAFKA**

**To—To  
Lay to rest. Today  
Franz Amshel Kafka  
The first,  
The most typical  
Modern Western Jew.  
My—ah  
This man's life  
is an end and  
a beginning.**

**GOETHE** walks over to **RABBI KAFKA** with **FAUST'S POODLE** on a leash. **KAFKA** unleashes the **POODLE**. The **POODLE** looks up at **KAFKA**.

**GOETHE**

**I shall be brief.**

The **CROWD** titters.

**GOETHE** looks towards the open grave.

**GOETHE**

**The most typical Western man.**

**GOETHE** looks at **RABBI KAFKA**.

**GOETHE**

**When your brother Soren Kierkegaard died,  
The Age of the Dominant Father  
Passed away.**

**Your life marks  
The New Age,  
The Age  
of the Rebellious Son.**

**GOETHE** steps back into the **CROWD**. The **POODLE** remains with the **RABBI KAFKA**.

**RABBI KAFKA**(*chanting in HEBREW with  
simultaneous ENGLISH translation.*)  
**God compassionate God.**

**who leads us to our final rest.**

**May his soul find shelter  
beneath the tree of life.**

**May he rest in peace**

**as we say together.**

**Amen**

**The JACKDAW flies onto RABBI KAFKA'S shoulder. It alights.**

**JACKDAW**

**Kaka**

**Kafka.**

**Kafka.**

**So high.**

**So high.**

**Ka Ka Ka**

**A LONG SHOT of LADY LIBERTY, holding her torch and sword.**

**EXT LONG SHOT MANHATTAN LADY LIBERTY'S (POV) DAY**

**Waves of traffic flow over to Manhattan. Cars stop simultaneously, as if they are controlled by one brake.**

**EXT LONG SHOT MANHATTAN LADY LIBERTY'S (POV) NIGHT**

**Headlights of waves of traffic flowing towards Manhattan merge into one light.**

**EXT FULL SHOT RABBI KAFKA STREETS OF MANHATTAN EARLY MORNING**

**The streets are empty. RABBI KAFKA walks as if he is tourist. RABBI KAFKA looks around, his head straining to see the tops of the buildings. His camera eyes rove everywhere, taking all the sights in. The POODLE, on a leash, strides along with him.**

**Then on the same streets, the foot and car gridlock. RABBI KAFKA, who bumps from person to person, disrupts the orchestrated chaos of movement, where no one collides. He is still taking in all of the sights.**

**RABBI KAFKA moves along. he bumps into a group of CHASSIDIC JEWS, whom he attempts to greet, but they look at him as if he is an alien.**

**RABBI KAFKA falls behind the CHASSIDIM. A contingency of HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS turns around the corner. The CHEERLEADERS are wearing mini-mini skirts and Rameses High School monogrammed tops embossed on a gold pyramid.**

**The CHASSIDIM slide over towards the wall of the building so they do not have to walk between the women. The CHEERLEADERS slow down and gawk at the CHASSIDIM, whose gazes are fixed ahead. RABBI KAFKA, at the end of the CHASSIDIM, winks at each of the CHEERLEADERS, who then squeal with delight and smile back at him. RABBI KAFKA looks down at their feet. They all wear tennis shoes**



**RABBI KAFKA**

Streetwalkers?

Each CHEERLEADER steps aside for him. A stunningly beautiful WOMAN, an older version of MILENA, (*played by the same actress*) with frosted hair and white dress, carrying a white briefcase, walks rapidly towards RABBI KAFKA. She expects him to yield ground. She gets caught by KAFKA and the POODLE, captive in the leash.

**RABBI KAFKA**

I'm lost!

**WOMAN**

I'm late!

**RABBI KAFKA** (*pleading*)

Really? Where am I?

The WOMAN looks around, as if she is caught and in need of the assistance of a police officer.

**RABBI KAFKA**

Perhaps we could-

**WOMAN** (*interrupting*)

I thought your kind were not allowed to talk-to look at woman.

**RABBI KAFKA**

I'm different.

**WOMAN**

I'll say.

**RABBI KAFKA** (*shy, begging*)

Be so good... kind. Walk with me.

The WOMAN pulls extremely close to RABBI KAFKA'S face.

**WOMAN**

Are you a Duke  
with a famous name?

A broad American  
with a Red Indian figure?

You have never even seen the Seven Seas

Or voyaged on them, wherever they may be.

So why, pray, should a pretty girl like me  
go anywhere with you?

**RABBI KAFKA**, hurt and rejected, drops the leash. The **WOMAN** walks away, her head turns towards **RABBI KAFKA**.

**RABBI KAFKA**

I see no limousine  
to whisk you away.

No gentle man  
escorting you in the half circle of his arm  
or uttering blessings on your head.

Your breasts are... well  
but your thighs and hips.

Your smile... thin lipped, inviting danger,  
but only from time to time.

**RABBI KAFKA** shrugs.

You had better go your way  
as I go mine.

**PEOPLE** gather around and stare. The **WOMAN**, walking away, head turned towards **RABBI KAFKA**, walks into a **PASSERBY**.

**OPTIONAL SCENE**

**EXT MEDIUM SHOT 42ND STREET RABBI KAFKA NIGHT**

**RABBI KAFKA** turns the corner onto Broadway and 42nd St. He stops in the front of marquis of porno movies. He steps into the doorway of a shop with **XXX** in the window and a sign, "*Private Booths.*"

**RABBI KAFKA**

America

**RABBI KAFKA** takes a deep breath and enters.

**OPTIONAL SCENE**

**INT MEDIUM SHOT PORNO THEATER RABBI KAFKA NIGHT**

**RABBI KAFKA** walks between rows of booths advertising scenes. He picks his booth. The promotion for the booth features a strikingly attractive platinum blonde with pointed breasts that defy gravity.

**RABBI KAFKA** enters the booth with the **POODLE**.

The **POODLE** sits looking up at the screen. **RABBI KAFKA** places four quarters into the machine. The film begins. Light shines on his face and his eyes grow wide. **RABBI KAFKA** moans.

#### OPTIONAL SCENE

**EXT MEDIUM SHOT PORNO THEATER RABBI KAFKA NIGHT**

**RABBI KAFKA** exist the theater. he holds an apple with a bite into it. **RABBI KAFKA** takes a deep breath.

**RABBI KAFKA**

Confessionals.

A **PROSTITUTE**, a Gypsy woman, approaches **RABBI KAFKA**. Her hair is down and flowing in the wind. Waves of alluring black and gray darkness. Her all black dress reveals every curve and cleavage of her perfect body. Her face is heavily made up with multicolored makeup. She is the **BELZER REBBETZIN** as **PROSTITUTE**. The same actress plays them.

**EXT FULL SHOT 42ND ST. RABBI KAFKA/ PROSTITUTE DAY**

**RABBI KAFKA** and the **PROSTITUTE** walk down the street. **RABBI KAFKA** carries two full bags in each hand. The **PROSTITUTE** holds his arm. **RABBI KAFKA** continues to look around like a tourist.

**PROSTITUTE** (intimately

Franz Amschel Kafka, watch where you are going. Look ahead! Stop gazing at everyone. Only whores try to make eye contact. Look straight ahead or you will be mugged!

**RABBI KAFKA** bows and tips his hat. The **PROSTITUTE** takes out a long pair of scissors. **RABBI KAFKA** flings his black hat into the wind. It arcs like a boomerang and lands back on his head. The **PROSTITUTE** caresses his face and cuts off his side locks. A number of people stop, including a Chassid. **RABBI KAFKA** offers the side curls to the Chassid. The Chassid slaps him. **RABBI KAFKA** stands still, tears falling down his cheeks. The Chassid slaps him again on the other cheek. The **PROSTITUTE** reaches toward the Chassid to throttle him, and he flees.

**RABBI KAFKA** undresses as the **PROSTITUTE** weaves his sidelocks into a headband. **RABBI KAFKA** removes his shirt but leaves on the *tallit* (*tah-leet: vestment under garment with fringes.*) She pulls items out of the bag. She replaces his pants with leather leggings. She paints his face with makeup like an Indian warrior. With great ceremony she takes out a Chief's headdress from her Cairo Emporium shopping bag.

**RABBI KAFKA**, now **CHIEF KAFKA**, bows and reaches into the bag. He pulls out leather boots.

## **PROSTITUTE**

**Franz, darling, I'm not sure about the boots. Are you a cowboy or an Indian?**

**CHIEF KAFKA smiles and steps into the black, gray and white snakeskin cowboy boots. He attaches spurs.**

**CHIEF KAFKA and the PROSTITUTE walk through the street where a white horse with reins but no saddle is waiting for him. CHIEF KAFKA leaves the PROSTITUTE with a lingering full mouth kiss. He hands her the leash and his POODLE. He mounts the HORSE.**

**CHIEF KAFKA sees the WOMAN he stopped the day before. She stands on the corner, waving, as if she were trying to hail a cab. A cab stops. She waves him on. It is MILENA, then it is FELICE.**

**CHIEF KAFKA**

**Felice, Felice.**

**The WOMAN continues to wave. Another cab stops. She ignores the cab, waving it on. It drives away. CHIEF KAFKA sees MILENA again. The older MILENA, in white.**

**CHIEF KAFKA**

**Milena, Milena.**

**The WOMAN continues to wave. CHIEF KAFKA gallops down the street, leaning towards the WOMAN. She reaches out as CHIEF KAFKA pulls her onto the horse with one smooth motion. It is MILENA. He gallops down the street.**

**CHIEF KAFKA**

**Milena.  
I am a Red Indian.  
Riding Lightning  
swifter than the wind.**

**The WOMAN embraces CHIEF KAFKA from behind as they pick up speed and head towards the other end of the block.**

**EXT FULL SHOT RIVERBANK CHIEF KAFKA/MILENA DAY**

**CHIEF KAFKA and MILENA ride West on a trail down a riverbank. The riverbank is lined with apple trees as far as the eye can see.**

**EXT FULL SHOT HEARTLAND WHEAT FIELDS CHIEF KAFKA/MILENA DAY.**

**CHIEF KAFKA kicks off his spurs as the two are pursued full speed by a regiment of cavalry. MILENA fades away. Shots are fired at CHIEF KAFKA from behind.**

**EXT FULL SHOT DESERT CHIEF RABBI KAFKA DAY**

The cavalry is still in pursuit. CHIEF KAFKA drops the horse's reins, which fade away. They ride past a sign that says "KALIFORNIA". He loses the cavalry and stops at a stream. He and the horse drink. CHIEF KAFKA undresses and jumps into the stream. His head emerges.

CHIEF KAFKA (in Hebrew, with English subtitles)

We acknowledge the single One—author of our lives—who commands us to be holy and to be immersed in Living Waters. He then speaks in English.

Forty years, and now, the Promised Land.

CHIEF KAFKA remounts his horse and rides through the desert until he reaches a ridge skirting the Pacific Coast. He rides, ocean to his left, picking up speed, until the horses head and neck fade away. The momentum of CHIEF KAFKA's running body pushes him up a steep flight of stairs.

INT FULL SHOT PRAGUE, CZECH GYPSY SYNAGOGUE KAFKA DAY 1896

#### KAFKA'S BAR MITZVAH

KAFKA enters dressed like a thirteen-year-old. Light pours in from behind, making him look like a shadow. Entering the dark synagogue, after being in the intense sunlight, his vision blurs. KAFKA walks up to the front of the synagogue, as one invisible, and ascends the raised platform, or Bimah, where the Torah scrolls are kept. Only the Gypsy PROSTITUTE and MILENA notice KAFKA's entrance. They are dressed as though for a funeral.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH, facing the congregation, is reading from the scroll the first chapter of Genesis in Hebrew with cantillation.

KAFKA is late for his own Bar Mitzvah. He takes a seat on the bimah, facing the congregation.

RABBI BAR MITZVAH continues reading. We see the congregation from the rear. Slow PAN towards the bimah. KAFKA's family watches stiffly and attentively, trying to look interested.

MEDIUM SHOT of RABBI BAR MITZVAH, ELDERS, and SEXTON in formal Sabbath attire and black and white striped prayer shawls.

KAFKA yawns so loudly that the service momentarily stops. KAFKA blushes.

CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA's slender fingers following the text.

KAFKA (Genesis 2:16, simultaneously translating the  
RABBI's Hebrew into English)

And God said, saying, singing

**You may eat from every Tree of the Garden**

**CLOSE SHOT of MILENA. She watches RABBI BAR MITZVAH read, and follows in translation.**

**MILENA (VO)**

**But from the Tree of Knowledge  
of Good and Evil  
You may not eat.**

**CLOSE SHOT of OTTLA, who seems to understand the reading.**

**OTTLA (VO)**

**For on the day you eat it  
you will definitely die!**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH continues chanting into chapter three of Genesis. Most people gaze at the RABBI a bit dazed. They do not understand a word of the reading.**

**KAFKA raises his Bible in front of his mouth, but is able to stifle his yawn.**

**KAFKA (Genesis 3:4, translating the RABBI's  
Hebrew into English)**

**You will not die.  
Really.  
God knows  
on that very day  
your eyes will be open.**

**KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW MEDIUM SHOT OF HERMANN KAFKA.**

**HERMANN AND KAFKA**

**You will be like God.  
Knowing Good and Evil.**

**The RABBI drones on through the fifth, sixth, and a seventh chapter of Genesis as the camera explores the symbols of the synagogue. The Ten Commandments, the rich blue velvet ark cover, and the Eternal light. Beneath the light is engraved "Know before whom you stand."**

**Camera explores the faces of the congregants and guests, whose eyes are glazing over. Random congregants eyes are beginning to close. One leans his head back and the camera explores that point of view, panning the magnificent high vaulted ceiling of the Old-New Synagogue.**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH finishes the reading and begins his sermon.**

**RABBI (dramatically)**

**One law.  
A simple law.**

**A dietary law.**

**Don't eat.  
The apple.**

**And they eat!**

**KAFKA is gently shaking his head 'no'.**

**KAFKA's fingers caress a velvet bag containing his Bar Mitzvah *tefillin* (*The law stipulates that they are not to be worn, or even touched, on the Sabbath.*).**

**RABBI (almost shouting)  
Beasts and dogs eat whatever they come upon.  
Like a dog returning to sniff its vomit,  
we return to our sins.  
Sneaky children always disobey.**

**KAFKA strenuously shakes his head no. He secrets his *tefillin* out of their velvet pouch. HERMANN glares at his son in warning. The congregation is noticing KAFKA's reaction to RABBI BAR MITZVAH's sermon.**

**RABBI  
The serpent wins and Adam sins;  
and he is banished from the Garden.**

**Close shot of KAFKA's arm bound to the post of the Ark. He has the head straps around his neck, like a hangman's noose, and is about to pull. The SHAMMES #1, who is the SEXTON, and the RABBI's right hand man, shouts.**

**SHAMMES  
Sabbath, Sabbath. Muktzah.**

**The RABBI turns toward KAFKA. KAFKA reddens, as if he was not aware of what he was doing.**

**RABBI (paternally)  
Franz, my boy. You know, never on the Sabbath.**

**KAFKA unbinds his arm and lays his head down.**

**For their disobedience  
they are banished from the Garden.**

**The flaming turning sword  
Angels of Destruction  
Guard the Garden of Eden.**

**So we would not touch  
The Tree of Life.**

**KAFKA** takes the two straps of the head tefillin around his neck and pulls them tightly, and begins to choke. All watch until they hear a chattering noise from the top of the Ark near the Eternal Light.

A business associate of **HERMANN KAFKA**, with no prayer shawl, whispers to his neighbor in the back of the congregation.

**BUSINESS ASSOCIATE**

We have our church mice (points)  
This must be the synagogue sable.

**MEDIUM SHOT** of **SABLE**. It has pale blue green lines following the pattern of a skunk on it's black, dusky body. At first glance it looks frightening, particularly the long neck and triangular face, which jut out almost horizontally. On the upper lip we see a row of long, hard, pale bristles and teeth.

**CLOSE SHOT** of mouth closed. The **SABLE** looks, harmless, cuddly. It observes the congregation with bright, unblinking eyes.

The **SHAMMES** has waited patiently for the return of the **SABLE**, and has prepared a stick on the side of the Ark. He takes a whack at the **SABLE**, trying to kill the beast. He misses, breaking the Eternal Light. Glass falls on the floor. **KAFKA** approaches from behind and grabs the board from the **SHAMMES**.

**KAFKA**

The Sabbath!

Everyone except **HERMANN** and **RABBI BAR MITZVAH** cheer. The **SABLE** disappears.

**KAFKA** approaches the reading desk and opens Isaiah to his prophetic Bar Mitzvah reading. Kafka's training was a ridiculous learning by rote of a song in a strange language. He is expected to sing with perfect pronunciation and melody. The melody had been beaten into his head by **RABBI BAR MITZVAH**. **KAFKA** begged to be taught the meaning of the verses, but was berated by **RABBI BAR MITZVAH** for his lack of Hebrew skills. **KAFKA** studied on his own, a translation of the verses. He wants to chant in the original and in translation, but **RABBI BAR MITZVAH** and his father forbid this.

**KAFKA** is about to start chanting the blessings, but decides instead to challenge the **RABBI** with an extemporaneous sermon.

**KAFKA (to RABBI)**

It is a Tree of Life  
To those who will grasp it  
touch it, take hold of it.

**KAFKA (to CONGREGATION)**

I understand the Fall  
Better than any man.

**CLOSE SHOT** OF **MILENA, PROSTITUTE, AND OTTLA**



**In the beginning, God is alone.  
She is lonely.**

**CLOSE SHOT OF JULIE.  
Tears are forming in her eyes.**

**It is not good,  
so she sings.**

**One flesh will be two  
In this, I will know you.**

**CLOSE SHOT OF PROSTITUTE who smiles.**

**Why lament  
this so called Fall?**

**KAFKA (cont.)**

**We are not exiled from Paradise  
because of a Fall.**

**But because of the Tree of Life.**

**CLOSE SHOT OF RABBI BAR MITZVAH, horrified.**

**A stroke of luck!**

**Had we not left,  
Paradise would have had to have been destroyed.**

**LONG SHOT OF HERMANN, JULIE, AND OTTLA, frozen.**

**God is a woman  
Not Ya-We  
but Ya-She.**

**God is a woman.  
Ya-She  
Knew  
She births us**

**KAFKA**

**Ya She  
She buries us.**

**CLOSE SHOT OF JULIE, frightened and confused.**

**Overlooking the Promised Land  
In the beginning of my end.**

**RABBI BAR MITZVAH, SHAMMES, AND CONGREGANTS** are aghast. They sit rigidly until the **SYNAGOGUE SABLE** reappears on the Ark, chirping, pleased with the sermon.

**KAFKA** begins to chant the blessings of the obligatory Bar Mitzvah prophetic reading, *Haftorah*. He looks up. Only a few people are following. He raises his eyes to the women's section, lowering his eyes when he notices an infatuated thirteen year old staring. At the other side of the women's section is the **PROSTITUTE**, who smiles and slowly begins to pull at the fingers of her black gloves. White gloved **MILENA** notices and smiles at **KAFKA**. **KAFKA** is distracted. He chants verses 5-14 of Isaiah, chapter 42.

Continuing, defiant, **KAFKA** chants the translation with cantillation.

For a long time  
I have kept Silent

I cry out  
A woman in labor.

The congregation is startled into awareness. The **SABLE** leaps from the Ark and scampers to the women's section. Some **WOMEN** scream.

A number of them stand on their seats, clutching their furs.

The **PROSTITUTE** sits calmly. She removes the gloves from her hands. She holds them up for **KAFKA** to see. and then drops them at her feet.

**KAFKA** returns to the drone of his chanting. Eyes of congregants glaze over again.

As **KAFKA** chants, another **KAFKA** splits away and steps back from the **CHANTING KAFKA**.

The **SYNAGOGUE SABLE** again darts from the bimah to the women's section. **KAFKA** follows and crawls on his knees to the gloves.

**CLOSE SHOT OF PROSTITUTE'S FACE.**

She watches the **CHANTING KAFKA**. She rises slightly and takes a deep breath. Her eyes reflect the beginnings of passion.

**KAFKA** chants Isaiah 43: 1-2

**CLOSE SHOT** of the **PROSTITUTE** closing here eyes and quietly moaning.

**KAFKA** chants Isaiah 43: 3 and 4

**CLOSE SHOT** of **PROSTITUTE'S** lips parting and her mouth opening in the beginnings of ecstasy.

**KAFKA** chants Isaiah 43: 5-8

The CHANTING KAFKA looks at the PROSTITUTE and licks his lips. He becomes disoriented and loses his place for a moment.

CLOSE SHOT FACE OF PROSTITUTE, whose mouth opens.  
KAFKA finishes chanting his Haftorah. Isaiah 43: 10, with the traditional melodic flourish.

(OS) the LOUD, PASSIONATE CRY OF THE PROSTITUTE.

The women in their section assume the SYNAGOGUE SABLE has returned. One WOMAN screams.

WOMAN

The black beast is back!

WOMEN one at a time stand on their chairs. The PROSTITUTE is glowing.

KAFKA lifts his hand, which is holding a black glove. The service continues, led by the RABBI.

Slowly raising his hand, KAFKA stares at the PROSTITUTE, and slowly, sensuously, slips his fingers into her black glove.

INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KAFKA'S FAMILY APT., PRAGUE KAFKA DAY 1912

KAFKA'S face is covered, cowboy style, by a shiny black Chassidic hat with a broad brim. The black straps of the head *tefillin* criss cross KAFKA'S neck.

CAMERA RAISES, showing all of KAFKA wearing a shiny silk Chassidic caftan, which lifts dramatically around the distended belly. A woven black belt (gartel) wrapped many times around the waist tightly creates sections of a hardened shell. The overall effect is of a giant black dung beetle. A human being malnourished or pregnant.

In his left hand, KAFKA holds a sharp sword. The right hand rests on the left in the manner of a pious Jew. The right hand grows one bristle, and then another.

On the night table, next to KAFKA's bed, is a picture of the PROSTITUTE. She is wearing a fur sable cap and stole, and is holding out to the viewer a huge muff into which the whole of her forearm has vanished. Her hand clutches a black glove.

The POODLE sits still as a stuffed animal in the corner.

CLOSE SHOT FROM ABOVE: the hat covers KAFKA'S FACE. KAFKA slowly tilts his head backwards.. The lifting hat reveals the black face of KAFKA transformed into a beetle with wispy black Chassidic beard and side curls. KAFKA wears his head *tefillin*.

LONG SHOT OF THE DOOR OF KAFKA'S BEDROOM.

CAMERA CLOSES IN on the turning of the brass knob, which reflects the room behind.

JULIE (OS)

**It's locked again. Franz, Franz, what are you doing?**

**MEDIUM SHOT OF KAFKA'S HAND** slowly revolving the sword one time in the air, towards his head.

**CLOSE SHOT FROM ABOVE OF KAFKA'S NECK.** He cuts his black neck from ear to ear. Mucus and ooze bleed from the insect neck. The hat tilts down. Blood flows from his neck, staining the sheets and filling the bed. Sounds of tubercular coughing. **CLOSE SHOT OF DOOR KNOB.** The knob turns, the room reflected in the knob.

**OTTLA (OS)**

**Franz... Amschel, are you all right?**

**CLOSE SHOT OF KAFKA'S FACE.** KAFKA tilts his head back. Awakening, he tries to answer. His antennae are side curls and his wispy, thin, Indian beard now covers a swarthy human face. KAFKA tries to whisper again and blood flows from his mouth.

**KAFKA**

**Ottla!**

**Blood flows from his mouth and covers the white pillow around his head.**

**KAFKA** turns his head towards the door. The knocking continues. **HERMANN KAFKA,** looking tall, strong, and broad, waits outside the door.

**HERMANN (OS)**

**Franz, up.**

**KAFKA** sits up.

**This minute. Out of bed.**

**KAFKA** stands.

**I demand it.**

**KAFKA** falls on the floor and scuttles to the door. He opens the door. **OTTLA** carries **KAFKA** back to the bed.

**OTTLA**

**Let him sleep. We will wake him later.**

**INT FULL SHOT DINING ROOM FAMILY NIGHT**

**The table is set for the Sabbath meal. KAFKA** is dressed in his silk Chassidic outfit. He has sprouted a few more bristles on his hands. His sidelock antennae raise in the direction of **HERMANN.**

**HERMANN KAFKA** sits in an armchair reading the paper. **HERMANN** shakes his head.

**HERMANN**

*Meshuga. Meshuga.*

He leafs through the paper.

**HERMANN**

If its not the Czechs, its the Germans.  
If its not the Germans, its the Jews.

**OTTLA**

The Jews?

She is ignored.

**HERMANN** (turning the pages)

Going to be a war. Goddamnit. Maybe a worldwide war.  
Shit heads.  
And Jews fighting Jews.

**KAFKA** cringes at **HERMANN'S** opinions.

**JULIE**

So good to see you up.  
You must eat.  
We have prepared a Sabbath feast.  
And it's just for you

**OTTLA**

My brother the Rabbi

**JULIE**

A Rabbi. A lawyer. A doctor of the soul.

**HERMANN**

My son the penitent.  
Rabbi, make the blessings.

**KAFKA** blushes and hesitates. He tries to stand, but his insect thin legs are wobbly and give way and he falls back into his chair.

**HERMANN** (imperiously)

Stand.

**KAFKA** tries again. He falls and sits.

**KAFKA**

Some Jews have the custom of saying the blessing seated.

**HERMANN**

**Tradition. In this house, we stand.**

**He takes the Kiddush cup from KAFKA. OTTLA and JULIE stand. KAFKA tries again and cannot.**

**KAFKA**

**I—**

**HERMANN**

**I order you to—**

**OTTLA looks imploringly at HERMANN.**

**Not to be so obedient.**

**KAFKA turns toward his room.**

**HERMANN**

**Don't even think of it.**

**KAFKA**

**I must go write.**

**KAFKA looks at his right hand, which is now insect-like, and looks like a quill pen.**

**HERMANN**

**You know what your problem is?**

**KAFKA (interrupting)**

**Did you read my story?**

**HERMANN**

**You problem is your stories.  
When are you going to start living?  
In Judaism there are no monks.**

**KAFKA**

**I—work—must be—alone.**

**HERMANN**

**It is not good for a man to be alone.  
You work—but thirty years old and not married.**

Still living at home. Grow up. Move out. Of course  
You'd probably marry one of your shiksas or  
prostitutes, so you had better stay.

KAFKA, pensive, about to speak, is interrupted by HERMANN, who is tapping one finger  
on his newspaper.

HERMANN

*Luftmensch.*  
If I had your worries.  
And the things you write about.  
And what have you been paid?  
Nothing!  
Your entire life is a song and dance  
about Nothing!

JULIE

That's not fair.

KAFKA looks toward his mother in hope.

JULIE

Writing is Franz's past time

KAFKA is crushed.

KAFKA (to HERMANN)

I write only for you.

He puts his head down in his arms. One arm is human, the other is a dung beetle's.

JULIE enters from the kitchen with two perfectly roasted chickens, tzimmis, potatoes, and  
green beans. OTTLA follows, carrying a dish for KAFKA. HERMANN is served first.  
KAFKA is served raw lettuce.

HERMANN

The stuff on Shabbos. Meat on Shabbos.  
A Jew eats meat.

KAFKA

I—

HERMANN

Never mind. Eat first. Talk later.

**HERMANN eats everything fast, hot, and in big mouthfuls. OTTLA eats defiantly slow, laying her fork down with every mouthful. JULIE tries to eat daintily, but is in too much of a hurry.**

**OTTLA**

**Franz, you are writing. This time. What is it about?**

**KAFKA**

**The family.**

**OTTLA**

**Someday Franz will be a great writer. I'll bet...  
world famous.**

**KAFKA frowns.**

**KAFKA (to HERMANN)**

**Did you read—?**

**HERMANN holds the chicken bone, conducting.**

**HERMANN**

**Eat. Eat. Eat. And don't crack your bone with your teeth like a dog.**

**The POODLE in the corner growls. The ladies eat daintily. HERMANN bites off the end of the bone and loudly sucks the marrow.**

**KAFKA**

**The challah**

**HERMANN picks up the loaf with his greasy hand. KAFKA cringes. HERMANN moves the loaf in front of KAFKA.**

**HERMANN**

**Rabbi, the blessing.**

**KAFKA draws the loaf to himself.**

**HERMANN'S POINT OF VIEW. KAFKA picks up a knife to cut the challah. JULIE and OTTLA hold their breath.**

**HERMANN watches closely, judgementally. KAFKA'S human hand is shaking.**

**HERMANN**

**Straight. Straight.**



**KAFKA'S knife slips and cuts the end of his insect appendage.**

**HERMANN**

**Disgusting!**

**HERMANN leaves the table and goes back to the armchair**

**Now that HERMANN is gone, KAFKA begins to eat. He puts a piece of the lettuce on a fork, eats, and then lays the fork down. He follows the Fletcher method of chewing all food 100 times**

**As KAFKA eats, we see HERMANN cutting his finger nails, cleaning his ears, sniffing the ear wax, and finally farting, taking a deep breath and then smiling, content.**

**JULIE enters with a bowlful of shiny red apples. OTTLA waits until KAFKA finishes eating**

**KAFKA**  
*(to OTTLA)*

**The story- I have- a beginning.**

**How is it going?**

**KAFKA**

**It's- going.**

**He looks around.**

**OTTLA**

**Why not make him a caterpillar?**

**KAFKA is delighted.**

**KAFKA**

**Yes, a caterpillar  
One day a grotesque  
pup  
the next  
alights  
and flies away.**

**There is a loud KNOCK on the front door. KAFKA falls out of his chair.**

**The POODLE barks.**

**HERMANN**

**Who would call so late? Must be Nata Samal-  
your twin vermin. And he wants us to give him a job!**

**NATAL SAMAL enters. He is bent, showing humbleness. His head is down. He slowly lifts his head; it has changed since the funeral. NATA has a black crustaceans face with light blue human eyes. His curves suggest a giant dung beetle. NATA is still somehow handsome. His antennae hang in ringlets down to his shoulders. As NATA walks towards KAFKA, his antennae beginning to uncurl, then rise, and then stand straight up. KAFKA'S antennae respond in kind. Instead of shaking hands, their antennae intertwine. NATA sits. He hands KAFKA an apple. JULIE and OTTLA daintily peel and eat. HERMANN is eating apple after apple, including the core. He watches KAFKA and NATA. OTTLA glances at NATA a few times, attracted and repelled.**

**OTTLA**

**Why do you look-dress-so different?**

**NATA, as CHASSIDIM are requires, attempts not to look at OTTLA. He is attracted and cannot avert his eyes.**

**HERMANN**

*(from behind his paper)*

**To embarrass his father.**

**NATA**

**To honor my father  
and grandfather and  
grandfather's father back to Abraham, our  
father.**

**OTTLA**

**Did Abraham dress- like- this?**

**NATA**

*(staring at OTTLA, flirting)*

**Well, he probably wore a turban.**

**KAFKA**

*(with a loving smile)*

**Nata is Chassid. A Belzer Chassid.**

**OTTLA**

**Bells. I see no Bells.**

**HERMANN**

**Helz Belz.**

**NATA**

**Belz- a one day journey- into a different world.**

**The capital of Chassidism.**

**OTTLA**

**Chassidism?**

**NATA**

**Ask your mother. She is a descendent of the spiritual grandfather of the movement.**

**OTTLA is intrigued. JULIE shrugs.**

**HERMANN**

**So what?**

**OTTLA**

**So what is Chassidism?**

**NATA**

**Experiencing God, enjoying living. Being-living-Judaism. Kabbalah.**

**Uh, Kabbalah. Kabbalah.  
You two going to make a Golem?  
A Frankenstein?  
Golems!**

**OTTLA**

**Tell me more.**

**KAFKA is excited.**

**KAFKA**

**All matter is spirit.  
Full of divine sparks  
and can be lifted up(*gesturing to God*) to the Single One.**

**HERMANN**

**You two shmucks are the only single Ones.  
Get married.**

**OTTLA**

**I never knew Judaism had a spiritual mystical tradition.**

**KAFKA and NATA roll their eyes at one another.**

**HERMANN**

**Chassidim is dead. Belz is a graveyard.**

**NATA**

**We believe in transmigration of souls!  
Reincarnation!**

**OTTLA reacts with surprise and fascination.**

**OTTLA**

**You mean like the Hindus?**

**NATA**

**Yes and more. The soul can come back as a rock  
or water or a plant.**

**HERMANN**

**You two will come back as turds.**

**NATA**

**We have saints.**

**OTTLA**

**Like the Christians?**

**NATA**

**Like you- your lineage- your mother-  
the great Rabbi of Prague- Maharal.**

**OTTLA**

**I hear Chassidim have funny attitude towards  
their women- you know, holes in sheets during- You  
know.**

**NATA**

**The one thing every Jew knows about  
Chassidim.**

**And it is untrue. Chassidim is liberating. Kabbalah  
teaches that no man should be without a woman, no  
woman without a man.**

**KAFKA**

**And we have male and female within ourselves,  
like God!**

**HERMANN**

**Not in my house! Don't mention the theory of the queer  
in this house.**

**KAFKA has a coughing fit.**

**HERMANN**

**You sound like your ass  
assistant at work.**

**NATA**

**Who?**

**HERMANN**

**That Fag with T.B.  
Sooner he dies the better.  
Flea infested dog.**

**KAFKA has another coughing fit.**

**JULIE**

**Queer?**

**HERMANN**

**You know- the one who's going to blow his brains out.  
He converted to Christianity.**

**Winbe- something- Weininger.**

**KAFKA**

**I did not know you knew-**

**HERMANN**

**Know? Who can not know? In the streets, in my shop,  
it has come up. Bye Bye sexuality.**

**He laughs at his own joke.**

**NATA**

**His theories may be valid. The kabbal-**

**HERMANN**

**Queers. He-he's. She-she's.**

**NATA AND KAFKA**

**He-he's and she-she's?**

**HERMANN**

**You know. Queers. Lesbians. But don't tell me I am a  
He-She. I am a man. A man!**

**KAFKA**

**Father- Understand. Nata speaks of Taoism. Yin and  
Yang. Mystical balance and equality.**

**NATA  
(to OTTLA  
)**

**We put women on a pedestal-in the synagogue-  
above us- in the women's' section- for you are  
spiritually loftier than we.**

**HERMANN**

**Pigshit. Listen. There are only two types of women.  
Mothers (*he points to JULIE*) And whores.**

**OTTLA**

**Oh really father? And what if the mother plays the  
whore?**

**HERMANN and JULIE are appalled at OTTLA'S defiance.**

**HERMANN**

**Enough. Enough. End of discussion. The Ten  
Commandments. The Law prevents women from playing  
the whore.**

**KAFKA**

**Well, we know why in Judaism religion is passed  
through the Mother.**

**JULIE**

**Why?**

**KAFKA**

Why? We all know who are mothers are. Fathers-

He looks down.

We can not be so sure.

HERMANN lowers his paper. He glares at KAFKA and then covers his face.

NATA starts a simple Chassidic melody.

A black BEETLE scurries across the table

**JULIE**

Oh my God. Hermann.

HERMANN gets up and raises hi foot over the beetle.

**BEETLE (POV):** The foot is a giant shadow- a fairytale-sized foot. The CAMERA EXPLORES KAFKA'S and NATA'S faces as they are covered by the shadow when the foot drops

**INT CLOSE SHOT FOOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE, GALACIA CHASSIDIM DAY**

The black shadow falls to a foot stomping. BEETLES on the floor scamper into the wall.

Loud SOUND of STOMP. Another foot stomps on the ground. Another loud SOUND of STOMP.

CAMERA RAISE to a hundred hands going and forming a circle. Two hundred feet are stomping, slowly at first and then faster and faster. These dancers form an inner circle. Hundreds of other CHASSIDIM, all dressed alike, like their REBBE, form an outer circle. KAFKA and NATA are dressed in black, exactly like the other CHASSIDIM. The outer circle DANCERS have their arms around one another's necks. A dance may last an hour or a day into exhaustion and then ecstasy. All the DANCERS' hands are joined as they exit.

**EXT FULL SHOT BELZ DANCERS' NIGHT**

The small village of Belz has 3000 inhabitants. One half are Jews. The village is to the Chassidim as Rome is to the Catholics. We see dirt and squalor. Belz is known for its synagogue, House of Study, and Rabbinic parsonage. These three buildings enclose the square. The DANCERS move under the REBBE'S window. The REBBE exits the parsonage and is danced back to the synagogue.

**INT FULL SHOT SYNAGOGUE DANCERS NIGHT**

The REBBE OF BELZ is in the center of the revolving, dancing circle. The circle closes to within eight feet of the REBBE. CHASSIDIM push one another. KAFKA and NATA are pushed into the center circle. The REBBE takes off his gartel and whips NATA. KAFKA

watches, frozen. NATA smiles. The REBBE turns to KAFKA and stares at him with his good eye.

**REBBE**

You will be my guests on Shabbos.

**INT FULL SHOT REBBE'S HOME REBBE/ KAFKA GROUP NIGHT**

The REBBE'S home is opulent and elegant—including real crystal chandeliers. The REBBE'S wife and daughter, DEBORAH (DORA), following Chassidic custom, sit at a separate table. KAFKA can see DEBORAH, in long braids, between the two Shabbos candles. She radiates warmth, purity, and holiness. NATA nudges KAFKA. Not only is it not polite to stare here, it is forbidden.

KAFKA takes a deep breath.

**KAFKA (VO)**

The purity of the air of Eden.  
Before the Fall.

DEBORAH sneaks another glance at KAFKA and quickly takes a bite from an apple. She smiles.

**INT FULL SHOT HOUSE OF STUDY GROUP DAY**

KAFKA and NATA stand by their study podiums. The House of Study is filled with hundreds of scholars, all speaking loudly to be heard. Gesticulations and thumbs moving up and down—up for a question, down for an answer accompany Talmudic arguments. The chanting also follows this pattern.

**KAFKA**

She smiled—at me.

**NATA**

She has been promised since age three. It is not within...

**KAFKA**

I love her.

**NATA**

And I.

**KAFKA**

You don't understand. I want to marry her.

**NATA**

Even if she were not engaged—not you—I—she will marry only a pious Jew.



**KAFKA**

**I have returned. I'm a Ba'al Tshuva.**

**NATA**

**More is required.**

**KAFKA**

**More?**

**NATA**

**The Rebbe's daughter will marry a scholar. A rabbi.**

**KAFKA**

**So I will be a rabbi**

**NATA**

**Only after years of study.**

**KAFKA**

**Let us begin.**

**NATA**

**Where?**

**KAFKA**

**Genesis. In the beginning.**

**NATA**

**No. Mishna. This is what today's class will be on. *Betzah***

***Shnoida be Yom Tov*. An egg laid on a Holy day. Rabbi**

**Shamma says—you may eat it. Rabbi Hillel says—no.**

**KAFKA raises his hand**

**KAFKA**

**An egg. This is a Jewish law?**

**NATA**

**Legal principles essential to the sanctity of our holy days are involved.**

**KAFKA (serious)**

**I understand. An egg born on the holy days. You know what to do with it?**

**NATA**

**What?**

**KAFKA**

**Make an omelet**

**NATA tries another Mishna**

**NATA**

**Two are grasping a Tallit— a prayer shawl.**

**NATA closes his eyes. He sees two religious Jews each holding the end of a Tallit.**

**JEW 1 (NATA'S voice)**

**This is mine and mine only.**

**JEW 2 (NATA'S voice)**

**This is mine and mine only.**

**NATA**

**They must take an oath because the laws of witnesses cannot be applied. Now Franz, the Talmud always asks Questions on the Mishna. You are a lawyer. What is the question?**

**KAFKA**

**The question. The question. Why do people always argue over religion?**

**NATA**

**Franz!**

**KAFKA**

**The question. I have it. What religion are the two?**

**NATA**

**Franz, you know they are Jews. Christians have no interest in the decisions of Rabbinic courts.**

**KAFKA**

**So why does he want a prayer shawl?**

**NATA (frustrated)**

**Franz, please.**

**KAFKA**

**I have it. Was it Jesus' prayer shawl?**

**NATA hushes KAFKA.**

**NATA**

**Franz, remember where you are. Who you are!**

**KAFKA**

**You are right. I am sorry. Perhaps we should begin with the basics.**

**NATA runs around to find texts to study. A black BEETLE crosses one of the leather volumes. NATA raises his hand to kill the BEETLE. KAFKA grips his hand.**

**NATA sits and reads. KAFKA closes his eyes and visualizes. The fox has KAFKA'S face.**

**NATA**

**All existence is vanity. A fox enters a vineyard. It has one fence opening. Three days the fox fasts to fit through. Once in the vineyard, the fox feasts. For three full days. Then it is time to leave the vineyard. The fox cannot fit through the opening. The fox fasts three days and leaves the vineyard.**

**KAFKA is swaying back and forth at his podium.**

**KAFKA**

**More on death.**

**NATA**

**First life.**

**We see this text from NATA'S POINT OF VIEW.**

**NATA (VO)**

**At one we are in little jails.**

**We see one year old KAFKA in a crib.**

**At three we poke around the garbage. Pigs.**

**We see a dirty faced KAFKA.**

**At ten we jump around like a kid.  
At twenty we parade around like angry horses.**

**having married we are like asses.**

**We see KAFKA on all fours with DEBORAH on his back and six children.**

**Bearing a heavy burden  
Then we grow old and become bent like a monkey.**

**KAFKA**

**And die.**

**NATA**

**Death is strong.  
But the Messiah  
will defeat**

**Death.**

**KAFKA**

**The Messiah. How do these—**

**KAFKA waves his arms as the CAMERA PANS gesticulating CHASSIDIM, oblivious to KAFKA and NATA.**

**Understand the Messiah?**

**NATA**

**The law teaches that persecution of the Jew will end. Israel will live peacefully in the world.**

**KAFKA**

**A miracle, but too rational for me.**

**NATA (opening the text)**

**In that time there will be no famine. Or War. Envy or Strife.**

**KAFKA**

**Not enough**

**NATA**

**Enough?**

**KAFKA**

**How do you bring the Messiah?**

**NATA**

**Only God.**

**KAFKA**

**No. The Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary.**

**NATA**

**There is a teaching that the Messiah comes when Israel repents.**

**KAFKA**

**The Messiah comes only on the day after his arrival**

**NATA is pained and puzzled.**

**The Messiah comes  
Not on the last day—**

**NATA**

**If not then, when?**

**KAFKA**

**On the very last day.**

**NATA**

**The Chassidim believe with perfect faith and wait at every moment for the Messiah to come.**

**KAFKA looks long and hard at the monochromatic black dressed CHASSIDIM.**

**KAFKA**

**Only when the most unbridled individualism of faith is possible**

**NATA**

**The Law is a bridle for wild asses. These are the most civilized people on earth. They are a community of priests. A holy nation. These are the only ones who have not given up on Jewish tradition.**

**KAFKA**

**They are part of the reason for its destruction.**

**NATA has heard enough.**

**NATA**

**Franz, why are you so negative? And so obsessed with death? Why not life?**

**KAFKA**

**Death and Life are one.**

**NATA raises his eyebrow.**

**If one believes in resurrection.**

**NATA**

**Resurrection. That is a difficult topic in Judaism.**

**KAFKA**

**No. Think of Jesus.**

**NATA**

**Jesus?**

**A number of SCHOLARS turn and stare at NATA.**

**NATA**

**Rabbi Maiminodes teaches that we do not believe in bodily resurrection.**

**KAFKA**

**The Messiah will peel your body from your soul like an orange.**

NATA touches his body—uncomfortable.

KAFKA points to CHASSIDIM. He opens his hands, palms up, and continues.

KAFKA

Tadpoles will become frogs  
caterpillars  
butterflies  
Men will become like angels.

The graves—open themselves and we all will be  
resurrected in the image of the Singular One.

NATA listens intently. He is now the student.

KAFKA

Now my friend. Kindly make arrangements for me to meet the Rebbe, so I  
may ask him for the hand of his daughter in marriage.

NATA buries his head in his arm.

INT FULL SHOT *MIKVAH* (RITUAL BATH) BELZ KAFKA GROUP DAY

KAFKA and NATA are undressing, removing their fringed *tallit katan*.

KAFKA

Is this necessary?

NATA

To see the Rebbe—yes, you must.

KAFKA tries to avert his eyes from NATA's genitals.

Be pure.

INT MEDIUM SHOT REBBE'S PARSONAGE REBBE/KAFKA DAY

The REBBE sits at an oversized desk.

REBBE

Attention. You have your *kvitels*.

Insert shot: The REBBE opens a piece of paper and reads.

REBBE

*Nata bat Sarah me Prague has modeh  
belimud vayiras shamyeen.*

Nata son of Sarah of Prague requests blessing for

learning and fear of heaven.

The REBBE beams with delight.

NATA gives the REBBE a gold coin.

KAFKA approaches with his kvitel. The REBBE'S good eye stares.

KAFKA freezes.

INSERT SHOT: The REBBE opens KAFKA'S kvitel.

**REBBE**

*Amschel bas Julia me Prague has modeh be Tshuva  
Shalama va La heschatan em ha bas shel ha Rebbe.*

Amschel son of Julie of Prague seeks perfect  
repentance and to marry the daughter of the Rebbe.

The REBBE is astonished. He raises his eyebrow over his good eye and stares at KAFKA. KAFKA, nervous, empties his pockets of change on the REBBE'S desk. The REBBE takes one coin and places it in front of him. He draws a circle around it in the dust of his desk.

REBBE (in Yiddish, with English subtitles.

Du bist an am Ha-aretz

You are a man from the country

**KAFKA**

Ya-nu

REBBE (shaking his head)

Am Ha-aretz. An ignoramus.

The REBBE puts up his hand to stop KAFKA'S response. The REBBE draws another circle around the coin.

**REBBE**

You will learn to be a Rabbi? A Talmud scholar?

KAFKA nods his head yes.

The REBBE drays another circle.

**REBBE**

Perfect repentance. Would you be a Rebbe? A saint?

**KAFKA**

Yes.

The REBBE strokes his beard, staring at the kvitel. He keeps KAFKA waiting.

KAFKA

Your daughter—my rebbe.

REBBE

Tell me Reb Amschel who would marry my daughter, and perhaps someday be the Rebbe. In our Holy Torah... spell. What are the letters of God's name?

KAFKA, without hesitation, answers

Every letter of our Holy Bible is a letter in the name of God.

The REBBE is shocked by KAFKA'S astute answer. He stares at the coin and circles. He picks the coin up and flips it in the air. He does it again. KAFKA grabs the coin from the air.

KAFKA

Your daughter's hand.

REBBE

Not yet.

KAFKA and NATA leave the REBBE'S study. The REBBE stares at the circle.

INT MEDIUM SHOT BELZ TRAIN KAFKA/NATA DAY

KAFKA

We must make the train by five o'clock

NATA

The five o'clock has gone.

KAFKA

The nine o'clock.

NATA

There is no nine o'clock. And if there were, you would not be on it.

KAFKA

Why are you so angry?

NATA

The train.

INT FULL SHOT TRAIN KAFKA/NATA DAY

KAFKA is looking out the window, watching the countryside outside of Belz roll by.



**PASSENGER**

**You are blocking my view.**

**KAFKA does not hear.**

**NATA**

**Franz, come sit.**

**KAFKA stares back at NATA. NATA is reading two oversized books, FAUST by Goethe, and a book by Freud.**

**PASSENGER 2 (to KAFKA)**

**Sir please. Rabbi Talmud. You are blocking our view.**

**NATA**

**Franz. Sit!**

**KAFKA obeys. He sits opposite NATA.**

**KAFKA**

**Why do we have to leave?**

**NATA**

**You can stay. I have had enough of Puritans**

**KAFKA**

**They are pure.**

**NATA**

**Isolated, backwards, dirty.**

**KAFKA**

**Tranquil and full of spirit. A country of the living.**

**NATA**

**For me now this is death.**

**Two hats are laying next to NATA. He puts one on. KAFKA puts the other one on.**

**KAFKA**

**But the Rebbe said not yet.**

**If I study, become a Rabbi, a Rebbe.**

**NATA**

**I will be a man.**

**NATA is at his limit with KAFKA'S insensitivity. He takes off his hat and reads the label.**

**NATA**

**Amschel. Your hat. I want mine.**

They exchange hats. Nata opens the window, takes careful aim, and flings his hat out the window and it takes off in the wind, birdlike. NATA sighs.  
Nota opens a book.

**Kafka**

You are reading?

Nota

Freud. The father of... my new Rebbe

**Kafka**

Are you now a son of Freud?

Nota

Awakening to the erotic  
I shall be a man.

**Kafka**

And I a Rabbi

**INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KAFKA FAMILY APT.KAFKA 1913**

**CLOSE SHOT OF Kafka's head covered by his hat cowboy style. The brass doorknob turns.**

**JULIE**

Franz, dinner. You must eat. Franz, open the door.

**KAFKA ( stuttering from under his hat)**

Go away. I told you. I cannot. The Rebbe. I eat alone.

**HERMANN**

What is that smell? Nauseating!

**KAFKA, hearing HERMANN'S voice, climbs out of bed. He falls, crawls, and climbs the wall, opening the door.**

**KAFKA**

Father. Did you read my novel?

**HERMANN**

**Novel. Novel. The Child in the City? Grow up. Yes, I tried.**

**KAFKA**

**And?**

**HERMANN**

**And, and, we had enough toilet tissue, so I used it to start the stove.**

**KAFKA bows as if his work deserved the fate of being thrown into the fire.**

**KAFKA**

**And the verdict?**

**HERMANN**

**Guilty.**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**You read it.**

**HERMANN**

**When I'm damn well good and ready.**

**KAFKA is shaking, nervous. HERMANN draws near him face to face and shouts.**

**HERMANN**

**Relax! Relax!**

**KAFKA**

**I—I**

**HERMANN**

**You must relax!**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**Father, I must tell you. I am moving to the country.**

**HERMANN**

**Where?**

**KAFKA**

**Belz.**

**HERMANN (laughing at his own joke)**

**Oh yes. Hells Belz.**

**So you and your friend will join the other shit  
beetles and roll your shit balls down country roads.**

**KAFKA**

**Nata will not return.**

**HERMANN**

**What will he do?**

**KAFKA shrugs.**

**HERMANN**

**Figure skating and the Kabballah.**

**Putz. At least he came home**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**I am leaving.**

**HERMANN**

**You will be back. Good. The maid will clean your room.**

**Bread, onions, porridge and ink. Mix them all up,**

**You get this dunghill stink. Hey— now I'm the poet.**

**HERMANN picks up the picture of DEBORAH**

**HERMANN**

**Who's this?**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**The Belzer Rebbe's daughter.**

**HERMANN**

**Oh she is too—everything for you.**

**KAFKA**

**I love her.**

**HERMANN**

**Don't tell me you're engaged. Jewish shiksa vermin Chassidic Rabbi's daughter! A shit beetle's wife. Even the maid calls you Dung Beetle. When will you be leaving?**

**KAFKA is twitching. His entire face is now black and crustaceous. He falls to all fours. HERMANN stands over him.**

**HERMANN**

**Relax! I can't wait. Why are you on your knees?**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**I must ask you for her hand.**

**HERMANN**

**Putz. I am not her father. Are you proposing to me?  
What's her name?**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**I—I do not know yet.**

**HERMANN**

**Try to find out before the wedding.**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**Father—your blessing.**

**HERMANN**

**You. You cannot marry her. You are not even a Jew. Shagetz.**

**HERMANN slips DEBORAH'S picture under his belt.**

**HERMANN**

**She'll be staying right here with me.**

**HERMANN puts on his pants.**

**You are not going anywhere. Write a story. Maybe you will remember her  
name.**

**KAFKA**

**Father. Her hand. Your blessing.**

**HERMANN**

**Not yet.**

**HERMANN leaves, slamming the door. OTTLA enters a moment later with a pan of milk.  
She puts it on the floor near KAFKA.**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**Ottla. My sister—my...**

**OTTLA**

**I brought you some milk.**

**KAFKA**

**I asked Father.**

**OTTLA**

**What did he say?**

**KAFKA**

**He...**

**OTTLA notices DEBORAH'S picture is gone.**

**OTTLA**

**Where is the picture?**

**KAFKA**

**Father took it. Stuffed it down his pants.**

**OTTLA turns away, smiling.**

**OTTLA**

**My...**

**She turns away and rubs her hand over her breast.**

**Franz. My—the milk. drink, drink.**

**Both of KAFKA'S hands are now appendages, and he laps at his milk.**

**OTTLA moves closer.**

**OTTLA**

**Franz. Nata never shakes—hands—until now.  
He says religious Jews cannot touch women.  
Sometimes even their own wives. Is this true?  
Does it include sisters?**

**KAFKA**

**I believe so.**

**OTTLA**

**So stupid. What would happen if I touched you?**

**KAFKA**

**The Rebbe.**

**OTTLA touches KAFKA. His feelers become erect. KAFKA blushes, black to reddish.  
OTTLA leans over towards her brother. He pins her sleeve down with his arm appendage.**

**KAFKA**

**Ottla. Please.**

**OTTLA slowly moves away until her entire shoulder is bared. KAFKA raises himself to her  
shoulder. He closes his eyes.**

**OTTLA**

**Franz. I love you. I cannot bear the thought of you marrying that and remaining like this. Break it off. I will care for you. You can write. We could get a room. I could move into.**

**OTTLA moves her head even closer. KAFKA closes his eyes. One of KAFKA'S feelers snakes around her shoulder and caresses her neck. The other stands out rigid at full extension. KAFKA opens his eyes and both feelers go limp.**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**I love her.**

**OTTLA stands and takes the milk and pours it on KAFKA'S body.**

**OTTLA**

**You can starve for all I care. I'm telling! You louse!**

**INT FULL SHOT DINING ROOM SABBATH KAFKA FAMILY EVENING**

**Dinner has been served. Two giant bowls of apples have been set out on the table. KAFKA is slowly chewing his bread, onions, and mush.**

**JULIE**

**No wonder you are starving. Have some apples.**

**KAFKA takes an apple and offers it to OTTLA. She glares. HERMANN takes his bowl, eating one apple after the other, core and all.**

**HERMANN**

**Your sister says you are still planning on marrying that Chassidic Shiksa.**

**OTTLA**

**He is no longer my brother.**

**She careful chooses three apples. HERMANN carefully chooses three apples.**

**HERMANN**

**I read your shit story.**

**KAFKA**

**What?**

**HERMANN**

**Your shit story. In the toilet. I read it in one sitting, and in my judgment, the verdict is "No"!**

**JULIE**

**Franz will have to marry someone someday.**

**HERMANN**

**No shiksas.**

**JULIE**

**Hermann, for God's sake. She's a Rabbi's daughter.**

**HERMANN**

**No shiksa. Jewish or Gentile.**

**KAFKA (stuttering)**

**In the morning I will be...**

**HERMANN**

**Sit.**

**KAFKA stands, wobbling.**

**KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW: HERMANN violently knocks KAFKA onto the table. We hear a crunching sound as KAFKA lands on his back, his wind knocked out.**

**KAFKA**

**I cannot breathe.**

**KAFKA is coughing.**

**KAFKA'S POINT OF VIEW: We see gray ceiling and the shadow of a sword.**

**HERMANN**

**You are not going anywhere. You will marry only the woman I approve of.**

**KAFKA**

**Mother...**

**JULIE stands passively.**

**Ottla...**

**OTTLA looks away.**

**KAFKA looks up to see the shadow of the sword moving towards his head.**



**KAFKA (stuttering)**  
Father, Father. Why have you forsaken me?

**HERMANN'S POINT OF VIEW:** We hear the sound of a knife hitting the table. An apple has been cut in half. HERMANN is grinning.

KAFKA has fallen out of his chair again. JULIE and OTTLA eat their halves of the apple.

**HERMANN**  
You have until three to get up. One. Two...

**KAFKA**  
Dora. Deborah. Dora. I am coming.

**HERMANN**  
Three. You lose.

HERMANN and OTTLA stand over KAFKA. He shuffles towards his door on all fours. HERMANN throws one apple, then another at KAFKA'S back as a joke. The third is thrown so hard it sticks into KAFKA'S back and sinks in. Kafka is stunned.

In incredible pain, he moans. KAFKA turns to OTTLA as he lifts himself up, holding the doorknob.

**OTTLA**  
Her or me.

**KAFKA**  
I must get away from Father.

OTTLA has two apples in her right hand, and one in her left. KAFKA, standing, turns toward OTTLA with his arm open and outstretched. OTTLA rears back and fires the apple. It hits KAFKA'S heart with a thump and sinks into his body. KAFKA falls into his room.

**EXT FULL SHOT VLATAVA RIVER (PRAGUE) KAFKA/NATA LATE WINTER DAY**

NATA is figure skating. First he twirls and skates a *yould*, which looks like a large comma, then a *hey*, doing the leg on one skate, then a straight line *vav* and another *hey*.

**KAFKA**  
What in...

**NATA**  
God's name.

KAFKA laughs.

**KAFKA**  
I am returning. Come back.

NATA

Why?

KAFKA

The dreadful things happening in my apartment.  
My family. What do you say?

NATA

No—*genuke*—I have had enough. As soon as I am strong enough I will have  
a woman.

KAFKA

Fine. Good. I will take you. But please. Return with me.

NATA

No. I am working on a book. I would only return to see the Rebbe's  
daughter.

KAFKA

Oh.

NATA

Eroticism and mysticism. I have mastered the mysticism.

KAFKA

The Rebbe's daughter is not the only. Chassidic women  
are so pure, so radiant. SO clean and beautiful.

NATA

Franz, I love her.

KAFKA

As soon as you have a real woman you will forget her.

**EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE RED LIGHT DISTRICT KAFKA/NATA NIGHT**

Streetwalkers approach KAFKA and NATA. KAFKA smiles. NATA is eager and ready to  
talk to one.

KAFKA

No, no. We are going to a brothel.

NATA

Why?

KAFKA

There, love is sensibly conducted.

**NATA**

**You lead the way.**

**They walk to the brothel. They enter the building "The Amazonian" and walk up many flights of stairs. Two well dressed men descend with broad smiles. KAFKA and NATA enter an ante-room. First one, then several (5), prostitutes encircle the two. One PROSTITUTE whispers to another, nodding her head towards KAFKA.**

**NATA makes his choice, a blond with a gap between her front teeth. She has large dark eyes and thin lips. She pulls her underpants away from her pudenda.**

**OLDEST PROSTITUTE**

**Take the gentlemen's hats.**

**(to KAFKA)**

**Will you be watching this evening?**

**KAFKA**

**O no, no.**

**(to NATA)**

**I will wait outside.**

**NATA is enraptured by his blond. He whispers to KAFKA**

**NATA**

**I think I am in love.**

**KAFKA**

**Already you have forgotten her?**

**NATA**

**Forgotten?**

**KAFKA**

**The Rebbe's daughter. Talk to you after.**

**EXT FULL SHOT CHARLES BRIDGE PRAGUE KAFKA/NATA DAY**

**NATA and KAFKA are crossing the Moldan river on the bridge. As they walk, and pass the baroque statues of the Catholic saints, the CAMERA EXPLORES NATA'S new look. Human face, European suit, goatee and modern fodor hat.**

**They walk to the Old New Synagogue and stop in front of the Hebrew clock in view.**

**NATA**

**You are living in the synagogue.**

**KAFKA**

**I bother no one, and no one bothers me.**

**NATA**

**You are not lonely?**

**KAFKA (calling)**

**Theo, Theo.**

**NATA turns to the door where KAFKA'S standard black POODLE, THEO, is waiting.**

**NATA**

**Are you happy?**

**KAFKA**

**I will be indestructible. I am studying the oral law, Mishna. I am about to finish the Sixth order.**

**Nata, I need an Aramaic tutor for my Talmud studies.**

**NATA**

**I see.**

**KAFKA**

**I will pay.**

**NATA**

**We will see. Franz—do you know, besides the poodle, you have another roommate?**

**KAFKA**

**You mean the marten. The synagogue sable.**

**NATA**

**What? No. Come, I will show you.**

**INT FULL SHOT OLD NEW SYNAGOGUE NATA/KAFKA DAY**

**As they walk slowly through the sanctuary, a small ANIMAL streaks by. It is the Bar Mitzvah SABLE.**

**KAFKA**

**The synagogue sable.**

**NATA**

**Oh.**

**They walk to Kafka's room, which is spartan, containing only a bed, a desk, and books piled everywhere.**

**KAFKA**

**One week. I return to Belz. To my bride.**

**NATA**

**Franz, the Rebbe will never...**

**KAFKA**

**I am not going to marry the Rabbi.**

**NATA**

**We will see. Let us learn.**

**NATA walks towards THEO, who growls.**

**NATA**

**You study with this at your feet? Let us study, then I will introduce you to a relative.**

**NATA gets two large leather tractates *Sanhedrin*. He opens the text with a dramatic flair, randomly.**

**NATA (reading the text)**

**The Rabbinic Master Rava says:  
If the righteous desire they can create a world.**

**KAFKA**

**Fictions?**

**NATA**

**Oh no. Listen and learn.**

**NATA'S POINT OF VIEW: We see an ancient Rabbi moving fog into a gray clay mud form, then laying his body on the mud while he is holding a large Hebrew scroll in his hand.**

**NATA (VO) (incantation)**

**RAVA BARA GAVRA  
RAVA BARA GAVRA  
RAVA BARA GAVRA**

**Rava created a man.**

**Visuals continue from NATA'S point of view with his (VO).**

**The Gray clay man gets up and dresses similarly to the RABBI, RAVA who created him. The RABBI questions the gray clad man who is mute.**

**Visual of RABBI ZAYRA'S lips in sync with NATA'S**

**KAFKA**

**Why was the golem mute?**

**NATA**  
Even Rabbi Rava was not without sin.  
We cannot create better than God.

**KAFKA**  
What was he chanting, Aramaic?

**NATA**  
Rava Bara Gavra. He rearranged the letters of his name Raba and created  
Bara.

**NATA** reenters and **KAFKA** is startled. He drops the sword, which falls on the floor. **NATA** sits and opens his book randomly.

**NATA**  
Says here that Rabbi Zayra had his throat slit and was cured by a miracle.  
Kabballah!

**NATA** stands over **KAFKA**, holding the sword. **KAFKA** lifts his chin. The **POODLE** sits and growls meanly at **NATA**, who gently lays the sword down.

**KAFKA (animated)**  
If we were to, the Rebbe would know, I would be an accomplished  
Cabalist. Imagine.

**NATA**  
Follow me.  
They ascend the stairs.  
You are related.

**KAFKA**  
Who told you this?

**NATA**  
Kitsch, the journalist.

They enter the attic. **THEO** heels behind **KAFKA**.

The attic of the Old Now Synagogue is thick with cob webs and is pulsating light at the rhythm of a heart beat. No one has entered for hundreds of years. The room has the gothic windows of **FAUST'S** study. Bookcases, full, frame the wall. In the center of the room is a small desk stacked high with books. In the corner is a thick cob web chrysalis, the source of the pulsating light. A Hebrew clock on the wall reads exactly 3:55.

**NATA (pointing to the cocoon)**  
The earth bastard, son of your mother's relation Rabbi Yehuda Lowey, the  
Maharal.

**KAFKA**

Is someone sleeping in the—

**NATA**

Don't you see? It will be easy this time. Your great uncle did all the work and laid him to rest. Here.

**KAFKA**

Why did the Rabbi Maharal create? What is his? her? name?

**NATA**

Joseph. Joseph Golem. Dead Christian children.

**KAFKA**

Please?

**NATA**

Blood libels. Blood for Passover Matzos.  
Children's blood for red, red wine.

**KAFKA** picks up his sword.

**KAFKA**

How could anyone believe?

**KAFKA** raises up his sword over an imaginary ISAAC. VISUAL of **KAFKA** as ISAAC.

**KAFKA**

Even Abraham did not have to sacrifice his son.

**NATA**

Jew hatred is never reasonable, Franz. The Jews of Prague needed a protector, a material Messiah who would protect them from these accusations. A being who would neither slumber nor sleep.

Visuals follow **NATA'S** point of view.

**NATA**

The Maharal took his trusted disciples. They fasted seven days. They put on their tallis and tefillin and prepared morning prayers. They found the right gray clay and pure artesian water, and most important, they found this book. And created.

**NATA** gestures toward the chrysalis.

**NATA** (cont.)

Adam Two.

**NATA checks the clock. Exactly five o'clock.**

**Let us begin.**

**They approach the pulsating chrysalis and detach it from its place, placing it in the middle of the room. It stops pulsating.**

**NATA**

**Start circling. We cannot stop or— How long?**

**NATA**

**We have 97,240 incantations. It will take exactly seven hours. Do exactly what I do. No interruptions.**

**NATA and KAFKA(repeating each sound and movement)**

<b>AA-A</b>	<b>TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT</b>
<b>AE-E</b>	<b>TURN HEAD DOWN</b>
<b>AI-I</b>	<b>TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT</b>
<b>AO-O</b>	<b>TURN HEAD UP</b>
<b>AU-U</b>	<b>JERK HEAD FORWARD</b>

<b>BA BA</b>	<b>TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT</b>
<b>BE BE</b>	<b>TURN HEAD DOWN</b>
<b>BI BI</b>	<b>TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT</b>
<b>BO BO</b>	<b>TURN HEAD UP</b>
<b>BU BU</b>	<b>JERK HEAD FORWARD</b>

<b>CA CA</b>	<b>TURN HEAD LEFT TO RIGHT</b>
<b>CE CE</b>	<b>TURN HEAD DOWN</b>
<b>CI CI</b>	<b>TURN HEAD RIGHT TO LEFT</b>
<b>CO CO</b>	<b>TURN HEAD UP</b>
<b>CU CU</b>	<b>JERK HEAD FORWARD</b>

**KAFKA is into the ritual, but laughs.**

**NATA**

**Franz, remember, he will awaken, and his thoughts will reflect our meditation.**

**The CAMERA FOLLOWS the clock towards midnight as KAFKA and NATA chant. Each hour the chrysalis pulsates brighter. At ten o'clock, the outline of the GOLEM'S body is visible. JOSEPH GOLEM begins to breath. At eleven o'clock, the GOLEM'S arm reaches for something and binds straps to his arm. The light is stronger, revealing tefillin of the head, outlined on the GOLEM'S forehead. At midnight, the figure emerges from the cobwebs and rolls towards KAFKA and NATA. The GOLEM'S body unrolls like a scroll.**

**The GOLEM slowly stands. He has the bulging muscles of a body builder. Cobwebs cling to his face. The GOLEM'S face is ruddy. He looks remarkably like KAFKA. The GOLEM has the long straight hair of a red Indian. The GOLEM and KAFKA smile at one another.**



**GOLEM**

**Good morning.**

**NATA screams.**

**NATA**

**I—I thought you could not—were—mute. Are we  
(gesturing to KAFKA) without sin?**

**The GOLEM laughs.**

**GOLEM**

**No. You are not my creators. You did awaken me with your mumbo jumbo.  
I get up at midnight every morning.**

**NATA**

**What do you do every evening—morning.**

**GOLEM**

**I study.**

**NATA**

**Alone.**

**The GOLEM nods.**

**NATA (cont.)**

**You are lonely?**

**GOLEM (in denial)**

**Oh no. I was created to be alone.  
I study God's Torah law.  
The world freely offers itself in rolls and waves  
of ecstasy at my feet.**

**The POODLE settles on GOLEM'S feet. He growls again at NATA. He looks up at the  
GOLEM.**

**GOLEM**

**The dog is hungry.**

**The GOLEM gets the dog some food. He sits at his desk. Tears well up in his eyes. KAFKA  
looks compassionately at the GOLEM.**

**GOLEM**

**It has been a while since I have been with other humans.**

**NATA**

**You are human?**

**GOLEM**

**Oh yes. All too human. I miss my father.**

**KAFKA**

**Your father.**

**The GOLEM covers his eyes.**

**An image is projected on the cobwebs, which still hang in a sheet on one wall, of the RABBI MAHARAL sitting in his study.**

**GOLEM (to KAFKA)**

**Your great, very great, uncle, my father, was a saint and a genius.**

**KAFKA**

**He must have known the secrets of the Kabbalah to create you.**

**GOLEM**

**The secrets of science.**

**GOLEM (VO) (in the mouth of the RABBI'S image.)**

**Time is a form of matter.  
Everything is spiritual.  
The worlds of time and matter  
consist of movement.**

**GOLEM removes his hands from his eyes.**

**So here I am  
an I do not age.  
I am eternal  
I am indestructible  
and yet  
Earth Mother  
Earthly Father  
I am a man.  
And now, I am hungry.**

**KAFKA**

**If you eat, you must...**

**GOLEM**

**Regularly. Every morning upon awakening. You must therefore excuse me.**

**The GOLEM enters a small lavatory surrounded by thick cobwebs. We can faintly make out his seated form.**

**NATA**

**You—The Rabbi Maharal. You said he was a scientist.  
My teacher, the Belzer Rebbe, teaches that secular studies are for—you will excuse me, the toilet.**

**Where one is forbidden to think of the Torah.**

**The Rebbe appeared to me in a dream.  
Warning me about my reading.**

**NATA (cont.)**

**So I have taken to reading Freud in the toilet.**

**GOLEM**

**I will tell you why your Judaism is in such a crisis.  
Why all Western religions are in crisis.  
Torah is science, and science Torah.  
Science gives men and women the eyes of God.  
Nothing exists but miracles.**

**NATA**

**Nonsense.  
Science will be the Tree of Death.  
Science falls into the hands of the demons,  
and the world goes up in fire and smoke.  
Every advancement in technology  
refines the art of killing. Of war.**

**The GOLEM finishes his toilet and carefully washes his hands.**

**GOLEM**

**Yes. Science and technology, like religion, are abused.**

**GOLEM invites KAFKA and NATA to sit.**

**GOLEM**

**Lets learn. This is where we, me and my father and I studied together every Friday afternoon.**

**NATA**

**First, I must hear the story about how you saved the Jews of Prague.**

**The GOLEM covers his face. We see the images on the cobwebs as he speaks.**

**GOLEM**

**The Rabbi told me of the Blood Libel.**

**Visuals begin with the GOLEM seated at the same desk studying with MAHARAL.**

I have a sixth sense—even a seventh. So I knew where the children were. It was a frigid winter.

The GOLEM enters the CARDINAL'S parsonage and goes to the basement, emerging with a child in his arms. Walking through the Ghetto, the Jews cheer their savior. The GOLEM brings the child to the Old New Synagogue and lays his body on top of the child, breathing into the child the breath of life. The child awakens and the GOLEM and the RABBI, each holding a hand, enter the KING'S palace and have an audience with the KING OF BOHEMIA. The KING, suffering from melancholia, brightens when he sees the RABBI and the GOLEM and the CHILD.

**KING**

Revoke the evil decree. No more death to the Jews.

**GOLEM (visuals follow his voice.)**

The Rebbe asked the King to come with us to the Royal Gardens. They were covered in snow, a blanket of death. The vines and trees and flowers suddenly came to life. Lilacs, peonies, olumbines, scarlet hawthorns. The King also blossomed. He wept.

**(KING in the GOLEM'S voice)**

I want to meet my ancestors, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

ABRAHAM appears.

**KAFKA (VO)**

What did he ask him?

**GOLEM**

He asked...

**KING (in GOLEM'S voice)**

What is the meaning of life? What does it mean?

We see ISAAC (KAFKA) on the alter. Smoke is rising. He fades as a sword comes down and slits his throat. He is surrounded by fire.

**GOLEM (VO)**

The Holocaustum.

ISAAC stands, phoenix like, touching his neck. It is healed. He walks to his FATHER who takes his hand. They embrace..

CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA'S face. He is weeping.

**NATA (mocking)**

You are so wise. Tell me, what will happen on Judgment Day? Bodily Resurrections?

**GOLEM (sincerely)**

Judgment Day is a court that is always, at all times, in session. And Resurrection is an eternal occurrence. The teaching of God. The Mother.

**NATA is squirming. These are heresies to him.**

**NATA**  
**The Messiah. What do you believe?**

**GOLEM**  
**Believe? Belive. Be! Live!**  
**A faith like a guillotine as heavy as light.**

**KAFKA**  
**I must see the end.**

**GOLEM shakes his head no.**

**GOLEM**  
**I have already—you have already seen too much.**

**KAFKA (imploring)**  
**The end.**

**The GOLEM looks at the visuals on the cob web screen. He is startled and narrates.**

**GOLEM**  
**God establishes the Final World Order. Jerusalem is capitol.**

**We see an AERIAL SHOT of Moriah to Zion.**  
**The Earth is renamed Pacifica.**

**SPACE SHOT of Earth.**

**GOLEM (cont.)**  
**Oceans. One world. No boundaries. The United Nations of Israel. The entire world is Israel. Israel is Jerusalem.**

**SPACE SHOT of Israel.**  
**Jerusalem...**

**AERIAL SHOT of Jerusalem.**  
**The Holy of Holies. And the center. A temple.**

**AERIAL SHOT of the Temple.**  
**In the center of the Temple, the Tree of Life, and a Menorah.**

**CLOSE SHOT of MENORAH'S light.**  
**Time is transcended. Distance is spanned. Light becomes matter, and matter, light.**  
**The Tree of Knowledge is the Tree of Life.**

**LONG SHOT of a MAN in white. His face is similar to KAFKA'S**

**KAFKA (VO)**

**Eat the fruit. Even the leaves. Give nourishment.**

**We see light filling a laboratory and scientists measuring, pouring, and creating. They wear prayer shawls and white silk skullcaps. Organs are pulsating in containers; machines create bionic life like human parts. First, we see feet, then legs, arms, heads, and then a body.**

**Homo Messiah.**

**NATA (VO)**

**Please, I am going to be sick.**

**GOLEM**

**Each a Messiah of their own small world. Each Eternal.  
Golem Men and Women.  
Aging is eliminated.**

**CLOSE SHOT of KAFKA'S face. He is entranced.**

**Pain is eliminated. Death is defeated.  
The world to come. Infinite life.  
Abundant life, excitement, learning, dancing, music.**

**GOLEM (cont.)**

**Travel through space and time.  
Thinking produces miracles.**

**KAFKA takes a deep breath.**

**CLOSE SHOT of NATA'S face.**

**NATA**

**I see why the Rabbi made you mute.**

**GOLEM**

**Mutism is an attribute of perfection.**

**KAFKA, childlike, recites a Mishna.**

**KAFKA**

**Rabbi Simon, the son of the great Rabbi Gamaliel says, "All the days of my life I have grown up amongst sages and have found nothing better for the body than silence."**

**GOLEM**

**Very good, Rabbi. You repeat your Mishna.**

**NATA**

**I always thought a golem was an idiot goblin. I'm dreaming, Joseph Golem. Adam Frankenstein?**

**GOLEM**

**You are dreaming that you are dreaming. All of this is true.**

**NATA (at the door)**

**Franz, we have sinned. We have made as sculpted image. We have violated the Second Commandment of God's Law. I think I will be leaving.**

**KAFKA**

**Teach me. Talmud, Aramaic, Zohar.**

**GOLEM**

**Why?**

**KAFKA**

**I am in love.**

**GOLEM**

**With whom?**

**KAFKA**

**But you seem to know everything. Why ask?**

**GOLEM**

**Answer anyway.**

**KAFKA**

**The Belzer Rabbi's daughter.**

**GOLEM**

**That is not a reason to study the Torah.**

**KAFKA**

**I am in love.**

**GOLEM**

**First you must learn to love God.**

**KAFKA**

**I want to live—to create— with her a paradise. A heaven on Earth.**

**GOLEM**

**One condition,.**

**NATA (still at the door.)**

**The Golem sounds more and more like...**

**The POODLE growls at NATA.**

**KAFKA**

**What is the condition?**

**GOLEM**

**Take me with you.**

**NATA**

**Franz, you are making a pact with a...**

**The POODLE stands on his hind lags and barks at NATA.**

**NATA**

**Dog, you expose. You are violating the Law. Fie on you.  
God cursed you to walk on all fours to hide your nakedness.**

**POODLE**

**Dogmas!**

**NATA**

**Oh my God! The Poodle, the golem, the Devil!  
Faust, Theophilos, Theo.**

**GOLEM (to NATA)**

**Come. Learn with us.**

**NATA stands stiffly in the doorway.**

**GOLEM (opening a text)**

**In the beginning was...**

**NATA**

**There, you see already he replaces God's name with a blasphemy.**

**GOLEM**

**In A beginning.**

**NATA**

**God created**



**GOLEM**

was the.. Word. *Ah-ha-va*

**.NATA**

**He quotes the forbidden text!**

**GOLEM**

**In the beginning was the deed. In A beginning, God creating in deed.**

**NATA**

**Faust, Satan, out, out! Franz, come with me. This golem who speaks incessantly and always blasphemously. Franz, we must leave. All who have entered this room since it was sealed and banned have gone mad!**

**KAFKA**

**I must understand. Love. Life. Paradise.**

**NATA**

**The answer is in Belz. Listen Franz, a story. You must come with me. I will return.**

**Visuals from NATA'S point of view.**

**When the Rebbe of Zans took his son to visit the Belzer Rebbe he asked him how it felt being in the presence of the Rebbe and his holy wife.**

**As they entered the room, the boy answered, "I feel like we were seeing Adam and Eve before the Fall." Like Paradise," answered the boy. "So it looked to me as well," answered the Rebbe.**

**GOLEM**

**A nice story, Nata. Now come and learn.**

**They wait. NATA does not move. The poodle sits in a chair. The GOLEM opens a text for him. He rests his paw on the page.**

**GOLEM**

**In the beginning was the Quest.**

**Learning**

**The questioning is the Way  
to your redeeming.**

**In the beginning is the Equation.**

**GOLEM writes on the screen. In black appears the equation  $E=MC^2$**

**GOLEM (cont.)**

**This hour a wondrous undertaking.  
A human being in the making.**

**GOLEM opens his arms to KAFKA.**

**GOLEM (to KAFKA)**

**Well, Father. It's really me. This is no joke, as you see.**

**NATA**

**Franz...**

**GOLEM**

**Come embrace me. Take me to your heart and tenderly.**

**KAFKA embraces GOLEM.**

**GOLEM**

**This mechanical Bachelor with himself has debated what his life lacks.  
You, dear Franz, a human being whose body and soul are so firmly mated.**

**The door slams. NATA is gone. The POODLE jumps to all fours and goes to the door.**

**KAFKA (to POODLE)**

**Nata was.  
Was Nata.**

**POODLE**

**Right.**

**KAFKA**

**You are...**

**POODLE**

**Theophilus . A dog, that starts with D. Adding evil you get...**

**KAFKA**

**The Devil. Are you—really Satan?**

**POODLE**

**Who is Satan?  
Where is Hell?  
No. Not the Devil.  
God's lover, God's friend.  
I said—Theo is my name.  
Theophilus. God's greatest Chassid  
If you serve  
as I serve  
with devotion and obedience  
You too shall be a Theophilus.**

**God's humble servant.**

**The POODLE sits with KAFKA and the GOLEM.**

**POODLE**

**Unroll the ancient parchment.  
Genesis again. Again and again and again.**

**On the seventh again, he rested.**

**Reflect on what still more.**

**The POODLE points to the screen and writes *what, how, why, I, j, KAFKA*, as he speaks.**

**On how and why.**

**To dot the I, read J to K**

**The POODLE'S monologue activates the visual screen he has been writing on.  
Romantic spooks are all you have known.**

**We see Frankenstein's, Monsters mindlessly walking, humans fleeing, old horror film images. The GOLEM shakes his head in disgust.  
We see COUNT DRACULA wearing a Jewish star, hypnotizing a nubile blond-haired, blue-eyed, teenaged girl.**

**He says, "My name is Count Dracula. I want to have you for my Passover Seder."  
We see Faust, an image of GOLEM MAN, becoming a monster. A MONTAGE of images from movies on FAUST and MEPHISTO, The Jew becoming the Devil.**

**POODLE (as images roll)  
But a true ghost is a classical telling.**

**Yes, yes. I am the Satan, the dark accuser, a paid Prosecutor.**

**We see the POODLE in a three-piece suit in a court room. The defense attorney, another POODLE, also wears a three-piece suit.**

**Your sins are not original.  
Franz, Franz. We formed you into a Jew.  
A Kafka, for good reason.**

**The fringes of your prayer shawl.**

**The POODLE lifts them in his paw to KAFKA'S hand. KAFKA folds his hands together and his head drops to his chest.**

**Touch the corner of that garment, and be healed.  
the sinking hands of Christ embrace Dracula.**

**Yes, they bit their own neck and you, your own.**

**We see a Hollywood DRACULA wearing a Jewish star, turning his head madly, biting at the air.**

**CLOSE SHOT OF DRACULA'S FACE. It is KAFKA.**

**POODLE**

**The red stain. Rabbi. Heal thyself.  
Freedom. Free.  
We are in Paradise now. Death does not exist.**

**Theology is an iron bone that cannot be broken even by the common bite of a dog.**

**Give this dog  
Theo**

**POODLE (cont.)**

**No iron bones.**

**I am  
I love God  
I am doing  
My job.**

**KAFKA**

**No sin—eating of knowledge?  
The Tree of Knowledge?**

**POODLE**

**The apple. Eat.  
No. No original sin.  
And take it from this expert.  
No sin is original.**

**KAFKA**

**My sins are original to me!**

**POODLE**

**Franz—Kafka, sin is always a conspiracy.**

**KAFKA**

**What are you saying, Dog?**

**POODLE**

**God is Good without an O.**

**Visual of the POODLE tapping the word Good on the screen. The O disappears and the word God remains.**

**KAFKA**

**O?**

**POODLE**

**Death is in the beginning.  
Not understanding Death is the Fall.**

**KAFKA**

**Is that all?**

**POODLE**

**No.**

**The screen is activated, this time by KAFKAS growing mental capacity. We see the screen, then KAFKA twice. We see a raised platform like an alter with MILENA, DORA, THE RABBI OF BELZ, OTTLA, THE GOLEM, and KAFKA tied with leather straps to the alter. A flame flashes from above, and in a moment, we see only ashes.**

**KAFKA**

**Totally consumed. The holocaustum again.  
Isaac my brother.  
Should I believe the Devil  
in the form of a dark dog?**

**POODLE**

**Look again, Franz. This is your own vision.**

**We see a mushroom cloud devouring the Earth, fire and then white light.**

**KAFKA**

**After the Holocaustum, a holocaust?**

**KAFKA**

**What is my destiny?**

**GOLEM**

**Live it first, Franz.  
Live it first.**

**POODLE**

**Look into your heart, Franz.  
There, seeing, doing, and being are all one thing.**

**KAFKA**

**Tell me Theo.**

**The POODLE lifts his paw in a halt gesture.**

**POODLE**

**One last piece of advice.**

**KAFKA**

**Yes.**

**POODLE**

**Renounce hunting.**

**KAFKA**

**Hunting?**

**POODLE**

**Hunting animals. Hunting bodies. Hunting souls. Hunting God, and hunting dogs.**

**He smirks.**

**And hunting women.**

**The POODLE jumps to all fours and curls around the GOLEM'S feet.**

**INT FULL SHOT OLD NEW SYNAGOGUE GOLEM GROUP DAY**

**The GOLEM is sleeping in his cocoon. KAFKA sleeps on the floor covered by a white blanket., with the poodle by his side on top of the blanket.**

**The arms of the Hebrew clock moves around towards ten, then to eleven. KAFKA wakes and waits for the GOLEM. It is now midnight.**

**KAFKA**

**Up all night, asleep all day.  
I will miss my train.**

**GOLEM**

**Train?**

**KAFKA**

**The nine o'clock to Galacia.**

**GOLEM**

**You missed it.**

**KAFKA**

**The seven o'clock.**

**The GOLEM shakes his head.**

**KAFKA**

**The midnight train.**

**GOLEM**

**When I awaken.**

**KAFKA**

**The three o'clock.**

**GOLEM**

**Yes. The three o'clock. That is your train.**

**KAFKA**

**I must pack**

**GOLEM**

**You have eighteen minutes.**

**KAFKA is startled. The Hebrew clock reads 2:40.**

**KAFKA**

**We must leave now.**

**The GOLEM shrugs.**

**It does not matter.**

**KAFKA**

**To me, nothing is more important.**

**GOLEM**

**I know. I can see.**

**The webs are lighting up. The screen is activated. The chrysalis is lit and pulsating. We see KAFKA standing with luggage.**

**EXT FULL SHOT PRAGUE TRAIN STATION KAFKA NIGHT**

**Two middle aged JEWS in white skullcaps with neatly trimmed beards carry a trunk towards their waiting family. The trunk holds uncountable baggage, all their worldly possessions. The train whistle is heard and the children and adults are loaded with the bags. A shapeless but strong young woman remains seated on the trunk. She is suckling an infant and is surrounded by acquaintances in lively conversation.**

**KAFKA watches the scene.**

**One of the men looks at KAFKA and shakes his head 'no'.**

**JOSEPH GOLEM, in full Chassidic regalia, is carrying four suitcases, two under his arms, two in his hands. KAFKA, also dressed as a Chassid, carries the poodle on a leash.**

**EXT FULL SHOT TRAIN STOP BELZ GALACIA GOLEM GROUP NIGHT**

The train stops. Only KAFKA and the GOLEM disembark. They walk to the village. The one inn has a 'No Vacancy' sign. They find an empty stable and bed down for the night.

**INT FULL SHOT RABBI'S STUDY KAFKA/REBBE GROUP DAY**

**KAFKA**

I ask again for the hand of your daughter in marriage.

**REBBE**

Saturday night I will call a tribunal. Then we shall pass judgment.

**KAFKA**

Excellent. I will prove I have mastered the Torah and the Kabballah.

**REBBE**

The secrets of the Torah?  
You have—mastered?

The GOLEM approaches the REBBE, hand extended.

**GOLEM**

Shalom alechem, Rebbe Reb Yid.

The GOLEM grips the REBBE'S hand. It is enveloped by the GOLEM'S giant hand. The REBBE looks at his hand after the shake as if it had been burned.

**REBBE**

Who are you?

**GOLEM**

I am Joseph. Don't you recognize me?

The POODLE growls.

**KAFKA**

This is Theo.

The REBBE steps back. He is not a dog lover.

**REBBE**

Saturday night.

**INT FULL SHOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE MEETING DAY**

The REBBE is sitting at his tisch (table). He is the king of the court.

He takes a bite of fish and a large plate is passed around. Each Chassid takes a bite with their fingers. The REBBE appears in deep meditation, then bored, almost falling asleep, until KAFKA and the GOLEM enter. All Chassidim whisper to one another. We hear, "tonight. Tonight."



**CLOSE SHOT of REBBE'S face. We see the REBBE'S eyes close tightly.**

**Dissolve to a soft focus.**

**INT FULL SHOT NATA'S KITCHEN PRAGUE NATA/REBBE GROUP DAY**

**NATA is about to take a bite of a sweet pastry. He is reading a book by Freud. His head is bare.**

**NATA looks up, sees an apparition of the REBBE take form in his kitchen, and drops his pastry.**

**REBBE**

**Rebbe Reb Nata. No blessing? No yarmulka?**

**NATA turns red with shame.**

**REBBE**

**You must come to BELZ. Return.**

**NATA**

**But Rebbe, its Shabbos. Travel is forbidden.**

**The REBBE'S image fades.**

**The REBBE opens his eyes. He stares at KAFKA. The Chassidim open a path for KAFKA, the POODLE, and the GOLEM.**

**REBBE (condescending)**

**Amschel has been studying Kabbalah.**

**He promised to reveal a secret to us today.**

**Franz, tell us your secret.**

**KAFKA puts his arm around the GOLEM.**

**KAFKA**

**Meet Joseph Golem.**

**CHASSIDIM break into murmurs.**

**CHASSIDIM**

**Golem? What did he say? Golem?**

**The REBBE hits his fist on the table like a judge.**

**REBBE**

**Sha-sha.**

**This Joseph? A Golem?**

**You made?**

**KAFKA**

**Well, no. I helped. Nata and I.**

**Rebbe shaking his head yes.**

**REBBE**

**Nata is meshuga. Another meshuga. Franz Amschel Kafka.**

**GOLEM (eloquent)**

**Not so my Rebbe, Franz is the sanest of men.**

**The REBBE'S SHAMMES (attendant, played by the same actor in the first scene with the SHAMMES) in goatee and heavy robes is impatient with the attention taken away from his master.**

**SHAMMES**

**A test.**

**CHASSIDIM**

**Ah.**

**SHAMMES**

**The Golem of the Rabbi Maharal, a great Chassidic master, was the Rabbi's study partner. Pass this test (SHAMMES winks at REBBE) and you are the GOLEM.**

**GOLEM**

**As you wish.**

**KAFKA**

**No. Ask a question. Any question. He is as wise as Elijah.**

**REBBE (to KAFKA)**

**Franz, Amschel, if he answers correctly, you may have my daughter's hand in marriage.**

**The SHAMMES goes to the Talmud in the library.**

**SHAMMES**

**This is the test. I close my eyes. Open the text and place my finger on a letter. You tell me the letter my finger is on.**

**KAFKA**

**That is absurd. What book?**

**SHAMMES**

**A holy book.**

**KAFKA**

All books are holy.

**GOLEM**

Why squander your wisdom? Ask.  
The fate of the soul after death? Why evil.  
Is there life after birth?

**GOLEM** waits for a laugh. There is none, so he laughs himself. The exact moment, year...day...hour...of the redemption and the end of suffering.

**SHAMMES**

Mr. Golem. What letter?

**GOLEM**

The holiest letter, in this case letters, of the alphabet.

**SHAMMES**

Trickster. He speaks riddles.

**KAFKA**

All the letters of the alphabet are holy.

**SHAMMES**

The letter.

**GOLEM**

You Rabbi Shammes are a great legalist and Chassid. The Rebbes right hand man. But your arrogance has led you to obliterate with your finger God's holy name.

**SHAMMES**

Huh? More riddles.

**GOLEM**

Your finger covers the first letter, letters in God's holy abbreviated name, Adonai. The holy *yould*.

The **SHAMMES** looks down, lifts his finger, and faints. Pandemonium erupts. **CHASSIDIM** murmur.

**CHASSIDIM**

The test. Did he pass?

**A CHASSID**

I don't know. The Shammes fainted.

**2ND CHASSID**

He passed! The Golem!

Half of the CHASSIDIM surround KAFKA and hoist him up in the air, sitting in a chair. They continue holding him up, singing and dancing.

The REBBE sits rigid, staring straight ahead.

#### INT FULL SHOT BELZ SYNAGOGUE KAFKA GROUP NIGHT

KAFKA is staring straight ahead in the same pose as the REBBE. KAFKA'S entire Chassidic garb is now snow white. The GOLEM stands at his right, all in white. REBBE KAFKA takes a bite out of his chicken leg and sets it down. He chews the morsel 100 times. We see hundreds of CHASSIDIM in white lift their chicken legs, bite, and chew 100 times. He takes a bite out of an apple and chews it 100 times. So do all of his CHASSIDIM. KAFKA begins his teachings. KAFKA'S CHASSIDIM begin to bow and sway. KAFKA closes his eyes. All CHASSIDIM close their eyes.

#### CHASSID ONE

Sha—The Rebbe will speak Torah.

#### KAFKA

The True Way, the way of Kafkan Chassidism, is simple.  
It is the way of the tightrope walker.

We see KAFKA walking on a tight rope. He jumps, leaps high in the air, twirls around, lands on his feet on the ground, and smiles. The rope is suspended only one inch from the floor. KAFKA walks around it.

The CHASSIDIM are in deepest rapture. Their eyes are closed; they stroke their beards and pull at their side locks.

#### KAFKA

All human errors are impatience and laziness.  
Impatience—impatient.  
Eve and Adam expelled from Paradise.  
Impatient and lazy, they do not return.

A BLACKBIRD flies in the window and lands on the eternal light over the ark, and there is a hush amongst the CHASSIDIM. This is a bad omen for the KAFKAN CHASSIDIM and their new REBBE.

#### SUSTAINED SHOT of BIRD and LIGHT.

#### KAFKA

The blackbirds maintain that a single blackbird, one Kafka, could destroy the heavens. There is no doubting that.

PAN CHASSIDIM. Some are shocked, some perplexed. SHOT of the BLACKBIRD.

This proves nothing against the heavens, for the heavens signify, simply, the impossibility of blackbirds.

Do not let evil make you believe you can have secrets.

**The meditation by the serpent was necessary.**

**Evil can seduce a man or woman, but can never become a woman or a man.**

**The CHASSIDIM'S eyes are closed. They are enraptured. Again, their eyes open when they hear KAFKA speak.**

**KAFKA**

**This is my last sermon. Many people prowl around Sinai.**

**SHOT of a Torah service. KAFKA is reading the Torah. The CONGREGATION is either bored, or yammering in whispers.**

**Their speech is blurred  
Either they are rambling  
or they are silent.**

**A processional marching around the ark single file follows the Torah.**

**KAFKA (cont.)**

**However, I come down  
A straight broad path.**

**The True Way. The Path.**

**KAFKA is in front of the ark, victoriously holding the Torah over his head.**

**With effortless strides  
Moving towards one law.**

**Listen, Israel. You are the task.  
Nowhere is a disciple to be found.  
Nowhere is a disciple to be found.**

**We live in and by the community.**

**Indivisible, unity is indestructible.**

**Believe. Be-live in the indestructible  
within yourself.**

**No more sermons, and my Chassidim,  
no more silence.**

**Not one of you, not one, understands Moses.**

**The doubtful, doubt.**

**Believers believe.**

Now.

Believers, it is time to doubt.

Doubters, it is time to believe.

NATA, standing in the back of the synagogue, is wearing a white caftan, socks, shoes, and a dark Chassidic fur hat.

NATA

And who are you, a new Moses?

KAFKA (Shaking his head no)

Humility. The humility of a Moses.  
That is the only modern way to pray.

NATA

Do you believe Moses received the Torah on Sinai, or are you a heretic? An *Apikoroos*?

KAFKA

Moses. Moses. Leading the isolated and the mortal  
into Eternal Life.  
The accidental into conformity, into Law!

NATA

Whose Law? Moses' or Franz's?

KAFKA

One law. One mountain. One Garden. One Tree. One Fruit.

NATA

Are you saying we must ascend the Mountain ourselves? Are we all prophets?

KAFKA indicates to NATA to join at the head of the table. NATA does, and sits on KAFKA'S left side as KAFKA begins his final teaching. NATA strokes his beard and removes his black fur hat. KAFKA hands NATA his white hat.

KAFKA

There is no need to leave your home.  
Sit at your table. Your altar. And listen.  
Do not even listen. Just wait.  
Do not even wait. Be completely quiet and alone.  
The world will offer itself to you.

KAFKA conducts the *Havdalah* service. We see the fire and the spices.  
NATA puts on KAFKA'S white hat.

**KAFKA**

Now my trial.

**INT FULL SHOT REBBE'S STUDY KAFKA/REBBE NIGHT**

**KAFKA enters the dark study. The REBBE is holding a *havdalah* candle. He puts the candle out in his silver wine goblet.**

**REBBE**

**This tribunal is in session.**

**Seated in the shadows against the wall are the witnesses all wearing black and barely perceptible in the dark. HERMANN, JULIE, OTTLA, FELICE, MILENA, RABBI BAR MITZVAH, AND THE REBBE'S WIFE.**

**REBBE**

**The Judges.**

**The SHAMMES opens the door and brilliant light floods the room. A POPE in a black miter, black robe, black staff, and black ring emerges from the light. He sits to the REBBE'S right. Next emerges a SHEIK with a black beard, dark Semitic features, and a black turban. He sits to the REBBE'S left.**

**KAFKA, all in white, stands before the POODLE.**

**BLACK POPE**

**What is that book you are holding? A prayer book?  
And the dog?**

**KAFKA**

**No, it is a travel guide. My dog is fascinated by religious shrines.**

**The BLACK POPE jots down a note. The SHAMMES walks to KAFKA, offering him a stool.**

**SHAMMES**

**Sit.**

**KAFKA sits.**

**BLACK SHEIK**

**You believe in the one God. Absolutely Transcendent?**

**KAFKA**

**Absolutely.**

**REBBE**

And the God that is near imminent, the God of the Law? Elohim?

**KAFKA**

Abba—Father, hear o Israel.  
The Lord, transcendent  
Our God, imminent—so close.  
The Lord is one.

So love your neighbor as yourself.

The **BLACK POPE** makes a note. The **SHEIK** is shaking his head yes. The **REBBE** is intimidated.

**KAFKA (to REBBE)**

Now I have my question.  
I have passed your tests, I have returned.  
I am *Ba'al Tshuva*.  
I ask again for the hand  
of your daughter in marriage.

**REBBE**

You will have your answer in due time.  
Franz, you will live by the commandments, by the *Mitzvot*, the Laws of your  
tradition?

**KAFKA**

What commandment of the Law have I not fulfilled?

**REBBE (disgusted, screaming)**

Look at you! The law commands, demands black clothing.

**KAFKA**

The Law?

**REBBE**

The Law. The codes.

**KAFKA**

The codes. Your black dress is a custom, not a law.

**REBBE**

No. The Law is whatever we, the authorities, do.

The **POPE** and the **SHEIK** nod their heads in agreement.

**KAFKA**

And God's Law?



**REBBE**

We are God's law.

**KAFKA**

No.

The **REBBE**, **POPE**, and **SHEIK** glare at **KAFKA**.

The Law is given by God and belongs to the people.

**REBBE**

Heretic! Witnesses, you will not be needed. You are dismissed!

The **SHAMMES** opens the door. The witness walks into the light. The door is left open.

**REBBE (to KAFKA)**

You are not here to ask the questions. We ask the questions, and have only one. Will you obey?

**KAFKA** begins to answer, but is cut off.

**KAFKA** slowly walks in front of the court with **THEO** and stops to gaze at each of the judges.. **KAFKA** moves towards the **SHAMMES**, doorkeeper, and hands **THEO'S** leash to the doorkeeper. The doorkeeper momentarily looks down at the **DOG**, and **KAFKA** slips into the light.

**DREAM SEQUENCES END**

**INT CLOSE SHOT FACE KIERLING SANITARIUM KAFKA DAY JUNE 1924**

**KAFKA'S** eyes open as he awakens. He turns his head towards the door as it opens, bright sunlight floods the room. **CAMERA RAISES** to a **MEDIUM SHOT**, showing **KAFKA'S** body covered to the neck by a white blanket. His body is skeletal. He weighs less than 100 pounds. Lilacs, peonies, columbines, and scarlet hawthorns exactly as in the previous scenes surround him. **THEO** stands next to **DEVALORAH (DORA)** in the door. The light looks like a halo around her full head of hair, which has been set in sensuous curls, but she still has the air of a girl raised in a Chassidic household. She is innocent but mature.

**CLOSE SHOT** of **DORA'S** cherubic face and warm tender eyes, which are filled with tears. Her full lips quiver. **DORA** is holding a white book.

**KAFKA** turns his head back and looks up at the ceiling, which is gray and black. **DORA** sits next to **KAFKA'S** bed and the **POODLE** curls around her feet. **KAFKA** sighs. He is about to speak, but **DORA** stops him.

**DORA**

Franz my love, remember, you are not to talk.  
I went for a walk on the sanitarium grounds.  
Perhaps you could come outside with the other patients.

By doctor's orders, KAFKA is not to speak. He communicates by conversation slips on 5"x 8" cards. They are neatly stacked, in order, by the side of his bed. DORA reads aloud.

**DORA**

**Be careful of the broken glass.**

She looks at her feet and sees no glass. She gets off her chair and gets down on hands and knees. She finds a piece of glass under the bed. KAFKA indicates with his eyes that she should throw the glass in the trash. DORA carefully wraps the glass in cloth and gently sets it in the trash. She sits and reads the next card.

**DORA**

**Kindly move the lilacs to the sun. Mist the peonies, and see that they do not touch the bottom of the vase.**

**DORA gets up and does so.**

**This time she remains standing when she reads the card.**

**A dark bird flew through the room.**

**DORA looks at him and gently shrugs her shoulders. She believes KAFKA. KAFKA holds up an apple with one bite taken out.**

**DORA reads the next card.**

**We must finish Genesis and Isaiah.**

**DORA sits. She opens the book she has left on the bed. It is a *chumash*, a Torah that contains the legal and prophetic readings for the year.**

**DORA**

**We should continue with the text we were studying before you fell, dozed off.**

**KAFKA shakes his head yes and indicates his tefillin box with his eyes. DORA takes the black boxes out of their velvet bag that has an embroidered Menorah and the name Amschel on the front. DORA tenderly raises KAFKA'S arm and slips the box to a spot opposite the bicep. Tears flow down DORA'S cheeks as she binds KAFKA'S arms. KAFKA shakes his head to her to complete the ritual the way they do every day. DORA recites the blessings in Hebrew.**

**KAFKA (whispers with no sound)**

**Amen.**

**DORA gently raises KAFKA'S head and affixes the head tefillin. She slips a white silk skullcap onto KAFKA'S head. She recites the blessing in Hebrew.**

**KAFKA (whispers with no sound)**

**Amen.**

**KAFKA has taken her hand. He struggles to undo the strap that DORA has patiently woven around his palm and fingers into a Hebrew shin. His two hands begin to struggle. DORA is puzzled, then watches a moment and understands. The strap is loose and KAFKA binds their hands together. They smile lovingly at one another. DORA recites the blessing for studying the Torah and KAFKA answers amen by acknowledging the blessing with his eyes.**

**DORA sings in Hebrew Genesis 3:1-5 with cantillation.  
DORA (in English)**

**Now the serpent was the most naked tongued  
of all God's creatures.**

**DORA looks at KAFKA.**

**Standing on his legs  
the serpent says, in fluent Hebrew...**

**KAFKA smiles, delighted at DORA'S addition.**

**Is it not true that God said  
that you cannot eat from  
any tree of the garden.**

**KAFKA smiles and motions for DORA to continue.**

**Any tree but the one  
in the center of the garden.  
That one you cannot eat from  
without being...**

**DORA stops and closes her eyes. She is deep in thought. She swallows and has a difficult time continuing.**

**Touched by death.**

**DORA**

**Kafka, I cannot continue.**

**KAFKA opens his eyes wide, implying that she must go on.**

**DORA**

**The serpent says, Die? You will not die!"**

**God knows on the very day  
you eat from it  
opening will be your eyes.**

**You will be like God,**

knowing good and evil.

**KAFKA** (raspy and tubercular voice)

I must know. Our wedding in the fall. What was his answer?

The POODLE wakes. He lifts his head up to KAFKA to be stroked. DORA sits still. KAFKA waits patiently. DORA picks up the remaining notecards.

**DORA** (reading)

Put your hand on my forehead a moment to give me courage.

DORA removes his head tefillin and places her hand on KAFKA'S forehead. KAFKA raises his arm and DORA undoes the strap on his fingers and palms. KAFKA grasps hold of a pen and DORA reaches for a blank card to hand to KAFKA, along with a pen. He speaks.

**KAFKA** (slowly, shot of breath and rasping)

Where is the eternal spring and the wedding in the fall?

**DORA**

Franz, you must not talk!

**KAFKA**

I must know. Now.

**DORA** (stuttering)

He said not even though you have returned  
to the faith of  
that you're a *ba'al tshuva*  
Yes.  
A repentant one.

**KAFKA** stares at DORA.

He said...

DORA moves close to KAFKA and embraces him.

No.

**KAFKA** and DORA cry silently. **KAFKA** raises himself with difficulty to comfort DORA. They embrace for a while. **KAFKA** grabs the pen and writes on an index card. **KAFKA** begins to cough. It turns into a coughing fit. DORA helps **KAFKA** lay back down. He continues to cough. He spits out some blood. **KAFKA** does the comforting. DORA goes limp. **KAFKA** takes his pen and writes a note to DORA, who is still clinging and weeping.

**KAFKA tugs on DORA'S sleeve, revealing her shoulder and kisses and nuzzles her shoulder and breast. DORA quiets and KAFKA begins another coughing fit. DORA pats his back as he gasps and coughs. He cannot get a breath. His body goes limp and DORA stiffens as she lowers KAFKA from her arms into the bed. KAFKA is at peace. DORA closes KAFKA'S eyes and takes the card from KAFKA'S hand.**

**It reads, Marry me anyway. Love Kafka."  
She looks at the Hebrew clock on the wall.  
It is exactly 3:00  
DORA takes KAFKA'S hand, crying.**

**DORA**

**My love. My love. My Kafka. My love. My darling. My good one.**

**EXT FULL SHOT OLD PRAGUE TO STRASNIC (A PRAGUE SUBURB) JEWISH CEMETERY KAFKA DAY 1924**

**The sky is partly sunny, then gray. We ride in silence through Prague, past the Old New Synagogue and the Jewish cemetery until the towers of Old Prague and the bridged river disappears. The countryside spreads out towards Bohemia.**

**At the cemetery, HERMANN and JULIE, ashen faced, follow the plain pine coffin. Behind them is DORA and MAX, a crowd of approximately 100 follow the coffin down a path through a meadow of willows and cypresses. MILENA is in the front part of the cortege.**

**A beardless ORTHODOX RABBI perfunctorily chants the funeral service in Hebrew. As the coffin is lowered into the ground and a memorial prayer chanted, DORA cries out an agonized and piercing cry.**

**DORA**

**My dearest. My Amschel. My Kafka. My Franz.**

**The RABBI increases his baritone volume to drown out DORA'S emotional outburst. The mound of dirt that will cover the coffin is filled with clay-like lumpy earth, full of pebbles and stones. The MOURNERS each put a shovel full of dirt on the grave. The lumps and pebbles sound loud on the wood.**

**The RABBI, who did not know KAFKA personally, allows a communal eulogy. He looks towards HERMANN who stands stiffly and does not say a word. JULIE looks away towards the open grave.**

**MILENA steps forward. The RABBI looks towards HERMANN, who stares blankly at MILENA, then turns toward the RABBI and shakes his head no. DORA steps toward MILENA and takes her arm and whispers in her ear. MILENA attempts to begin. She is cut off by HERMANN.**

**HERMANN**

**Respect. How? At a Jewish funeral.**

**HERMANN has a coughing fit. He looks sick and pathetic. He continues, raspily,**

**Mr. Pollak, please.**

**We see OSKAR POLLAK'S back. He is dressed like a college professor.**

**OSKAR POLLAK**

**The books we need, and Kafka wrote,  
are of the kind that act upon us as a misfortune.  
That make us suffer  
like the death of someone we love.**

**We see HERMANN and JULIE, servants of suffering. They begin to weep.**

**More than ourselves.  
Those books are like an axe  
that breaks into pieces  
the frozen sea within each of us.**

**POLLAK holds his hand out to MILENA, palm up.**

**Milena, You must.**

**MILENA**

**Franz's books portray the world so perfectly any further comments are  
superfluous.**

**ROLL END CREDITS**

**All of his books paint the horror of secret  
Misunderstandings.  
of innocent guilt between people.**

**He was an artist  
a man of anxious conscience.**

**He could hear where others were deaf.**

**He was meek, shy, and kind.  
He saw a world full of invisible demons,  
tearing apart and destroying defenseless humans.**

**He was too clairvoyant  
too intelligent  
to be capable of living.  
And too weak to fight.  
He understood people as only one of great and nervous sensitivity can.**

**He was  
Someone who is, was, alone.**

**He was almost like a prophet.**

**His knowledge of the world  
was extraordinary and deep.**

**He was himself an extraordinary and deep world.**

**He has written the most  
significant books of modern literature.**

**He saw the world so clearly  
that he could not bear the world.**

**He was bound to die  
Since he refused to hide  
under any doctrine.  
Even the more noble ones.**

**Few people here knew him.**

**We see HERMANN, JULIE, and the RABBI.**

**He was a recluse  
A literary monk.  
A wise man in dread of life.**

**He had been suffering  
a lung disease for years.  
And while he worked to cure it,**

**MILENA (cont.)**

**He also nourished it.**

**The burden on his heart and soul  
weighing him down.**

**Also became a burden on his lungs.**

**He has breathed his last.**

**May he rest in peace.**

**MAX BROD begins his eulogy.**

**MAX BROD  
Franz Kafka was a fanatic of the truth within himself.**

The truth lives in a body where mind, soul, and spirit  
work as one.  
When artist and human are one.  
The word becomes flesh.

Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, each is the artist of an age,  
an epoch. Our age shall be called the Kafkan era.  
His importance far greater than he could ever understand.  
Alive he died, but for his love Dora, almost alone.

DORA is holding MAX'S arm. MILENA does not look at MAX. She feels his words are  
superfluous after her own.

Dead, he will be a legend.  
His life a literature  
A parable of the modern.  
So be it. My friend Kafka  
was completely indifferent to fame.  
Writing for him was a form of prayer.  
All his efforts were focused  
on spiritual fulfillment.  
On achieving a life that was immaculately pure.

One sentence sums up Franz Kafka.  
A sentence from his works.

We, you and I, every man and woman,  
cannot live  
without an enduring faith  
in something indestructible  
within ourselves.

Also, Kafka understood  
that the problem  
the world has with Jews  
is the problem  
of life itself.



