

# You, The Fire, and Me

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by SEVAN

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## PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

1. The characters and events in the play are a composite of real people and real events based on extensive research. The rules of the world are similar to those employed in *The Handmaid's Tale*: every event in the play has happened at some point to someone real, ensnared in the phenomenon of self-radicalizing Westerners.
2. Punctuation Performativity:
  - / is when the next character kicks in with their line
  - ... a pause, a moment of thought, an attempt at physical action or verbalization
  - is usually a personal cut off, switch in tactic, or shift in articulation of thought
3. The play's language moves forward at the speed of the thought being expressed, with the presupposition that teenagers have little to no subtext.
4. Interludes are opportunities for physical storytelling designed to reveal story not articulated by the text.
5. Homework / Practicum spaces are separate to scenes and interludes, but are dramatic events that actually occur and reveal story not expressed elsewhere.
6. Transitions are quick jumps in time and should not slow the play down.
7. The only pauses in the play are defined (as "a moment," an action, or an ellipsis).

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### **CAST:**

**TOMMY** (18) - American-Caucasian. A Nebraskan teen typical of suburban America. Lived a loner life in a gaming world mixed with being perpetually ignored by everyone including his family. True of heart but damaged goods.

**JULES** (17) - British-Caucasian. Fiery, strong, South London teen from a council flat. Suffered the oppression of new economic 'incentives'. Knows how to use what she has to get what she wants.

**OMER** (17) - Iraqi-Australian. Devoted and devout to The Faith. A child of immigrants who fled during Saddam's regime and landed in Melbourne. Intelligent, clever, but too consumed by his passion for creating a pure version of Islam.

**TIME:** Now.

**PLACE:** A radicalisation training camp.

**RUN TIME:** 2 Hours.

"This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease." — *Robert Kennedy*

"The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they — at some distant point in the future — will take over the reins. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile." — *Alvin Toffler*

## ACT ONE

### AN END IS A BEGINNING

*Darkness. We hear the Chaotic Noise of voices, electronics, and explosions. It's like The Matrix on acid. It's a confusion of sounds. A battle of wills. The grinding of the gears out of control.*

*A voice gets louder and louder repeating the same phrase.*

### **A VOICE**

Matha setef3aloo? Matha setef3aloo? Matha setef3aloo?

*[What will you do? What will you do? What will you do?]*

### TIPSY TURVY

*And then there was light...*

*The TRIO sit in a sloppy circle. TOMMY and OMER are in khaki trainee uniforms. JULES is in a feminised version which includes khaki cargos, a modesty blouse / shift kind of top, and a modesty scarf that covers her head and face which she has flipped up and over her head. It's night. They're secluded. A lantern illuminates them.*

### **TOMMY**

What do you mean drunk?

### **OMER**

As in they drank and as a result got drunk.

### **TOMMY**

No way.

### **JULES**

Fuck off.

### **OMER**

Language.

### **TOMMY**

Didn't think I'd travel thousands of miles to study the boozing habits of Soldiers of Glory.

### **JULES**

This place is lit.

### **TOMMY**

What about the whole: 'Do not approach prayers while you are drunk.'

That's just during prayers. **OMER**

Ok what about - **TOMMY**  
(pulling out a pocket-sized book and flipping pages)

Have you been writing in it? **OMER**

Well - yeah. **TOMMY**

You wally. **OMER**

Ah mate! **JULES**

What what? **TOMMY**

You can't write in a holy book. **OMER**

But I need to take notes. **TOMMY**

You is well gonna get smacked for that. **JULES**

You're defacing it. **OMER**

Gonna fail and be kicked out. **JULES**

And take us down with him. **OMER**

Can I make my point please and then you can burn me at the stake? **TOMMY**

Go on. **OMER**

**TOMMY**

Ok - where is it - where is it - ok here here - ya saloon-um-saloonek 3an- 3an 3an al-

**JULES**

Fail.

**OMER**

Need to get better at that, too.

**TOMMY**

I'm tired.

**JULES**

I'm dyslexic.

**TOMMY**

My brain is still on Nebraska time.

**JULES**

We've been here two weeks already, mate.

**TOMMY**

I'm trying here!

**JULES**

Try harder or they'll ship you on the first transport out of here.

**OMER**

If not worse.

**JULES**

Alright Mr. Gloom and Doom.

**OMER**

This is /

**TRIO**

Not a game.

**OMER**

We have to be able to defend whatever argument they throw at us tomorrow.

**TOMMY**

I know that! Why the hell do you think I'm letting you two abuse me?!

**JULES**

Give it me, I'll read it.

(grabbing the Book from TOMMY. In her worse Arabic-with-South-London accent:)

Ya saloon-um-saloonek 3an al -

**OMER**

What is that?

**JULES**

I'm reading it correctly.

**OMER**

Eliza Doolittle with an AK-47.

*She mimes shooting OMER. TOMMY grabs the book.*

**TOMMY**

Ok: 'They ask you concerning alcoholic drinks and games of chance. Say: in them are harm and goods for men, but their harms exceeds their good effects.' Alcohol equals bad. That's the answer to question 15. I win. Gold star for Tommy. Next question.

**OMER**

Nope, wally. All it says is there is good and bad in it. The bad may exceed it but it doesn't say: DO NOT DRINK OR YOU DIE.

**JULES**

Then why they always sayin' don't drink.

**OMER**

That's the problem: All this loose interpretation. That's what some of the wallies in this camp don't get - yet. Leaders, poets, clerics, soldiers - they all drank - wine mostly. They even got drunk. It was a part of their lives.

**JULES**

I'm not surprised.

**OMER**

Oh?

**TOMMY**

Really?

**JULES**

Well - yeh - wouldn't you want a pint or two before heading into battle?

**TOMMY**

Or blowing yourself up.

**JULES**

Calm the nerves.

**TOMMY**

Liquid courage.

**OMER**

Then you're not really dedicated to The Faith. If you're questioning then you're lacking. So in this case it would be more harm than good.

**TOMMY**

He's right.

**JULES**

Wait wait wait. We're doing this wrong.

**OMER**

How so?

**JULES**

We're meant to be following what they believe here - not what you believe.

**OMER**

We're meant to be following The Book.

**JULES**

But if we don't learn it their way then we're not gonna be a part of them.

**TOMMY**

She's right. Outsiders in a different zip code.

**JULES**

And that ain't why I is here. So let's do this the way they would do it.

**OMER**

We do this the right way according to the Book and they won't be able to argue it.

**JULES**

Still think you can change everyone.

**OMER**

I know I can.

**JULES**

If you's figured out all these magical keys to knowledge, how comes they can't?

**OMER**

Because The Book was written for a time that doesn't exist anymore so some things don't make sense - at first. The text is pure. Most wallies waste time deciding what version best suits their needs but there are no versions.



**TOMMY**  
Too busy prayin' to the 'God of Technology', right?

**JULES**  
Wicked.

**TOMMY**  
YouTube Deities and SnapChat Muses!

**JULES**  
Yeh chill mate.

**TOMMY**  
Sorry.

**JULES**  
But I'd kill for me iPhone and a few Snapchat filters.

**TOMMY**  
Flower crown was my jam.

**OMER**  
If this is the best the world has to offer we're all screwed.

**JULES**  
Yeah alright Ghandi.

**TOMMY**  
I think that's probably racist.

**JULES**  
It ain't.

**OMER**  
It is.

**TOMMY**  
I don't know how the hell I'm going to remember all their rules.

**OMER**  
Their?

**TOMMY**  
Damn it. Our.

**JULES**

Sort that out, mate.

**OMER**

We have an incredible opportunity here. We actually have a chance - a real one - to set things right in the world. If I can get everyone in this camp on the same page then this could really be something amazing - something that could forever change / the -

*A noise. They panic. TOMMY gets to his feet to check it out. OMER covers the lantern. JULES covers her face.*

**OMER**

What is it?

**TOMMY**

Sh.

**JULES**

I think pissed myself.

**TOMMY**

SH I said.

*Silence except for night sounds.*

**TOMMY**

We're good.

*The lantern is uncovered. JULES shows her face again. They sit - a little more alert.*

**TOMMY**

Did you guys tell anyone about this?

**JULES**

Hilarious.

**OMER**

We're not keen on being publicly lashed.

**JULES**

No one patrols around over here. I been watchin' all week - trust, fam.

**TOMMY**

I don't like it.

**JULES**

It's the only way we get to see each other, innit.

**OMER**

To study.

**TOMMY**

This stuff is easier to get my head around with you two.

**JULES**

Well yeh - but still - I dead ass miss not having you lads to talk to whenever I want. They moved us in, separated us, and now we's either studying or training like we's getting ready for the Olympics or something.

**OMER**

This isn't summer camp, Julie.

**JULES**

Oi, we've talked about that you posh wanker. It's Jules. Always has been. Always will be.

**OMER**

They've got to do something about the way you speak.

**JULES**

Wot's wrong with how I speak then, O?

**OMER**

Sound like a fish wife.

*She swats him with her leg.*

**OMER**

OW! What is wrong with you??

**TOMMY**

Sh!

**JULES**

Take it back.

**TOMMY**

Keep it down.

**OMER**

You nong.

**JULES**

I said take it back.

**OMER**

Alright, I'm sorry. Can't take a joke.

**JULES**

I know what a joke is and that ain't one. You been havin' a go at me since we got in here.

**OMER**

I have not.

**TOMMY**

You kinda have, man.

**JULES**

To him, too. Always making fun of him being an American.

**OMER**

I always used to do that!

**JULES**

Nah you didn't. You're all bezzie mates with us on WhatsApp and FaceTime and Snapchat, but here all of a sudden you're all like: Cover your face, fix your accent, change the way you walk, do this better, do that better.

**OMER**

We made a promise at the border.

**JULES**

Yeh but not to turn on one another.

**OMER**

I'm not doing that! I'm just trying to help you both be - never mind.

**TOMMY**

Be more like you?

**OMER**

No - be better people.

**JULES**

What's wrong with us?

**OMER**

We're here to be part of the New Future. It means changing who we are.

**TOMMY**

Well you're not changing much.

I kind of have a leg up. **OMER**

Oooooo. **JULES**

Ah come on. This stuff is in my bones and cultural DNA. **OMER**

Alright Melbourne Boy. **JULES**

Do I look white to you? **OMER**

You're just as Western as we are. **TOMMY**

I was raised in the West but I'm Iraqi. **OMER**

Half. **JULES**

Both my parents are Iraqi. **OMER**

They was born in the motherland. They's got a claim to it. **JULES**

You wouldn't understand, Monoculture Mary. **OMER**

Fucking coconut. **JULES**

Enough guys! Jules back off. Omer stop being a jerk off. **TOMMY**

*OMER and JULES pipe down and separate.*

Look, we're all stressed out with graduation / and all but - **TOMMY**

That ain't for 5 more months. **JULES**

**TOMMY**

Well this ain't a normal graduation for any of us cause there ain't no summer school if we don't pass. We can only do this if we do it together - as a family.

**OMER**

We're not a family.

**TOMMY**

Yet. We're not a family yet. But we will be. We promised. We'll get to the end with our hands up victorious.

*He throws his hands up like Rocky and jumps from leg to leg.. OMER and JULES look at him. Then at one another. JULES cackles. OMER chuckles.*

**OMER**

Wally.

**JULES**

What a plonker.

**TOMMY**

Yes. Good. Laughter is good. Wally and plonker and laughter.

**JULES**

Oh my days you is mental.

**TOMMY**

Whatever keeps you laughing. Now let's do this. Five hours before the sun comes up. 12 questions left on the list. Four questions an hour. That still gives us two hours for all the other homework crap they've got us doing. Jules - go!

*A gunshot.*

INTERLUDE.

*The group move into walking formations, their eyes focused on their notebooks, conjugating the verb 'to be'. Whoever falters drops out of the formation.*

*TOMMY is first, tripping over a pronunciation.*

*OMER stops and looks questioningly at his notebook and scratches something out as he steps away.*

SHIFT.

## HOMEWORK: SPEECH

*We hear the buzz of a fluorescent light. Perhaps the juddering of a tank. All three are in their own world working on an assignment (it is the same anytime they are in this space).*

### **OMER**

(writing and crossing out)

You see how the world thinks of you and your kind. *Our kind*. How they want us to disappear. Want you to disappear. You have no identity outside of what they expect you to be. *Nice one, Omer.*

*He cockily keeps scribbling.*

### **JULES**

(writing)

You's don't want none of what they have to offer because they ain't givin' it to you because you need it but because they is like tryna get you addicted to the opiate and the masses and all. *Ah Jules, you sound like a fucking div.*

*She crumples the paper.*

### **TOMMY**

(reads from his sheet)

No one's gonna understand you better than us 'coz we've been there so we kinda get it. We know what you're going through so we know what to give. You're the one that we want. You are the one we want. *Oo oo oo honey. Dammit!*

(looking at the prompt again)

'Convince someone who is exactly you to join. Do not use religion. Do not use hate.' *Pain in my ass.*

*They all scribble.*

### **JULES**

You don't want -

### **OMER**

They don't want -

### **TOMMY**

Your - *our* family.

### **JULES**

The government.

### **TOMMY**

*No* - friends. Our friends.

Do they understand us?

**OMER**

*No.*

**JULES**

They don't understand us.

**TOMMY**

*Better.*

**JULES**

They don't want us.

**TRIO**

*A gunshot.*

*INTERLUDE:*

*The realities of life in the camp settle in on the trio.*

*TOMMY bathes sitting on a wooden stool with a plastic bucket and cup shivering from the unheated water.*

*OMER repairs his glasses with duct tape frustrated that he can't get them aligned correctly.*

*JULES, examines an unusually large, old-school sanitary pad and granny panties in shock and bemusement. She puts them into a plastic bag and walks off.*

*SHIFT:*

## **LOT'S DAUGHTER**

*OMER pulls her into the shadows.*

Oi! Hands off!

**JULES**

Have you lost your mind?

**OMER**

**JULES**  
(lifting her scarf)

O? Why is you grabbing at me like that? Oh my days, is we gonna make out?



What? No - I mean - **OMER**

You is low key nervous now. **JULES**

I am not! **OMER**

A cudge behind the loos. I've had worse. **JULES**

Some of the men have been talking about you. **OMER**

Yeh - and? **JULES**

It's only been a month and you're already getting the wrong kind of attention. **OMER**

Just getting ciggies. **JULES**

Stay away from the vest jockeys. **OMER**

Who - that Mohammad? Those lads are more worried about blowing themselves up. **JULES**

It's against the rules for you to be talking to any of the men in the first place. **OMER**

That include you and Tommy? **JULES**

Well - no. **OMER**

You're not men? **JULES**

We are, but I mean, it's different with us. **OMER**

**JULES**

It's different with them.

**OMER**

We won't kill you to save our honour.

**JULES**

Maybe I'm testing them to see if they're too weak coz then I don't wanna marry 'em.

**OMER**

Now you want to be an Honour Wife?

**JULES**

I came here to avoid being pregnant and married, you div.

**OMER**

Then join the Honour Brigade.

**JULES**

Those demented twats. Nah nah. Running around villages throwing acid on women who ain't faithful enough.

**OMER**

You could show them a better way.

**JULES**

That's your thing, O. Ain't no one gonna follow me anywhere. Look, it ain't my fault lads is lads and are too stupid to give me what I want without asking for anything.

**OMER**

Which proves what?

**JULES**

They ain't strong as I am.

**OMER**

'We.' You don't raise yourself by lowering others.

**JULES**

If I'm / meant to be an equal part of the whole then I / need to be seen as an equal part. I / need to be good. I / need to be -

**OMER**

/ We. /We. /We. /We.

**JULES**

Can you stop that?

**OMER**

There is no self here.

**JULES**

Well I cant exactly walk about referring to myself in the Royal We now can I?

**OMER**

You can when you stop expressing your personal desires and start being a part of something bigger than yourself.

**JULES**

Ok but how can WE do that if WE aren't allowed to show my - OUR - greatest potential.

**OMER**

If you want to make some real change then do it from within the system.

**JULES**

How the bloody hell and I meant to do that dressed like a live burial?

**OMER**

(with a shit-eating grin)

You haven't read The Book.

**JULES**

I have.

**OMER**

All of it?

**JULES**

Some of it.

**OMER**

I knew it!

**JULES**

I figured I could learn by watching!

**OMER**

Jules - you wally - all this (indicating her garb) isn't dictated.

*She waits for the punchline. Nothing.*

**JULES**

I'll kill 'em! What about all that modesty blah blah cover up temptation stuff.

**OMER**

It's about us - not you.

**JULES**

Ok you is well got me confused mate.

**OMER**

The Faith actually respects women - wants them to be educated - wants them to be on the same level as men. But we're still animals at the end of the day. We're responsible for our own urges and temptations. The burden of modesty lies with us.

**JULES**

So why's we have to suffer for you lot wrapped up in all this?

**OMER**

The whole concept of The Covering up was actually for women AND men - but we were meant to only cover the top of our heads as a sign of respect and faith.

**JULES**

The top?

**OMER**

Yeah.

**JULES**

Just the top?

**OMER**

Yes.

**JULES**

Men AND women?

*He nods.*

**JULES**

...

**OMER**

It's true.

**JULES**

I'll bleedin' kill 'em!

**OMER**

Keep it down before someone comes looking behind here.

**JULES**

Why didn't you tell me sooner? Why don't we tell them all this?

**OMER**

Tying to undo decades of fundamentalism isn't easy. Will take more than one chav with a heat stroke.

**JULES**

Well this chav is about to get deep into their heads and flip the script on them.

**OMER**

Not the way you're doing it.

**JULES**

My way is easiest. And faster.

**OMER**

It's not safe.

**JULES**

Supergirl, inn'I?

**OMER**

These aren't like the guys back home.

**JULES**

All lads is wired the same dumb way.

**OMER**

These 'lads' believe in honour killing.

*A brief moment.*

**JULES**

Nah. I's their favourite heathen. That Mohammad lets me call him Mo and everything. We's tight.

*OMER raises an eyebrow to her.*

**JULES**

They like me.

*Another look.*

**JULES**

What else? What else do I need to know?

**OMER**

Read The Book.

**JULES**

You know exactly what I need to know so.

**OMER**

You'll learn it better if you read it directly.

**JULES**

Please just help me out come on, mate. Make it easy on me.

**OMER**

(starting to leave)

You're impossible.

**JULES**

(grabbing his arm)

Stop running so hot and cold with me. You're doing my head in. Protect me - save me - insult me - criticise me - pick one. What is it? You want me to say I'm a damaged person? Fine. I'm shit.

**OMER**

No you're not.

**JULES**

Then stop treating me like every other bloke has my entire life.

**OMER**

I only want you to understand that nothing about this place is as easy as it looks.

**JULES**

Pfft - this is easier than sitting in a Planned Parenthood clinic with a fake ID.

**OMER**

. . . . You never told us.

**JULES**

Is what it is and that's all it is. Don't make it a thing, mate.

**OMER**

I didn't -

**JULES**

Wasn't gonna be satisfied being another single, pregnant slag like me mum and sisters. Living to change diapers and cutting corners while trying to cheat the government for more benefits. Yeah that's lush arite.

**OMER**

I'm sorry.

**JULES**

Just coz I don't wear my scars so you can see them don't mean I ain't got 'em, yeh? So trust - I can handle this place.

**OMER**

Patience will take you far.

**JULES**

Patience got us a broken world in the first place. Fucking parents - yeh I know language just listen - and fucking paedo politicians saying they're looking out for us while starving us and emptying our bank accounts. No more of that, O.

**OMER**

You'll fail Jules -

**JULES**

Now hold on -

**OMER**

Let me finish. You'll fail if you try and do this alone. I understand the rules - you don't. And you won't if you keep ignoring or breaking them. I'm not trying to make your life difficult, Jules. I promise.

**JULES**

Whatevs, mate.

**OMER**

I want you to succeed, ok? I do. I want these wallies to understand how wrong they are about The Book including about you and the other women - but I can't do it alone. Work with me - with Tommy - so we can achieve that. We have to use these tools not because we desire something for ourselves, but because we need to fix a wrong in this world. And we have to start here.

**JULES**

If you knew this was all a lie why'd you come, mate?

**OMER**

It's not a lie. Just a series of misunderstandings. It's my calling to guide my brothers and sisters back to The Faith the way it's meant to be. But we have to be patient.

**JULES**

But I know how to get to men like this real quick and easy.

**OMER**

Why risk the shorter path that you can't see fully?

**JULES**

Mate, I can handle any path. Trust. I AM helping you and I will. So that WE graduate with top marks and impress them. Then WE'LL get assigned the best positions. The three of us need to throw up two fingers to the world what did us worse. Ride and die with us.

**OMER**

Don't be so dramatic.

**JULES**

Patience is just another way of wasting time until you forget what you wanted to begin with.

**OMER**

You'll learn, Jules. You'll see we can only do this together.

**JULES**

But you won't help me! You have the tools, you know what I need, and you won't give it me.

**OMER**

Because I know you can do it! You have all the passion - all the fire - but none of the discipline. And if you had that - there would be no limit. We're stronger together when we can also stand on solid ground of our own making.

**JULES**

Yeh alright whatever.

**OMER**

Read the book. Start there. Ask me questions. Then let's see.

**JULES**

Yeh. Let's see.

*A gunshot.*

*INTERLUDE:*

*TOMMY jogs on and around them as they stare at one another.*

*The trio move through drills meant to keep their stamina up and get them into shape.*

*They are trying their best to keep up, but it's clear they are not used to this. TOMMY falters and JULES steps in to help and bolster him.*

*OMER falters. JULES takes a moment then goes to help him as well.*

*A double gunshot.*



SHIFT:

*They drop, pulling out scrubbing brushes and a mop.*

SCRUBBERS

*Pre-Dawn. The Trio clean toilets. In this camp that amounts to holes in the ground. OMER and JULES scrub. TOMMY mops and yawns incessantly. The boys in the men's, JULES in the women's; her modesty scarf is flipped up and over so she can breathe better, but it keeps getting in her way as she cleans. A wall separates JULES from the boys. They're going at it hard and are breathless. All we hear is heavy breathing for a bit.*

**TOMMY**

Well this is crap. . .Get it? Crap? This is crap? Coz we're in a shitter.

*OMER looks at him dead-eyed then continues.*

**TOMMY**

Jules! Hey Jules!

**JULES**

Yeh?

**TOMMY**

This is crap!

**JULES**

Wot?

**TOMMY**

This is crap!

*A moment. She considers. He gives up. Then she cackles.*

**TOMMY**

See? She gets it, Omer.

*OMER cleans.*

**TOMMY**

Who knew mopping a floor was gonna kick my ass.

*They clean. TOMMY hums.*

**TOMMY**

*When Israel was in Egypt's land, Let My people go!*

*JULES cackles from the other side.*

**JULES**

Oh god I can taste the loo in my mouth I'm gonna be sick.

**TOMMY**

That does NOT look fun to clean. I still can't squat and aim right.

*OMER throws his brush at TOMMY.*

**TOMMY**

Hey! That is totally unsanitary.

**OMER**

This is all your fault.

**TOMMY**

What did I do?

**JULES**

Hey lads?

**OMER**

Asking Second Leader if he believed in T-Rexes.

**TOMMY**

It's a relevant question.

**JULES**

Too loud, lads.

**OMER**

How is that relevant in a religion class?

**TOMMY**

A lot of Christians don't believe in them - think God put the bones there as a practical joke.

**OMER/JULES**

What?

**TOMMY**

Crazy right? So if they don't believe in dinosaurs then it's sort of a problem.

**OMER**

Dinosaurs are completely inconsequential to The Faith!

**TOMMY**

It's just like Dungeons & Dragons.

**OMER**

What? What??

**TOMMY**

I have to know the world they're building and the rules so I understand the game and how to play it truthfully.

**OMER**

This isn't a game.

**TOMMY**

You know what I mean.

**OMER**

Not even two months and look where we are. Instead of sleeping like the rest of the camp we're cleaning out these cesspits.

**TOMMY**

You'd think they would've invested in toilets.

*OMER flings dirty water at him.*

**TOMMY**

Stop that!

**OMER**

Your mouth is going to get me kicked out before we've even begun. You too!

**JULES**

Oi she ran into my hand!

**OMER**

Twice?

**JULES**

She tripped.

(under her breath)

Uppity slag.

**OMER**

And lucky me gets to share in all this joy.

**TOMMY**

One for all and all for one.

**OMER**

How is this supposed to test our dedication to The Faith!

**TOMMY**

It's basic.

**OMER**

Basic what?

**TOMMY**

*Full Metal Jacket? Platoon?* Every military movie made in the last 30 years? Push-ups in the rain and shit. Basic.

**OMER**

I know this will be hard to believe but the entire world isn't on a steady diet of Hollywood. We have better things to do with our lives than fool ourselves into thinking we're free.

**TOMMY**

Tell that to all those people trying to get into America everyday.

**OMER**

Oh you mean the same ones who are mysteriously 'disappearing' every other day?

**JULES**

Weren't you the one complaining about being forced to White it up in Mighty Oz, bruv?

**TOMMY**

Ok so all our countries suck and ta da we find ourselves here. They're pushing us physically so they can break us mentally which will make us easier to mold.

**OMER**

There are two other barracks full of people our age. Get those wallies to do it.

**JULES**

Last in first to clean?

**OMER**

I'm not going to let you ruin this for me.

**TOMMY**

Doing a good job of it yourself.

**OMER**

Come again?

**TOMMY**

You're a pain in the ass in classes. Like you can't wait to get a pat on the head and singled out for good behavior.

**JULES**

Alright enough lads. Everyone'll be up soon. Heads down and work. The quicker we do this the quicker we get back to theology and dinosaurs.

**OMER**

The two of you think this is some sort of summer camp.

**TOMMY**

Lighten up.

**OMER**

I don't even know why they bother letting your kind in.

**TOMMY**

Whoa.

**JULES**

You is well out of line.

**OMER**

I'm sorry.

**JULES**

Is you a racist now, Omer?

**OMER**

Of course not.

**JULES**

If you believe what you just said, then you is.

**OMER**

It's not what - I didn't exactly - look I'm sorry ok - this - this stuff - all of it - I can't - it's not -

*TOMMY hugs OMER who stands there confused.*

**JULES**

What's going on?

**OMER**

He's hugging me.

What? **JULES**

Hugging me. **OMER**

Wicked. **JULES**

Why are you hugging me? **OMER**

Shhhh. **TOMMY**

Can you stop hugging me? **OMER**

Get 'im, T. Get 'im! **JULES**

*A little more hugging then TOMMY steps away and smiles at OMER still standing there confused.*

**TOMMY**  
I'm trying to make the best out of a bad situation so we can get through it together and maybe laugh about it later.

*TOMMY hands him the mop and takes brush duty instead. They clean.*

The bread. **TOMMY**

What? **OMER/JULES**

**TOMMY**  
I like the bread here. It tastes - I dunno - real. It smells like those commercials where the steaming loaf comes out of the oven. I dunno if I could ever go back to the crap back home - not that I ever could I guess.

**JULES**  
The music. I dunno what the other Silent Sisters in Black are saying half the time, but oh my days, their voices and the way they sing.

*They clean. Waiting for OMER.*

The religious debates. **OMER**

Nope. **TOMMY**

What nope? **OMER**

Simpler. **TOMMY**

. . . The people - they - look like me - like they could be my family except - better.  
*They clean. Then as if on cue:*

Pop tarts. **TOMMY**

Jaffa cakes. **JULES**

Coon Cheese. **OMER**

What? **TOMMY**

Jaffas and a proper cuppa. **JULES**

What 'what'? I said Coon Cheese. **OMER**

What the hell is that? **TOMMY**

Um - cheese? My brother Ali and I ate it every morning. **OMER**

Coon??? **TOMMY**

Um - yes? **OMER**

**TOMMY**  
That's like a really bad word for black people.

**OMER**  
Get out!

**JULES**  
Is he bein' racist again?

**TOMMY**  
You guys have something called Coon Cheese??

**OMER**  
Yeah.

**TOMMY**  
And the world thinks Americans are racist.

**OMER**  
I wouldn't be throwing rocks given who your lot have running the asylum.

**TOMMY**  
Fair point.

*OMER smiles. They clean.*

**JULES**  
Do you miss them?

**TOMMY**  
No. Maybe. I think I miss knowing they were in the house just as bodies in a space but not as parents in a home.

**JULES**  
I get ya.

**TOMMY**  
You?

**JULES**  
Nope. I'd rather be here scrubbing manky loos than sitting in a council flat watching me mum and sisters waste their lives away waiting for their benefits sitting on their lazy fat arses eating chocolate oranges and stinking up the place with cigarette smoke the fat cows.

**TOMMY**  
Well tell us how you really feel about it.



**OMER**

I miss mine. Is that bad?

**JULES**

You had a real family. T and I - not so much.

**OMER**

I don't know if you can count it as real if you feel like an outsider.

**JULES**

Even with all those brothers and sisters?

**OMER**

Even with and because of.

**TOMMY**

Well now you have us.

**JULES**

You think yours miss you?

**TOMMY**

They probably haven't noticed I finally left my room.

**JULES**

You never said much about them.

**TOMMY**

Boring old Mr. and Mrs. Davidson. Lawyer and realtor making America great one vodka soda at a time.

**JULES**

Lush.

**TOMMY**

And their fuck-up only child.

**OMER**

Don't say that.

**JULES**

Yeah. Worse you did was - what - play one of them video games for a whole weekend? My mum probably thinks I got up the duff like my other sisters and ran off with some Uber driver.

**TOMMY**

Goals.

**JULES**

They're in for a surprise. I'm gonna be better than all of them.

**TOMMY**

I'd be happy with a pat on the back and a 'good job'.

**OMER**

We have to stop talking about back home.

**TOMMY**

Just reminding ourselves why we're here.

**OMER**

The future should be enough motivation for us. Every time we look back we stop moving forward.

**JULES**

Doesn't matter. We's still gonna be great. We's gonna prove that we're somebodies. We do this off our own backs and make everyone stand up and take notice. Yeh?

**TOMMY**

Yeah.

**OMER**

Definitely.

**JULES**

Then say it: We's gonna be great.

**TOMMY/OMER**

We's gonna be great.

**JULES**

And those that get in our way -

*She slams both hands together like a collision. It's kind of like the equivalent of fist bump-exploding yourself.*

*JULES goes back to scrubbing. TOMMY scrubs and conjugates. OMER mops with renewed vigor.*

*A loud buzzer waking the camp from their sleep.*

*SHIFT:*

**HOMEWORK: DEBATE**

*Back to their assignments.*

**JULES**

They don't want us. Our family. Our government.

**TOMMY**

Our friends. They don't understand us. [chuckles] *They never will.*

**OMER**

Their knowledge is limited. They are influenced by money and - money and - riches - *no same thing* - money and power.

**JULES**

Money and - *what what what*. . . selfishness AND the need to prove their worth. Money and selfishness and the need to prove their worth. *Loyalty?* Worth.

*JULES leaves. TOMMY and OMER pull out notebooks.*

*SHIFT:*

**THE PRIME OF TOMMY**

I am.

**OMER**

*Akunu.*

**TOMMY**

You are.

**OMER**

*Takunu.*

**TOMMY**

He is.

**OMER**

*Yakunu.*

**TOMMY**

She is.

**OMER**

*Takunu.* TOMMY

You are - male plural. OMER

*Takuneenee.* TOMMY

No. OMER

*Takunoni.* TOMMY

Think first. OMER

*Takunoonoo.* TOMMY

We just went over this. OMER

*Tako* I don't fucking remember tell me. TOMMY

*OMER gathers his things and gets up to leave.*

No no come on. TOMMY

I warned you. OMER

I'm sorry I'm just frustrated. TOMMY

If you don't control your emotions you'll be useless. OMER

I know. TOMMY

And if you fail I fail and I don't fail. OMER

I'm sorry.

**TOMMY**

*OMER looks at him.*

Come on, Omer. Don't make me hold you to the promises.

**TOMMY**

*OMER sits back down.*

Thank you.

**TOMMY**

Without discipline -

**OMER**

- all doors close to you.

**BOTH**

You are - male plural.

**OMER**

Can we take a break?

**TOMMY**

No.

**OMER**

Just gimme two minutes to get my brain in order.

**TOMMY**

Two.

**OMER**  
(looking at his watch)

Seriously?

**TOMMY**

Tick tock.

**OMER**

Think you could have a little sympathy.

**TOMMY**

Discipline doesn't like sympathy.

**OMER**

*An awkward pause.*

**TOMMY**

Hey look - I appreciate your helping me ok?

**OMER**

If you fail / I fail.

**TOMMY**

I fail right I know but - still - ok? Thank you. I don't wanna graduate and get assigned permanent toilet duty.

**OMER**

How could you have lived in a country where all the tools to succeed are practically given to you and not walk away with the ability to succeed at everything?

**TOMMY**

Not everyone has access.

**OMER**

The opportunities are waiting to be taken - not asked for.

**TOMMY**

It's not that simple.

**OMER**

It is.

**TOMMY**

No, man, it's not.

**OMER**

The house you lived in. Your parents' work. Your skin color.

**TOMMY**

Sometimes the tools turn on you. Besides - I wasn't born speaking this language.

**OMER**

Neither was I.

**TOMMY**

But you grew up with it.

**OMER**

No I didn't.

But your parents are Arabic. **TOMMY**

Arab. Arabic is a language. **OMER**

You know what I mean. **TOMMY**

I taught myself. **OMER**

That doesn't make sense. **TOMMY**

They didn't want us learning it. **OMER**

Why not? **TOMMY**

If you want to talk then you conjugate. **OMER**

I need my brain to think about something else for a minute. **TOMMY**

They wanted us to fit in so they only allowed English at home. **OMER**

So how did you - ? **TOMMY**

Downloaded a book to my kindle and when everyone was asleep I'd study. No one had to push me to motivate me. **OMER**

All that time on WhatsApp and you never said. **TOMMY**

You never asked. **OMER**

Well I just - **TOMMY**

**OMER**

It's a bad habit of your people.

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

Sorry. I have to stop doing that.

**TOMMY**

You don't need to say I'm sorry for being human.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

So what did your parents think of it all?

**OMER**

The Faith tore apart their family during the war. They lost so many relatives. All their homes and land utterly destroyed. I tried to make them understand Religion doesn't start out bad. I wanted them to see the beauty of The Faith. To remember why they loved it. But they didn't want to remember living through the nightmares in Iraq. If they got rid of The Faith then it would never happen again.

**TOMMY**

It kinda makes sense, man. Wouldn't you?

**OMER**

No. Never. Because I understand its truth. I want them to find that beauty again. To remember the compassion and love it gives them and other people. To see how it really could save everyone if they would take a minute to listen to what The Faith is really saying. Not what others think it's saying. But they didn't have time for it or for me. I'm one of five - as long as I stayed out of trouble and brought home high marks that was enough for them. Probably for the better. Who knows where I'd be if they paid more attention.

**TOMMY**

I know how you feel. My parents forgot my birthday one year.

*OMER looks at him.*

**TOMMY**

14th - not a special one - but still - you know, my birthday.

**OMER**

Maybe if you spent less time playing videos games they would remember you existed.



**TOMMY**

They went on a couple's holiday for a week and left me \$100 on the kitchen counter. I invited my best friend Alex over and we ordered an assload of pizzas and orange Sunkist and watched Will Ferrell movies. He laughed so hard he puked orange pepperoni stuff all over the place and passed out early. I spent the rest of the night scrubbing the white carpets and making sure Alex slept on his side so the idiot wouldn't choke on his own puke. My mom remembered a month later. She gave me a souvenir mug as a belated gift. My dad never said a thing.

**OMER**

Your parents should have done better.

**TOMMY**

It's fine - really. I became an expert at making PB&Js by the time I was 7. Everyone else was too busy trying to be YouTube stars - like that actually matters - while Alex and I honed our sweet skills on Call of Duty and Halo - which, hello, clearly was the right choice because a make-up tutorial ain't gonna help me here. I learned the power of staying low, keeping silent. I didn't have to care about cliques or being invited to parties. Not even the bullies bothered looking my way. Drama-free life.

**OMER**

At least you had a best friend.

**TOMMY**

A best friend. One. For whatever that was worth.

**OMER**

Sometimes the one is enough.

**TOMMY**

Not always.

**OMER**

Better than having none.

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

If I had known - before.

**TOMMY**

You never asked.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

Don't give up on me. I'm not asking you to save me. I'd just like to not do it on my own for once.

**OMER**

*Takununa.* You are - male plural.

*A call to prayer sounds.*

INTERLUDE:

*JULES comes by and yanks TOMMY away as OMER pulls out The Book and a pamphlet making notes. He's wrestling with an angel and trying to make sense of The Book and the radicalisation pamphlet.*

*JULES pulls out a leafy branch. TOMMY gives her a look and she pulls out a tin foil ornament. She moves her fingers and one ornament becomes two. He smiles. They hang their ornaments on the branch.*

*OMER is losing the wrestling match. He gives up and puts the book and pamphlet away.*

*JULES and TOMMY take turns singing a Christmas carol the other does not recognise before finally landing on Jingle Bells.*

*Something clicks to OMER and he goes back to his work, turns pages in The Book and finds what he needs, scratching out something on the pamphlet and rewriting it.*

*JULES and TOMMY hear something or someone and quickly destroy their makeshift Yule tree and move away from one another.*

SHIFT:

**THE OUTSIDERS**

*JULES tugs at her modesty scarf, flapping it to create a flow of air to her face. TOMMY struggles with his beard.*

**JULES**

How much longer?

**TOMMY**

3 months.

**JULES**

Fuck my life.

**TOMMY**

And mine

**JULES**

Does it ever not smell like petrol around here?

**TOMMY**

My back is fucked from those mats they've got us sleeping on.

**JULES**

Fuckin' hell this shit is intense, innit.

**TOMMY**

"Isn't it."

**JULES**

Bite me.

**TOMMY**

You told me to correct you.

**JULES**

This proper talking tosh can bite me, too. Like it matters. 'Cover up and shit up'. Wankers.

*TOMMY laughs.*

**JULES**

Don't take the piss.

**TOMMY**

'Shit up'.

**JULES**

What?

**TOMMY**

You said 'Cover up and shit up'.

**JULES**

Oh my days - I'm havin' a heat stroke - that's it for me.

**TOMMY**

You're fine, nutbag.

**JULES**

Where was all this shit on their little pamphlet?

**TOMMY**

Didn't prepare us for a lot.

*They spot someone. TOMMY bends down to tie his boots. JULES puts her arms up in prayer. TOMMY nods to the person as they walk by.*

**TOMMY**

Don't get too close.

**JULES**

Mate, they wouldn't even be able to tell if I were talking or not.

**TOMMY**

Better safe than sorry.

**JULES**

Where's Omer?

**TOMMY**

Been liquid shitting himself all day. Idiot didn't boil the well water first.

**JULES**

Oh my days - he made a mistake!?

**TOMMY**

Boy's got a lot of book sense but not a lot of street smarts.

**JULES**

Ah mate I can't wait to rub his face in it. Always making me feel like I don't know as much as he does.

**TOMMY**

Loves correcting me every chance he gets.

**JULES**

And you see him on the run the other day. He's getting faster.

**TOMMY**

And stronger.

**JULES**

I mean he had farther to go so his improvements -

Seem bigger than ours right. **TOMMY**

So we're not really slowing down. **JULES**

Nah. I mean a stall here and there. **TOMMY**

Hurdles. Necessary hurdles. **JULES**

Right. **TOMMY**

Right. **JULES**

*A moment.*

The other 'foreigners' seems to be doing fine. **TOMMY**

Better than us at least. **JULES**

The guy from Belgium is pretty cool. **TOMMY**

The big ginger one? **JULES**

Yeah. They call him Abu Musa. Says hello and tells me to keep it up every day. Used to be a punk rocker. **TOMMY**

Yeh Mo says everyone loves him. **JULES**

Who's Mo? **TOMMY**

One of the vest jockeys. **JULES**

Makin' friends fast. **TOMMY**

**JULES**

Good to have some wild cards up your sleeve innit. Anyways, Mo told me Abu Musa just joined the other jockeys.

**TOMMY**

Oh - really?

**JULES**

Yeh. Hope he don't get called up though. He's well fit.

**TOMMY**

You're so horny.

**JULES**

Ain't gotta be horny to think someone's fit. I think you're fit and I ain't tryin' to shag you.

**TOMMY**

You do?

**JULES**

Yeh. Though that beard is a bit shit.

**TOMMY**

Can't change genetics.

**JULES**

Omer's beard though is sick.

**TOMMY**

Another gold star for him.

**JULES**

Makes the little specky bastard fitter than he should be.

**TOMMY**

Yeah. Yeah - fit.

**JULES**

Don't be jell.

**TOMMY**

I'm not.

*A couple of women go by. JULES waves at them. She clearly gets nothing back.*

**JULES**

At least wave back - bitches. I don't get it, mate. They really wanted us here but they treat us like the enemy.

**TOMMY**

Coz we look like the enemy.

**JULES**

But that will change, right?

**TOMMY**

If it didn't would it be the end of the world?

**JULES**

I want to be someone, mate. Not just anyone. If I can't get that here then - I dunno, mate - then what's the point of even breathing.

*A moment. He reaches behind and tries to find her hand.*

**JULES**

What is ya doin'?

**TOMMY**

Tryin' to hold your hand.

**JULES**

Why?

**TOMMY**

For comfort.

**JULES**

Why?

**TOMMY**

Because you -

**JULES**

Yeh?

**TOMMY**

You -

**JULES**

Yeh?

Never mind.

**TOMMY**

*He pulls his hand back. Scratches his beard. She ruffles her modesty covering.*

**JULES**  
(shaking it off)  
Just gotta be patient like - damn it - like Omer says.

He's struggling, too.

**TOMMY**

Is he? Hunh.

**JULES**

Feels out place.

**TOMMY**

Here?

**JULES**

Oh yeah.

**TOMMY**

Hunh.

**JULES**

But they're not making it easy on us.

**TOMMY**

No they ain't, bruv. They ain't.

**JULES**

The rules. The beatings.

**TOMMY**

The yelling. The shunning.

**JULES**

The heat.

**TOMMY & JULES**

Not the best motivations to get us out of bed.

**TOMMY**



**JULES**

More like motivations to send us running back.

**TOMMY**

We could always -

**JULES**

We should.

**TOMMY**

Good!

**JULES**

We should definitely double up and work harder and keep a check on one another.

**TOMMY**

Oh. Yeah.

*JULES looks at him confused.*

**TOMMY**

Totally. Yeah.

*A moment.*

**TOMMY**

They're just being dicks because they think we had it all.

**JULES**

Pillocks.

**TOMMY**

To be young in America! The Greatest Country in the World! Golden opportunities here and there for everyone! You get a car and you get a car which you'll get to enjoy once you're done choking on your school and credit card debt which you'll never pay off with the shitty minimum wage job you'll be working until you die - yeehaw.

**JULES**

Is American uni really like what I seen in films?

**TOMMY**

Dunno. Graduated high school and got the hell out.

**JULES**

Did you want to?

**TOMMY**

Think so. But hell if I know what I would want to spend the rest of my life doing.

**JULES**

If I could have gone - ah well - fuck it - no point dreaming up that life.

**TOMMY**

Why didn't you?

**JULES**

Where was I gonna get nine thousand quid a year, mate?

**TOMMY**

Nine thousand?

**JULES**

Steep innit.

**TOMMY**

That's it?

**JULES**

Wot?

**TOMMY**

That's a bargain! You shoulda gone! Do you have any idea how much it is a year to go to college in America? Nine thousand??

**JULES**

Mate, it all used to be free. Anyone could change their life if they wanted to. No more, mate. No more.

**TOMMY**

Sort of end up stuck in the middle then. Being worthlessly wasted.

**JULES**

You is so deep.

*TOMMY looks sheepish.*

**TOMMY**

At least we've got some kind of shot here.

**JULES**

But that's it, innit mate? Any dream we had we can realise here without bleeding restrictions like we had at home.

**TOMMY**

We're restricted here too.

**JULES**

Yeah - but it's different - it's weird mate. Like, yeh, I get the whole tryna keep womens down - even though O says they're actually like massively wrong about that - like that shite ain't a surprise but then they's got like this - this store, mate - and it's got like perfume, and make up, and tampons and shit in it.

**TOMMY**

What??

**JULES**

Yeh, mate, it's mental. So, like, there's that shite, then there's this [indicated her garb] but then they let me learn. My class don't matter here. My accent don't matter. They're letting me have knowledge. They're strengthening my body. They actually want us to be better. And giving us the tools.

**TOMMY**

Tools they won't let you use.

**JULES**

Yeh. It's doin' my head in. I can almost see how to get around it and it's driving me mad.

**TOMMY**

Ask Omer. He'll know.

**JULES**

Specky is too busy lookin' after me honour. Nah, mate, I can do this. Just gotta find that blind spot innit.

**TOMMY**

It does sort of feel good to be looked after though. And cared for.

**JULES**

Yeh.

**TOMMY**

I mean they're tough but it feels like it's coming from a good place. It's good to have some kind of attention.

**JULES**

We get choices.

**TOMMY**

Not that many.

**JULES**

Even two is more than I ever had before.

**TOMMY**

And we get to set down roots.

**JULES**

They want us to feel like we belong because they want us to not because they're obliged.

**TOMMY**

And roots take time.

**JULES**

Exactly.

**TOMMY**

Why were we complaining again?

**JULES**

(laughing)

Right? We's sort of got it better here, innit.

**TOMMY**

'And among His signs is the creation of heavens and earth, and the variations in your languages, and your colors.'

**JULES**

Beautiful.

**TOMMY**

Second Leader said it the other day. Been rattling around in my head. Didn't get it until now. No one is superior here. Who cares about what or how we speak. Or our skin color. Everyone who follows the Faith is our brother and sister. Slick bastard - he's seeing what's happening.

**JULES**

Hunh. Thanks for that.

**TOMMY**

The three of us need to become a family. That would be the cherry on top.

**JULES**

Yeh mate. Whatever. Ride or die.

**TOMMY**

There's no rush to the finish line.

**JULES**

Yeh but I'm guessing they ain't giving gold stars for last place.

**TOMMY**

One slips - the other two holds them up.

**JULES**

As long as the slip ain't too far though.

**TOMMY**

Doesn't matter, Jules. Jules?

**JULES**

Yeh...sure - don't matter.

*OMER barges into the space as JULES walks off.*

SHIFT:

### LIPS AND LIES

*OMER grabs a bag and starts packing his things.*

**OMER**

Idiots!

**TOMMY**

Do you want to get into more trouble, Yellie McYellerson?

**OMER**

I don't care if they hear me.

**TOMMY**

Yeah well my knuckles haven't recovered from the last punishment so chill out.

**OMER**

I'm a model student.

**TOMMY**

What are you doing?

**OMER**

And he's going to tell me I need to do better. Better?!

**TOMMY**

That's my stuff.

What? **OMER**

That's my shirt and my boxers. **TOMMY**

Oh. **OMER**

And stop packing. **TOMMY**

No way. Forget these trogs. **OMER**

I said stop it. **TOMMY**  
(grabbing his bag)

I'm sick of Second Leader trying to make me look an idiot in front of everyone. I challenge anyone here to a quiz on The Book. **OMER**

Is that a thing? **TOMMY**

You get one answer right and he's ready to crown you King of the World. I'm the reason why you know this stuff. **OMER**

And I thank you for it. **TOMMY**

Getting credit for my work. You should have told him it was me! **OMER**

Next time I can pretend not to know. **TOMMY**

He's wrong. Completely wrong. **OMER**

... **TOMMY**

Right? He's wrong. **OMER**

**TOMMY**  
Oh I thought you were just talking at me.

**OMER**  
So tell me.

**TOMMY**  
Uhh, maybe another time.

**OMER**  
I want to know.

**TOMMY**  
. . .you're a hypocrite. Beforeyouexplodehearmeoutman.

**OMER**  
...

**TOMMY**  
You don't practice what you preach.

**OMER**  
Go on. . .

**TOMMY**  
You're always going on about - um - about - uhhh - fragmentation. And how all these splits and factions are 'systematically ruining pure religious ideologies' and how we need mutual love, mercy and compassion, so we can be like one body and stuff. But...I mean, come on, man. You're not exactly practicing what you preach.

**OMER**  
I need to be the best or they won't listen to me. And every time Second Leader undermines me it throws me back steps .

**TOMMY**  
You'll get farther if you be yourself - or, you know, nicer. If you don't annoy him maybe he'll take you seriously.

**OMER**  
This is not a game.

**TOMMY**  
You're 17, man.

**OMER**  
This is all I have left.

**TOMMY**

You're 17! You're allowed to mess up.

**OMER**

I can't sit here and watch everything be ruined by another group of confused zealots.

**TOMMY**

Like you always say: Be patient.

**OMER**

Four months and nothing. I untwist them and they find a way to twist in a different direction. The Believers here act like any wally out there with a grudge. What's the point of my being here if I can't make a difference?

*He starts to pack again.*

**TOMMY**

(unpacking what Omer packs)

Well that's just the crazy talking so let it all out.

**OMER**

I came here to be around people who didn't expect me to deny my culture to fit in. Where I could relax and be as Iraqi and as Arab and as faithful as I want without having to worry whose eyebrows would be raised if I wasn't Aussie enough. I don't have to be O-Man, or O-Dawg or Brown Boy - I could be Omer. And nothing else. But it's like I have to work twice as hard just because I was born in the West. I AM Arab. I AM a Believer. What more do they want?!

**TOMMY**

Use honey and less vinegar. And don't talk so much.

**OMER**

I just want them to listen / to really hear me.  
I know this stuff. It's meant to be air tight  
but they don't get it.

**TOMMY**

Or you can keep talking - alright keep  
talking.

**TOMMY**

(letting his anger show)

Stop packing!

(taking a breath)

You're not a one-man army. I know you want to be. But that's, like, highly unrealistic. Be a part of a whole. Work with Jules and I for a change instead of apart from us. We can help if you would just let us.

*A moment.*

**OMER**

Why don't I annoy you?



**TOMMY**

Oh you do.

**OMER**

Oh.

**TOMMY**

But it doesn't bother me. Now - unpack.

*OMER looks at him. Then slowly starts unpacking.  
TOMMY watches him in silence for a bit. He chuckles.*

**TOMMY**

You remind me of my friend Lizzie. Lizzie Benzo. Well, I don't know if friend is right. She was the class nerd - with a whole lotta bite. Stood up to the bullies every time. I followed her after one her stand-offs and found her next to the dumpster crying her face off - like ugly crying. I wanted to give her a hug but somehow I thought that would like insult her. Like the last thing she needed was someone feeling sorry for her. So I sorta sat down next to her and let her do her thing. Just wanted her to know she wasn't alone. And stuff.

**OMER**

I have to make them understand and I don't know what else to do anymore.

**TOMMY**

You got a good heart. But you got those walls up, man. Hell we all got walls. But I'm here for you. And not because I'm told I have to be. Like, I'll sit there and let you ugly cry if it helps. And I know I'm not there yet, but I can still help you do - stuff - whatever you need. You helped me succeed so let me help you succeed. So, like, yeah. Breathe. I'm gonna hug you now and you're going to let me.

*OMER allows himself to be hugged. As they pull away he looks at TOMMY then impulsively kisses him. OMER pulls away quickly, the blood draining from his face.*

**OMER**

Oh no. No no no.

**TOMMY**

Well then.

*OMER drops to his knees and starts rapidly praying.*

**TOMMY**

Hey man. Omer. It's fine, man. Chill. Seriously don't - don't do that ok. Omer? (he reaches for him)

**OMER**

(repeating)

Rubbanna la tooa5ithna in nasina auw  
a5tah'na.

*[Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget or fall  
into error.]*

**OMER**

Don't touch me! Get away. Get away!

**TOMMY**

Relax, man!

**OMER**

You can't tell anyone. Please you can't. You can't. I didn't mean it. I don't know why I did it!  
[repeating] Rubbanna la tooa5ithna in nasina auw a5tah'na.

*TOMMY wrestles with OMER trying to get him to stop praying. He gets him into a reverse bear hug on the ground.*

**TOMMY**

Calm down.

**OMER**

Let me go.

**TOMMY**

Calm down and / I will.

**OMER**

Get off!

**TOMMY**

Stop it.

**OMER**

No.

**TOMMY**

Stop it!

*TOMMY squeezes tighter until he feels OMER start to relax and calm down.*

**TOMMY**

It doesn't matter, alright?

**OMER**

I shouldn't have -

**TOMMY**

There's a lot we shouldn't do. But the world doesn't always end. Usually.

*TOMMY releases OMER. They smile at one another.*

*Chanting. More militaristic than cultish.*

INTERLUDE:

*They move into prayer formations, OMER helps TOMMY correct his positioning and his breathing.*

*JULES cuts her modesty scarf getting rid of enough of the material to still be covered but not be drowning. It looks a little odd but it's not as suffocating anymore.*

SHIFT:

HOMEWORK: RHETORIC

*Back to their assignment they go.*

We are trapped in the middle.

**JULES**

We want a different world.

**TOMMY**

A safer world.

**OMER**

Our world. A world for us.

**TOMMY**

*No.*

**JULES**

*TOMMY moves off confused.*

A world we create.

**OMER**

*No. For us by us.*

**JULES**

*OMER moves off frustrated.*

**JULES**  
*No no simple simple simple. We want a different world - a better one. For everyone like you.*

*A gunshot.*

INTERLUDE:

*They move into a new drill.*

*OMER pulls away and takes out a candle. JULES pulls away and lights the candle.*

*They surprise TOMMY. They mouth the Happy Birthday song. He blows out the candle.*

*They return to the formation. TOMMY stares at the candle.*

*A double gunshot.*

*SHIFT:*

## THE SOUND OF WHITE

*The TRIO are in their secret place again, a lantern illuminating them. They share a humble plate of bread, rice and a piece of meat; eating with their hands. TOMMY is mostly picking at the food, OMER is a pro, and JULES concentrates hard on making it perfect with her scarf flipped up.*

*We hear a celebration in the background: singing, shouting, occasional gunfire. Every time a gun goes off, TOMMY flinches - it should be random throughout except where noted. And he gets more aggravated with each one.*

**OMER**

You've improved.

**JULES**

Either that or starve. That Mo is a genius with lamb.

**OMER**

Tastes like my mum's.

*TOMMY spills food. Gives up and licks his fingers clean.*

**JULES**

(honestly)

Want me to feed you?

*TOMMY shakes his head. JULES raises her eyebrows at OMER and pulls a face. OMER pulls out a fork from his pocket and nudges TOMMY, offering it. The latter smiles. OMER returns the smile. TOMMY eats with the fork.*

*A gunshot.*

**OMER**

I'll never get used to how loud that is.

**JULES**

We been hearing it almost every day since we got here. How is you not used to it?

**OMER**

Gun-free country. You get used to the silence of non-violence.

**JULES**

Oooooo. Can't imagine everyone in London walking around with a gun.

**OMER**

It's weird, right?

**JULES**

Oh, yeh mate, yeh. Dunno how your lot deal with it T.

*No response as he continues eating.*

**JULES**

Anyways... You got one more month to get used to it O, or they will set your cap and gown alight in the bonfire of your inadequacies!

**OMER**

(play acting)

Noooooo - not the bonfire!

**JULES**

It burns! It buuuuuuuuuuuuuurns.

*OMER and JULES enjoy the moment. TOMMY is silent.*

**JULES**

What's got in you?

*TOMMY shrugs.*

**OMER**

You've been quiet since they got back from the mission. What's up?

**TOMMY**

Nothing. Just - thinking.

**OMER**

We agreed not to think of home anymore.

**TOMMY**  
Can't stop my brain doing what it wants to do.

**JULES**  
Go on tell us then.

**OMER**  
Don't encourage him.

**JULES**  
Better out than in, my dad used to say.

**OMER**  
And now you're doing it. Discipline for 5 seconds and anarchy for 3 days.

**JULES**  
Yeh alright Herr Hitler.

**OMER**  
Surprised you know who that is.

*Smacks OMER's head.*

**OMER**  
Ow!

**JULES**  
I'm poor not thick, yeh?

**OMER**  
That really hurt.

**JULES**  
Just coz I speak like this don't mean I ain't educated, alright?

**OMER**  
Yes, alright alright. I'm sorry. Ok? I'm sorry.

**JULES**  
Thank you. You got rice in your hair.

**OMER**  
Huh?  
(shaking his head clean)  
Oh - thanks

**TOMMY**

Guess someone is finally learning how to play well with others.

*OMER and JULES look at one another then go for TOMMY. OMER pretends he's in the WWE. JULES steps back to commentate. OMER grabs TOMMY and gives him a noogie.*

**JULES**

Are you getting a stiffy, Tommy?

**OMER**

(ripping himself away)

What??

**JULES**

Relax lads just funnin' ya.

*Rapid gunfire and TOMMY shudders.*

**OMER**

We should go back before anyone starts wondering where we went.

**TOMMY**

Let's stay here, ok? That party is not dying anytime soon.

**JULES**

Last time they blew up a convoy they didn't stop until dawn.

**TOMMY**

Yeah but this was one of ours.

**OMER**

Ours?

**TOMMY**

Theirs. THEIRS. This one was the Americans.

**OMER**

Good.

**JULES**

I know it's meant to be a glorious thing - a good thing - but I'm defo gonna miss Abu Musa. Beautiful ginger bastard.

**OMER**

All glory goes to him.

**JULES**

Pretty fit, too.

**OMER**

Jules.

**JULES**

He is - was. He was. Seems a shame for someone that fit and nice. Ya know? I mean I know he's in a better place and all living a hell of a better life than we are, but still...

**TOMMY**

Could you do it?

**JULES**

. . . I want to say yes.

**OMER**

Shouldn't have to think about it.

**TOMMY**

Could you?

**OMER**

Well it depends on -

*JULES laughs.*

**JULES**

That's a no.

**TOMMY**

I mean - you sort of know that's part of what you're signing up for.

**OMER**

Self-sacrifice is meant to emphasise heroism not victimization. It is a beautiful act - an unconditional expression of protecting your tribe, your people, your family. To give up your blood for someone else's life. It's a decision that happens in the moment - in an hour of greatest need. You don't think. Your heart compels you and you act.

**TOMMY**

That's beautiful, man.

**OMER**

It can easily get twisted for military strategy - politics. Using one body to destroy another. But that's not the only way to do good. It's a last resort. You should try to save non-believers with love and compassion.



**JULES**

True. But to do good, be known, remove the enemy, AND get glory? One hell of a bargain.

**TOMMY**

Finally felt like we got tight. Wish I could ask him. Wish I could have hugged him goodbye or something. I mean I get why they picked him for this one - coulda been a cowboy from Wyoming. But still. He was really cool. And nice. Everyone loved him.

**JULES**

They love him even more now. He's brought people even closer together. That's what his death did for us. We have the power to - I dunno mate - create love.

**OMER**

And unity.

**JULES**

Could you ever imagine doing that back home?

**OMER & TOMMY**

No.

**TOMMY**

In the moment though - seeing other people. Finger on a button. How could he be compassionate then?

**JULES**

What better compassion is there than to sacrifice yourself to save people and rid the world of those who only seek to destroy it?

*They look at her.*

**TOMMY**

Drinking that Kool-Aid deep.

**OMER**

That's a bit turned around, Jules.

*Gunshot.*

**JULES**

(at Tommy flinching)

T, mate, you really have to get a control of that.

**TOMMY**

Reflex.

**OMER**

Thought you Americans was supposed to be cowboys with big guns in every pocket.

Not this American. **TOMMY**

So why's it bother you? **JULES**

Let's head /back before - **TOMMY**

Tell us. **OMER**

You never tell us anything. Does he, O? **JULES**

- not always. **OMER**

Even back in the day. **JULES**

Wasn't gonna type out my life story in a WhatsApp Message. **TOMMY**

You always make excuses. You want us to be a family but you keep holding out. **JULES**

Don't think it matters much anymore. **TOMMY**

You know about me and my shitty sisters and mother. Omer and his 'betrayers who'll burn in hell' family. **JULES**

I didn't say it like that. **OMER**

You implied it. All we know about you is that you lived with the cows in Nebraska and your parents never paid attention to you. **JULES**

And the video games. **OMER**

Right. **JULES**

**TOMMY**

I didn't hang around cows. A good ol' boring suburb in Council Bluffs.

**JULES**

Sounds a lush place.

**TOMMY**

Omaha's Great Plains. Yeehaw.

**OMER**

Wait a minute you played all those first person shooter games.

**JULES**

Hey yeh!

**TOMMY**

It's not the same.

**JULES**

Coz it ain't real?

**TOMMY**

Yeah sure.

**OMER**

You're not making any sense.

**TOMMY**

Get off my case guys. I don't like the noise is all and I'll get over it and whatever I don't see why it's a big deal.

**JULES**

Calm down, mate.

**TOMMY**

No fuck you and fuck you. You don't have a right to know about my life.

**OMER**

We're your friends.

**TOMMY**

So then respect me as my friend and just leave it the fuck alone. Fuck!

**OMER**

We're not trying to be disrespectful.

**TOMMY**

Well you are, ok? We came here to be something else - someone new - so this shit is all that matters.

**JULES**

Abraham Lincoln High School.

(TOMMY stares at her.)

That's it isn't it? You said Council Bluffs and I - oh my days I can't believe I didn't put two and two together - stupid Jules.

**OMER**

What's she talking about?

**TOMMY**

How the fuck - there's no way you - what the fuck, Jules?

**JULES**

Poor - not stupid. You was there wasn't you?

**TOMMY**

...

**JULES**

(to herself)

What was his name - think Jules - think.

**OMER**

Someone want to clue me in.

**JULES**

This is what happens when you don't watch TV, O. Worst school shooting in history. Mental kid walked in and shot up five different classes.

**OMER**

Is she right? Was that your school?

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

Talk to us mate.

**JULES**

Alex!

*TOMMY looks at her.*

**OMER**

What?

**JULES**

Alex something - dammit - / Alex - that's it right?

**OMER**

Tommy wasn't your best friend - ?

**JULES**

You knew him.

**TOMMY**

I guess we weren't that best of friends because it's not like he told me. Not like he asked or warned me. Just another kid lost in the fucking shuffle and he broke. They let him break because they don't listen. They never fucking listen. They don't hear us. The whole country going to shit and they won't hear us. Become a social media sensation and all of a sudden you mean something but you're not actually doing anything - saying anything. They make us think that's what we need to be important - to make a lasting mark. But it's all an illusion. They don't really think we matter - none of us. And maybe we don't. Maybe we don't. So what's the point anymore. Of this. Of us. Any of it. When do we get to have a real voice and not one forced through someone or something else?

**JULES**

You matter to us, mate.

**TOMMY**

Until you walk Abu Musa's path. Or he does. And then what? You'll matter then? Abu Musa is gone and I can't be happy about it. I can't. Because what was all he did for? Everything he meant to us. It all stops dead and cold.

**OMER**

I know it's a difficult tenet to wrap your head around/ but -

**TOMMY**

And you know what's sick? Abu Musa - Alex - they didn't really matter until they did something horrible. All that death and sadness bringing people together who spend most of their days avoiding each other. They turn away from their screens for a moment and check in on their humanity. It can be anyone - as long as it's horrible enough then people come together. Is it worth it? Is it? One person has to go so the rest can find themselves - find - hope - whatever. So we don't matter. Not really. We only change things by not being around. We're in the way so we don't matter. It can't keep being that way. It can't. It can't! We have to matter. I have to matter. To something. To someone. To -

*OMER surprises him with a hug. JULES takes a moment then hugs the two of them. They breathe as one.*

*The family circle is complete.*

You matter to us. **JULES**

And we're not going anywhere. **OMER**

You're not going anywhere. **JULES**

You're stuck with us until the end. **OMER**

'Till the end. **JULES**

*They continue their hug. Sounds of cheers - a celebration.*

SHIFT:

## GRADUATION

*The TRIO get dressed in military blacks in their own spaces.*

### **A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Intelmukhtaroo al-athee athbat anahu mustahaqun lilaintheemamee illee hatha il3aeleeh - 3aeelatookah. Kunna qawee. Kunna salba. Kunna saree3a. Kunna naqeeyah. Na7na na3taqid fee lek. Al Nabeeyou, kul almajid lahoo, youeemun lak. Sawf tahadath firqah. Sawf taqoom bi7ifth alzhamee3ee.

*[You are the chosen few who have proven yourselves worthy to join this family - your family. Be strong. Be hard. Be fast. Be pure. We believe in you. The Prophet, all glory goes to him, has faith in you. You will make a difference. You will save all others.]*

*The TRIO meet in the middle.*

Ready? **TOMMY**

Oh yeah. **JULES**

It all changes now. **OMER**

We'll finally be seen as equals. **TOMMY**

Respected.

**JULES**

Nothing will stand in our way.

**OMER**

Hands in the center.

**TOMMY**

*They do.*

Forget what it took to get here. It was worth it. We change the world.

**TOMMY**

We change the world.

**JULES & OMER**

Together.

**TRIO**

*They line up horizontally.*

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**  
I7tafal. A3riff al mara7. A3riff el sa3ada. / Nafkhur fee af3alikeh wa fee ba3thaha al  
ba3thoo. Qareeba a7adukoom sayarsal reesala watheeha lil 3alem. Satakoon munqatha.  
Rasool. Istanadee. Hal saykoon intah? Lam tantah. Hnak akthar. Wa7ida minkum sawf  
alyooghayerroo al3alem. Illee al abad. Kun jahizen. Kun jahizen.

He's going too fast.

**JULES**

A little help man?

**TOMMY**

He wants us to celebrate and have pride and etcetera and -

**OMER**

*Off his face.*

What?

**JULES**

We're not done.

**OMER**

What?

**TOMMY**

**OMER**

Shh let me listen. We're being called.

**TOMMY**

Well yeah that's why we came here.

**OMER**

No. It's something new. He's being vague. Something about a special deed.

**JULES**

That don't sound too bad.

**OMER**

*One of you is going to change the world. Forever. Be ready. Be ready.*

**JULES**

Forever?

**TOMMY**

What's he mean?

*OMER looks at them confused.*

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Abu Mukhtaar.

*A black headband and AK-47 descend from above.  
TOMMY steps up and takes it.*

**TOMMY**

Abu Mukhtaar.

*Another descent.*

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Omer.

*OMER is lost in thought.*

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Omer.

*TOMMY nudges him forward,*

**OMER**

*(slowly donning the headband and taking the AK-47)*

Omer.



Khawla.

**A MALE VOICE**

*Nothing has descended. JULES is confused and looks up.*

Khawla.

**JULES**

Matha setef3aloo?

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

*[What will you do?]*

Matha setef3aloo?

**TRIO**

Matha setef3aloo!?

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Matha setef3aloo!?

**TRIO**

Matha setef3aloo?!?

**A MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Matha setef3aloo?!?

**TRIO**

*Cheering and applause. The trio look at one another confused. They look out - confused - concerned.*

**END OF ACT ONE.**

## ACT TWO

*\*NOTE: Throughout this act JULES' accent becomes less South London. After 'For Honour' she begins to take on a light Arab accent.*

### PRACTICUM: REVISION

*The TRIO hold a single sheet of paper. As JULES reads the other two follow along. JULES has wrapped her scarf around her head in a new way so we see her eyes in total. It is her own makeshift headband.*

#### **JULES**

(reading half-heartedly)

They don't want us. Our family. Our government. Our friends. They don't understand us. They never will. Their knowledge is limited. They are influenced by money and selfishness and the need to prove their worth. And we are trapped in the middle. We want a different world - a better one. Brothers and Sisters rise up! Come to us! We welcome you! We are here only for you! What will you do? What will -

*All three crumple up the papers. The boys move and get dressed in their military blacks, wrapping the black headband around their heads.*

*JULES takes a moment then goes to retrieve the paper. She smooths it out, looks at it, gets an idea, smiles, then takes out a pen starting to scribbling.*

*A gunshot.*

#### SHIFT:

*The boys move into a drill. She stuffs the paper into her pocket and joins them. This drill is much harder than their earlier ones.*

### MOVING THE LINE

Lungs.

**TOMMY**

Sh.

**JULES**

Fire.

**TOMMY**

SH! **JULES**

Fuck me. **TOMMY**  
(under his breath)

Language. **OMER**

Didn't say nothin'. **TOMMY**

Stop talking! **JULES**

*More silent drilling. TOMMY is flagging.*

Seriously. I'm gonna pass out. **TOMMY**

Don't stop. **JULES**

In through your nose / out through - **OMER**

I can't even feel my nose! **TOMMY**

*Drill and breaths.*

I thought things were supposed to get easier for us now. **TOMMY**

Something has changed. **JULES**

Omer, man, please- **TOMMY**

He can't help you. **JULES**

They won't know. **TOMMY**

They always know. Keep going. **JULES**

Gimme a sip. **TOMMY**

She's right. **OMER**

Should've rationed. **JULES**

Didn't think it would last this long. **TOMMY**

The enemy doesn't take breaks. **JULES**

*Two gunshots.*

Thank you sweet Jesus. **TOMMY**  
(stopping and dropping)

Tommy, come on. **OMER**  
(stretching out his limbs)

What? Oh, right, sorry - thank you sweet Prophet. **TOMMY**

All glory goes to him. **TRIO**

Take a break Jules. **OMER**

*She flinches at the name. She slows to a light drill.*

Show off. **TOMMY**

Show off who'll get the special mission. **JULES**

Keep dreaming. **TOMMY**

**JULES**

The weak dream. The strong do.

**TOMMY**

Talk about a hell of a graduation present. Just when you think they're done they move the finish line to reveal: A new one. Ta da!

(getting a sharp pain in his side)

I think my lung collapsed.

*OMER chuckles. JULES stops and looks at OMER.*

**JULES**

Interesting.

**OMER**

What?

**TOMMY**

These new threads are amazing. They're not even soaked. I got swamp ass right now and these pants are drier than -

(feeling his ass and crotch)

- yeah they're dry. Glad that little Hokkaido joined up - bless Japanese ingenuity.

**JULES**

Either of you heard what it's about?

**TOMMY**

Nope.

**OMER**

No.

**TOMMY**

Even Second Leader seemed surprised by the news.

**JULES**

Mo and his crew knew nothing either.

**OMER**

Must be big for them to hold off on assigning us our duties.

**TOMMY**

Big enough for all the extra training they're starting. / Ow.

*OMER smacks his arm.*

**JULES**

What extra training?

**TOMMY**

Huh? Nothing.

Are you training without me?  
**JULES**

No no - he just - well he talked to a bunch of us and kinda told us / to be ready for -  
**TOMMY**

Us who?  
**JULES**

The men.  
**OMER**

What kind of training?  
**JULES**

Boring stuff: bomb making, counter-intelligence, recruitment - oh! They even have us -  
**TOMMY**  
*OMER smacks him again.*

...why didn't you tell me?  
**JULES**

Didn't want to piss you off.  
**TOMMY**

Right. Thanks.  
**JULES**

*An awkward pause.*

I'm betting on espionage.  
**OMER**

Infiltration makes better sense.  
**TOMMY**

*JULES walks a perimeter and checks her pulse.*

Counts me out then.  
**OMER**

How you figure?  
**TOMMY**

*OMER gestures to his face and the rest of him.*

**TOMMY**

Good point. Leaves you and me then, Jules.

**OMER**

And all the other Westerners walking around here.

**TOMMY**

New ones coming in. Stronger and quicker.

**OMER**

Look at the Danish sisters there - lean and mean looking drongos.

**TOMMY**

More and more people who look like us coming in every week. Well, like me and you, Jules.

**JULES**

We've been here longer. And we're better than any of the newbies.

**TOMMY**

With our wonder twin powers activated who's gonna beat the three of us.

**OMER**

We're clearly doing the right thing here. The rest of the world keeps failing and we're a safe haven for those like us.

**TOMMY**

But it is kinda weird to see more and more people from our homes, too. You guys talked to any of them?

**OMER**

No.

**JULES**

Why would I bother?

**TOMMY**

We know what they're going through. We could be an Abu Musa to them.

**JULES**

We have better things to focus on.

**OMER**

That's a good idea, Tommy.

**TOMMY**

(fist pump)

Yesss.

**JULES**

The mission needs to be the priority. The others need to take care of themselves.

**TOMMY**

Maybe it's a - you know - sacrifice?

**OMER**

You can't be forced to be a vest jockey. Compulsion makes the action meaningless.

**JULES**

Prepare for the best - expect the worst.

**OMER**

Let's be positive.

**TOMMY**

We didn't bust ass for 5 months just to blow ourselves up.

**JULES**

Not like you have to worry.

**TOMMY**

Meaning?

**JULES**

You only graduated thanks to him. Two weeks and you're already falling behind again.

**OMER**

He's got heart.

**JULES**

He's complacent and lazy. We all are.

**TOMMY**

She's starting to sound like the old you.

**JULES**

Who was better. And more dedicated.

**OMER**

I'm dedicated.

**JULES**

Of course you are.



**OMER**

I've proven myself. I'm not a recruit anymore so my words will weigh more. I can advance faster and further.

**JULES**

Not if you keep contradicting / them.

**OMER**

I gather enough voices and they won't be able to shut me out.

**JULES**

They'll silence you in some way.

**OMER**

Not when I get picked. One more step up the ladder will mean even more authority.

**JULES**

No way you're getting the mission. No way!

**TOMMY**

Jeez chillax.

**JULES**

No I won't 'chillax' alright?

**TOMMY**

What's got into you lately?

**JULES**

You think everything stopped because you got a headband and a rifle?

**TOMMY**

No, but -

**JULES**

Even more is expected of us. This is the real test. What was before was nothing. It could come at any moment and we need to be ready: Physically, Mentally, Emotionally. And the mission means we're better than the best. We're trusted for greater things. We'll be able to do more - mean more.

**TOMMY**

Yeah, but - come on. I mean -

**JULES**

What? Spit it out.

**TOMMY**

They're still not going to let you fight.

**JULES**

Yes they will.

**OMER**

I'm surprised they haven't taken you away and permanently made you a Silent Sister in Black.

**JULES**

Because they can see my potential.

**OMER**

You're going to have to pick joining the Honour Brigade or the Honour Wives soon - before they pick for you.

**JULES**

I have time. I'll keep pushing inch by inch until I am in that circle.

**OMER**

Tick tock.

**TOMMY**

Dangerous game to play.

**OMER**

I've tried telling her. Let her believe what she wants to.

**TOMMY**

She keeps swinging her dick around like that and they're gonna punish her.

*JULES gets nose-to-nose with TOMMY .*

**JULES**

Disrespect me again and I'll have you. Got it?

**TOMMY**

Caring about your life is disrespectful?

**OMER**

He's looking out for you.

**JULES**

And since when do you back him specky?

**OMER**

It's what we promised to do at the border. ALL of us.

Is that what we're still doing? **JULES**

Yes. **OMER**

One for all and all for one? **JULES**

Of course. **OMER**

*TOMMY guffaws.*

What? **JULES & OMER**

You guys are being totally selfish. **TOMMY**

What?? **JULES & OMER**

Why are we here? **TOMMY**

What do you mean? **OMER**

Why are we here right now? **TOMMY**

So we can save the world. **JULES**

And by 'we' you mean 'us' right? **TOMMY**

Yes! **JULES & OMER**

**TOMMY**  
Coz so far you've said you want the mission so you can get ahead and people will listen to you. And you want it to so you can have a rifle and a headband. Breaking the promises left and right.

**JULES**

And what about you Mother Theresa? You want it just as badly.

**TOMMY**

I do. But to keep us together.

**JULES**

Right.

**OMER**

What are you getting at?

**TOMMY**

You guys think big. I'm thinking small. I want to change the world starting with us. I get the mission and I keep us together. I show them how a bunch of misfits are stronger together than kept apart. Anyone can have a voice and mean something. If I get chosen then you get what you want and you get what you want. All the wishes are granted. But I don't see how we three kings figure into either of your plans. Just sayin'.

**JULES**

Yeah well you two said I wasn't even allowed to play.

**TOMMY**

Hey I get some status and they won't have a choice! You win no matter what, Jules.

**JULES**

Unless it goes to one of the others in our group.

**TOMMY**

That ain't gonna happen.

**JULES**

And if it does? What do you think happens to me? To us? If I don't get this then it's off to the Honour Brigade or to be some bloody baby-making wife. And you know what happens then? I never see either of you - ever again. But I suppose it's alright since you two can do this without me.

**TOMMY**

No. We can't. And don't ever say that again.

**OMER**

It's not like you're a big fan of us right now, so why should we trust you?

**TOMMY**

Harsh, man.

**JULES**

I get chosen and you never have to hide anything from me to spare my feelings. Never have to worry about my non-female female actions having consequences. We stand side-by-side and change everything together.

**OMER**

That include me?

**JULES**

Don't be a div. I well want to smack you right now, but I don't go back on my word.

**TOMMY**

I'm convinced. Thank you, Jules. And you?

**OMER**

What me?

**JULES**

Where do we fit into the mighty future of Prophet Omer?

**OMER**

I don't need to state the obvious.

**TOMMY**

Oh but you do.

**OMER**

Do you really think I want to see The Faith twisted and used to destroy or tear apart any more families than it already has? I could have stayed in my house for that.

**TOMMY**

Aw you do love us.

**OMER**

Do you get it now?

**JULES**

Yeh. Alright. But we need to do better. Be better.

**OMER**

We've always been ahead of the others.

**JULES**

But they're hungry now. Especially the new ones. They smell the blood. We keep our eyes on all of them.

**TOMMY**

We stick to the plan and stay focused. We made it to the last finish line. We'll make it to this one. In our own lanes but running next to each other.

**JULES**

And what if that's not enough?

**OMER**

It will be.

**JULES**

But what if it's not?

**OMER & TOMMY**

...

**JULES**

What if it's not?

*A gunshot.*

*No one moves. JULES eventually moves away.*

INTERLUDE:

*TOMMY and OMER begin constructing bombs.*

SHIFT:

**PRACTICUM: TRANSLATION**

*As the boys continue their work, JULES sits alone with an Arabic dictionary looking up translations - writing down the new phrasing on the wrinkled paper. Her modesty covering is bothering her more than usual.*

**JULES**

*They don't want us. La yereedoona.  
Our family. 3aeelatuna.  
Our government. 7ukoomateena.  
Our friends. Asdaqaheenah.  
What will you do? Matha setef3aloo?  
What will you do? Matha setef3aloo?*

*She looks at the paper.*

*La yereedoona. 3aeelatuna. Hukoo - hukoomateena. Asda - asdaqah - asdaqaheenah*

*She gets frustrated that she can't say it smoothly and rips off the modesty scarf going at her hair like she's got nits.*

*She stops. Lets out an exasperated breath. She folds the paper, puts it in the dictionary, and pockets it. She takes out a cigarette and lights it. She smokes and quietly recites.*

SHIFT:

## SMOKE AND MIRRORS

*OMER rounds the corner and catches her. She doesn't stop. He doesn't say anything to her. He shakes his head and starts to walk away.*

You gonna tell on me?

**JULES**

I might.

**OMER**

But you won't.

**JULES**

*A standoff. She smokes. He stares. They study one another. She puts out the cigarette. Retrieves her scarf and slings it over her shoulder.*

You should put it back on.

**OMER**

No one's gonna find me.

**JULES**

Where did you even get those?

**OMER**

The Vest Jockeys always have extras.

**JULES**

**OMER**  
(he sighs - then:)  
'and make not your own hands contribute to your own destruction'.

Al-Baqarah 196.

**JULES**

195.

**OMER**  
(turning and smiling)

**JULES**  
(under her breath)

Dammit.

**OMER**  
(starts to walk away)

Just be careful alright?

**JULES**  
Teach me more. Everything.

**OMER**  
We don't need the study sessions anymore.

**JULES**  
Knowledge is power.

**OMER**  
I thought you wanted a rifle.

**JULES**  
Best to be prepared for everything.

**OMER**  
What are you going to do? Become a recruiter and troll Twitter for others like us and start your own WhatsApp group chat?

**JULES**  
I could if I wanted to.

**OMER**  
They're not going to let you recruit anymore than they'll put a gun in your hands.

**JULES**  
Omer, I can do it all if I wanted to. I'll always find a way.

**OMER**  
You just can't stop yourself going against the rules.

**JULES**  
We've all gone against them.

**OMER**  
They tolerated your toeing the line when we were trainees, but the risk is greater now. So put that back on. And stop smoking.



**JULES**

I am more than this.

**OMER**

If you want to be a soldier and carry a rifle so badly then ask to be put in the Honour Brigade.

**JULES**

(forgetting who she is)

I ain't goin' 'round scarin' and hurtin' women into submission.

**OMER**

There she is.

**JULES**

I can offer more.

**OMER**

They don't care.

**JULES**

They just don't understand the benefit of my potential.

**OMER**

We came here to fight with them not against them.

**JULES**

Exactly! I want to fight with them! At their side! I need to be as perfect as possible so there is no room for doubt.

**OMER**

They're not gonna let you be a soldier.

**JULES**

(cozying up to him)

But you could help me.

**OMER**

I'm not going to be an accomplice to your dying.

**JULES**

If you protected me I wouldn't.

**OMER**

We agreed that the only way to change things is if we stay alive.

**JULES**

I want to live. I want us to live.

**OMER**

. . . This is about the special mission.

*She breaks off and stifles her frustration.*

**OMER**

I don't know if you're delusional or insane.

**JULES**

I have to be picked. I have to!

**OMER**

Give me one good reason.

**JULES**

So they'll respect me.

**OMER**

That's a desire not a reason.

**JULES**

So I can fight with the rest of you.

**OMER**

Still a desire.

**JULES**

I don't want to be a bride.

**OMER**

Desire.

**JULES**

Because- because I - [she huffs in frustration] - because I need to be seen as an equal.

**OMER**

(honestly - without malice:)

But they don't see women as equals. They would kill you just for suggesting it.

**JULES**

And you were supposed to change that.

**OMER**

There's a lot I have / to try and -

**JULES**

What did you do for me?

**OMER**

Keep playing by their rules for now.

**JULES**

That's all you say to me. All you've ever said. If you won't do anything for me, then I'll do it for myself.

**OMER**

A little more time / and I can -

**JULES**

You've given up.

**OMER**

I haven't.

**JULES**

Spending a lot of time with the new recruits.

**OMER**

Are you spying on me?

**JULES**

When you should be talking to Second Leader.

**OMER**

He's a lost cause.

**JULES**

You can beat him!

**OMER**

The new recruits are the key to this. If I can get to them before Second Leader can.

**JULES**

And how's it going?

**OMER**

...

**JULES**

Badly. [*off OMER's look*] Mo told me. They're making fun of you - Alnabeeyoo Majnoon. The Crazy Prophet. You're failing, Omer. I'm trying to give you a chance to help me and prove them all wrong. I'm DOING something for you. What will you finally do for me?

*OMER moves to leave.*

**JULES**

There's nothing in The Book that says women can't be soldiers.

*OMER turns to respond and she cuts him off.*

**JULES**

You told me to read The Book. I read it. I may not remember all of it, but I read it. And you know I'm right. No one wants to question it. But I want to fight. We're meant to be one, Omer. If that's true then they have to let me fight.

**OMER**

You have all the answers. You tell them.

**JULES**

I know how to help you.

**OMER**

You'll succeed where I failed?

**JULES**

WE'LL succeed. Start with Mohammad. He's not the same as the other vest jockeys. He sees truth in what we're doing.

**OMER**

You told him?

**JULES**

He's a good man. He thinks women should fight, too.

**OMER**

You're putting his life in danger by talking to him.

**JULES**

No one's said anything all these months - they're not going to start now.

**OMER**

Not if they find out it's about this.

**JULES**

He'll be fine!

**OMER**

You're being selfish.

**JULES**

People listen to the Vest Jockeys. Hold them higher because they have more honour. You tell him and he convinces two people who convince two more and before you know it we shift everything.

**OMER**

I'm not sticking out my neck to watch you get hurt.

**JULES**

You'd do it for Tommy.

**OMER**

I don't want either of you hurt!

**JULES**

Why won't you believe in me?!

**OMER**

You need to believe in yourself, first and foremost. What do you want, Jules? REALLY want. Not for yourself, but for others. Desire can lead you away from your destiny all the while fooling you into thinking you're going towards it. Desire can lead you into danger without your realising it until it's too late.

**JULES**

I've done everything they asked. I've tried everything - everything. Help me here, mate. I'm drowning.

**OMER**

Give me a little more time. For your sake.

**JULES**

We all promised.

**OMER**

I know.

**JULES**

You promised.

**OMER**

...

**JULES**

Please.

**OMER**

Cover yourself up, Jules.

**JULES**

But -

**OMER**

Cover, Jules. And stay away from Mohammad.

*A moment. She relents. He watches her wrap her face up.  
Gives her a tight smile.*

**OMER**

Thank you.

*He leaves her.*

*She waits a moment then rips the scarf off and lights a  
cigarette. Night falls. She paces.*

*She stops. Checks her watch. Looks around. She whistles a  
signal. Nothing. She paces and smokes*

*Someone signals back.*

**JULES**

You're late. But I knew I could count on you. Thank you again, yeah? Elf elf shukur [*a thousand thanks*] for sneaking me into the next skirmish. Don't worry - I'll make sure my face is completely covered the whole time. Once I prove how good I am - how good you've made me - then I'll show them the truth. They won't be able to argue against everything we've talked about. And don't worry - I'll make sure you get the credit and all the glory. Give me the rifle. What's wrong? I know how to use it, Mo. Hand it over. Mo? Mo?

*A pair of hands reach out from the dark and grab her. We  
don't see much and can't make sense of the moment. But  
we know enough.*

*SHIFT:*

**FOR HONOUR**

*A light blinks back on. JULES is seated- scarf off- lost in  
thought and showing visible signs of being assaulted.  
TOMMY stands close to her. OMER paces.*

**TOMMY**

What do you think you can do?

**OMER**

Confront him.

**TOMMY**

And if we're wrong?

**OMER**

I know it's Mohammad. I've seen them talking. I warned her before. Repeatedly!

**TOMMY**

That doesn't make him the only suspect.

**OMER**

Typical - never want to get involved until it's too late.

**TOMMY**

Let's not turn this into some Americans suck moment. I'm just trying to be the voice of reason.

**OMER**

You're being a coward.

**TOMMY**

And you're being a hothead.

**OMER**

Look at her clothes, Tommy! Look at the bruises on her face! We're wasting time.

*OMER moves to leave. TOMMY intercepts.*

**TOMMY**

We need an actual plan that doesn't make us snitches and alienates us from everyone else.

**OMER**

Is that more important than protecting Jules?

**TOMMY**

No!

**OMER**

This man is not a Believer. He's no better than the people we're fighting. He doesn't belong here.

**TOMMY**

It's not like he can just walk out of the camp.

**OMER**

You're right. He can't. We should.

**TOMMY**

What?

**OMER**

People who do this are not people who want to save the world. Are not people we can defend or fight with or for.

**TOMMY**

Think of it this way: If we can help them clean up house here then it means we can do it out there. We lead by example.

**OMER**

How can you be such an opportunist about this?

**TOMMY**

We need to play this smart otherwise it's all our asses, man!

**OMER**

This isn't a game.

**TOMMY**

Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me?? Of course it is! This whole place is one big mind fuck. That's why we stick together - closer than ever before.

**OMER**

I'm confused - are you or are you not agreeing with me?

**TOMMY**

I'm saying how do we know we're not being baited, man. Really testing our dedication - to the cause, to each other. Right?

**OMER**

So using the women is bait?

**TOMMY**

I dunno.

**JULES**

Stop it.

**OMER**

Using her was baiting us?

**TOMMY**

Maybe!



Shut up. **JULES**

And that makes it ok? **OMER**

Did I say that? **TOMMY**

Please shut the fucking hell up! **JULES**

... **TOMMY**

... **OMER**

... **JULES**  
Are you done talking about me? Can I say something as well?

We're just trying to protect you. **TOMMY**

Do I look like I need that? **JULES**

I mean considering what you / just went - **OMER**

It was a test. **JULES**

That's fucked up. **TOMMY**

No one is going to do anything. **JULES**

We can't let him go. **OMER**

He doesn't matter. I know men like him. They all fall sooner or later. And this isn't about him. **JULES**

What do you want us to do?  
**TOMMY**

This is the real test. It's clear.  
**JULES**

For what? Why? I don't buy that.  
**OMER**

It's about our limits. My limits. Phase 1 builds strength and character. Phase 2 tests it.  
**JULES**

Not like this.  
**TOMMY**

How else would you test dedication?  
**JULES**

Are you - are you ok with what Mohammad did?  
**OMER**

I push. They push. I push again. They push harder.  
**JULES**

These people -  
**OMER**

Are our brothers. Remember? Everyone here is our brother and sister.  
**JULES**

Family doesn't behave like this.  
**TOMMY**

Family does what we've stopped doing for each other.  
**JULES**

Which is?  
**OMER**

Challenge each other. Love each other. Test one another with the things needed to bring us closer to Glory.  
**JULES**

We've always done that every time they've made us feel like we didn't belong or weren't good enough.  
**OMER**

**TOMMY**

From Day 1. And no one has done it better than us.

*JULES looks at them - smiling knowingly. She eventually wraps the scarf around her face. They will never see her face again.*

**JULES**

We got complacent. We became the very things we fought against. The lazy, proud American. The selfish, self-important Brit. The suspicious, race-obsessed Aussie.

(laughs)

Don't you see it? We think we've let go of our old selves, but some pieces won't let us go. They need to be burned out of us completely.

**OMER**

And what would be left?

**JULES**

I'm special. I'm not like you or you. They've shown me that. I'm not like anyone else so they didn't know what to do with me. If my back could be broken why would they ever trust me again. But I passed. I did what no other woman - or man - has done in this camp.

**OMER**

What they did -

**JULES**

Has saved me. They gave me that. But the rest is up to me now. To burn a new path. To bring myself closer to glory. They pushed harder. I will push the hardest. Be ready. They will do the same for you. What will you do when you stand alone at the gates?

**TOMMY**

You're not alone, Jules. You're not.

**JULES**

My name is Khawla. Khawla. Remember that, Abu Mukhtaar.

**TOMMY**

Now more than ever we have to stick together.

**OMER**

We succeed as a team.

**TOMMY**

A family.

**JULES**

I know. I know. And I'll wait for you to join me on the other side of glory. But don't take too long.

*A gunshot.*

INTERLUDE:

*OMER and TOMMY get rifles and begin shooting targets.*

*JULES retrieves a hidden rifle and begins practicing on her own. She's proud of her progress.*

*TOMMY tensely hits all his marks first, and then throws up right after he's done.*

*OMER struggles to hit all of his.*

*A loud explosion followed by cheers.*

SHIFT:

CAREFUL CONFESSIONS

*A celebration. Singing and clapping in the distance.  
TOMMY is drunk.*

**TOMMY**

We made it man. Our first battle. We actually made it. . .I did good right? Right?. . .You see Jules? Khawla - whatever. I think I saw her. You see her? Like lightning - pew pew pew. . . How'd she do it? How'd she sneak in? Little sneak. . .The bullets and the bombs and the dust. Crazy, right?. . . And I didn't barf once. That's progress. What's up?

**OMER**

Nothing.

**TOMMY**

Come on, man. It's a celebration. Celebrate!

**OMER**

I'm not in the mood.

**TOMMY**

Well here have summa this and get in the mood.

**OMER**

I don't want any.

**TOMMY**

See how they trust us? All the - the - 'foreigners'? Put us out front first. They bring up the rear. So we could fight first. You did good, too. You're kind of a 'foreigner' too but that's ok cause I saw you. Right there next to me. Kept up and everything. You did good.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

Why so sad? Mad? Sad or mad? We did good!

*OMER looks at TOMMY wanting to say something.*

**TOMMY**

You're not gonna try and kiss me again are you?

**OMER**

What - no - why would / you even -

**TOMMY**

Relax, man. It was a joke.

**OMER**

It was a mistake.

**TOMMY**

I know.

**OMER**

You can't even - you don't - no joke, OK? None?

**TOMMY**

I know I know I know!

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

(whispering)

Though you do have some soft lips.

*OMER stares daggers through him.*

**TOMMY**

Sorry sorry sorry.

**OMER**

You shouldn't be drunk.

**TOMMY**

The guys kept giving me something that tasted like coffee. I couldn't say 'no' tonight.

**OMER**

Well you shouldn't be drunk.

**TOMMY**

Hey - HEY - big man in the little book says it's ok for us to get drunk, remember? I remember. I remember things. You talk and I listen. So I win this one. Gold star for Tommy!

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

I wish she was here. Wanna enjoy the night with my real family. I mean everyone else is cool and stuff but you guys are the best. The best. Come on talk to me. What's wrong? Tell me what's wrong. I can see something is wrong.

*TOMMY throws his arm around OMER.*

**TOMMY**

Didn't think I could do it. But I did it.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

The first one was hard. Trigger felt like cement. Had to push so hard. Didn't think I could. I would. But the second was easier. The third was lighter. I wonder if that's what Alex felt like - if he felt the same - if we're the same and -

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

Ohhhh I get it. You want that special mission. Bein' all secretive. Shh.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

No one should get the mission so we don't yelly yelly and fighty fighty. We stay like this [*interlocks his fingers sloppily*]. The mission does this [*explodes his fingers out*]. And I want this [*interlocks them*]. I want to fight the good fight until I'm good and old and then retire with you guys in a cave somewhere and sing songs all night and drink lots of this whatever this is. That's good right? That's still glorious right?

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**  
God you're so annoying talk to me.

**OMER**  
I didn't know blood smelled.

**TOMMY**  
Huh?

**OMER**  
Like walking through a cloud of metal. I can still taste it.

**TOMMY**  
You're not making sense.

**OMER**  
And you. That wasn't you out there.

**TOMMY**  
Huh?

**OMER**  
That was someone else. Taking corners. Shooting - everyone.

**TOMMY**  
We're here to kill the enemy.

**OMER**  
You couldn't tell the difference between who was the enemy and who was innocent.

**TOMMY**  
They were armed.

**OMER**  
Not all of them. Is it because they didn't look like you?

**TOMMY**  
What? No. No!

**OMER**  
I tried to stop you, but you couldn't even hear me.

**TOMMY**  
There was so much noise!

**OMER**

You were unhinged.

**TOMMY**

But they're the enemy. They could have shot you. I didn't shoot anyone without a gun! Did I? I didn't!

**OMER**

The Book tells us to live life with love and compassion. To bring people into the fold with it. Not with mindless violence and death.

**TOMMY**

But you did the same as me - so there.

**OMER**

I didn't shoot anyone.

**TOMMY**

What?

**OMER**

I emptied out the magazine into the ground.

*He stares at OMER.*

**OMER**

I'm leaving this place.

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

I can't do this anymore.

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

I've tried everything I could. I didn't come here to be an expendable tool for fundamentalism. It's killing me to watch them pervert the Faith - to see what they're doing to - us. I have to leave. I have to.

**TOMMY**

...

**OMER**

Come with me.



**TOMMY**  
(laughing)

Good one. Yeah. Leave.

*TOMMY laughs. Stares. Laughs again. Stares.*

**TOMMY**  
You want to go back - to home? To all that - lonely?

**OMER**  
Not everyone who tries is caught. It won't be easy, but I can do it. We can do it. We'll even take Jules. Tie her up if we need to and drag her with us. We could go anywhere. Live in your cave and grow old together, right? Do what they're afraid to: Live The Book fully and honestly. We know how to get to others like us. We get to them first. Teach them. Show them the truth. We could be bigger and better than this place. We'll be the example. The light. The truth. We'll make the world understand we're not monsters!

**TOMMY**  
But you knew about the guns! You knew!

**OMER**  
To defend not to attack! This is no better than when countries go places they have no business being and take lives to save their political backsides. To establish their authority in the blood of others. I won't have that kind of blood on my hands. So - no - Tommy. No! We go.

*TOMMY sloppily tries to kiss OMER.*

**OMER**  
What are you doing?

**TOMMY**  
You need this.

**OMER**  
Get off / me.

**TOMMY**  
Take it.

**OMER**  
Stop it!

*He shoves TOMMY away, but he rebounds quickly and shoves him against a wall.*

**OMER**  
Get off.

No. **TOMMY**

Let me go. **OMER**

**TOMMY**  
Remember what The Book says. 'If a person loves his brother, he should inform him of this fact. You won't become a total believer unless you love each other.'

... **OMER**

Please remember. **TOMMY**

*TOMMY rests forehead-to-forehead with OMER.*

**TOMMY**  
If you go Jules will be gone for good. She needs both of us to keep her together. I need you both.

We'll die in here. **OMER**

We'll die out there. **TOMMY**

**OMER**  
They care more about winning than the Faith.

**TOMMY**  
I don't care about any of that shit.

**OMER**  
They don't want believers - they want murderers.

**TOMMY**  
I don't care - I don't care - / I don't care -

**OMER**  
We're being used.

**TOMMY**  
I DON'T CARE!

*OMER covers TOMMY's mouth.*

**TOMMY**  
(moving OMER's hand)

You promised.

**OMER**

I didn't promise to get us killed.

**TOMMY**

I'll do better. Be better. Just don't leave me.

**OMER**

...

**TOMMY**

Please.

**OMER**

You never kill again.

**TOMMY**

What - I can't -

**OMER**

That's my only offer. You put yourself in a position to harm anyone else again and I'm gone.

**TOMMY**

But I'm not good at anything else, man.

**OMER**

Don't ever say that again. There's still more in you than you realise.

*TOMMY smiles at him sheepishly.*

**TOMMY**

Thanks.

**OMER**

You don't have to thank me for telling the truth.

**TOMMY**

See? I still need you. You still have things to teach me. We still have things to learn.

*TOMMY hugs him.*

**TOMMY**

There's still time to turn everything around.

*A gunshot.*

SHIFT:

## PRACTICUM: RHETORIC & COMPOSITION

*JULES is illuminated in her private space. She's more determined and resolute. As she recites she gets dressed in male soldier blacks with a balaclava instead of her modesty scarf (the kind with joined eye holes and a mouth hole). She checks in on the paper to make sure she is remembering everything correctly. Make it random. You know - act.*

### **JULES**

La yefhumoonā. Walan yefhumoonā abadan. 3almuhum mahdud. Imtithreen almaloo waloonaneyyat walʔazhata lee ithbat qeematihem. Naʔnoo mooʔasareen feel wasata.

*Trying a different emphasis.*

Naʔnoo mooʔasareen.

*Another one.*

Naʔnoo mooʔasareen.

*Another one.*

Naʔnoo mooʔasareen.

*She likes that one. She grabs her AK-47.*

*[They don't understand us. They never will. Their knowledge is limited. They are influenced by money and selfishness and the need to prove their worth. And we are trapped in the middle. We are trapped. We are trapped. We are trapped.]*

SHIFT:

## NEVER ENOUGH

*JULES shows off her gun and struts.*

### **TOMMY**

Congrats.

### **JULES**

Looks good, right?

### **TOMMY**

I pity any gas station you run into.

**JULES**

What? Oh - right. Well - it's win-win. I can breathe and my face is still covered - they couldn't argue that.

**TOMMY**

I'm glad you weren't punished.

**JULES**

Was half expecting to be when they called me in. Worth the risk.

**TOMMY**

You lucked out.

**JULES**

They couldn't deny my numbers. No one else had more hits than me. I mean, except you. You were a glorious warrior. Gives me something to work up to.

**TOMMY**

Right.

**JULES**

Where's Omer? I want to see the look on his face when he sees this.

**TOMMY**

Good to see your face again, Jules, sort of.

**JULES**

I told you it's Khawla.

**TOMMY**

Okaaaaaay.

**JULES**

You know it is.

**TOMMY**

Ok.

**JULES**

Say it.

**TOMMY**

Come on -

**JULES**

Say it.

**TOMMY**

Ok...Khawla.

**JULES**

Thank you. Now where is he? Been keeping himself scarce.

**TOMMY**

Nursing a cold.

**JULES**

In this heat?

**TOMMY**

Summer cold.

**JULES**

We need to help our brother out, Abu Mukhtaar. What? What's so funny?

**TOMMY**

Nothing. You just say it so well. I still can't get my throat wrapped around the 'kh'. Sounds like I'm hocking a loogie.

**JULES**

The Prophet, all glory goes to him, will punish you for that.

**TOMMY**

He can add it to the list.

**JULES**

Unsaved.

**TOMMY**

Terrorist.

**JULES**

Soldier of Glory, thank you.

**TOMMY**

You're loving this aren't you?

**JULES**

I came here for a purpose and now I am so close to it.

**TOMMY**

Well you certainly walked through the fire for it.

**JULES**

And this is just the start of something glorious - a life finally worth living and fighting for as a beacon for others like us to follow.

**TOMMY**

I miss the way you used to speak.

**JULES**

These words are better. You and I will be unstoppable side-by-side. They'll always assign us first now.

**TOMMY**

There's more we can do.

**JULES**

There's always more. But everything in its time.

**TOMMY**

We could change more people if they're alive.

**JULES**

Bored with killing people already?

**TOMMY**

What if we could change things differently?

**JULES**

Maybe one day if we get high enough in the system.

**TOMMY**

Think they'll let us?

**JULES**

After this [shows off her gun] anything is possible.

**TOMMY**

But we don't need that to change the world.

**JULES**

It's encouragement.

**TOMMY**

Corpses don't care much.

**JULES**

Why are you denying your success?

**TOMMY**

I don't know if violence is the solution anymore.

**JULES**

It's not violence, Abu Mukhtaar. It's mercy. It's cleansing the world to make way for those who deserve it.

**TOMMY**

But The Book tells us to be compassionate.

**JULES**

Don't confuse compassion with cowardice.

**TOMMY**

I think there is more out there that we could do.

**JULES**

Out there - away from here?

**TOMMY**

Wherever!

**JULES**

Out there we don't exist.

**TOMMY**

We've got more skills now.

**JULES**

Out there we're nothing!

**TOMMY**

We've got more smarts. It might be different.

**JULES**

It wouldn't be. It'll never be different for me.

**TOMMY**

It's already different.

**JULES**

(letting her guard drop for a moment)

You have your huge house and a forest in your backyard and two parents and a safe neighbourhood. Omer has all that family to love him and a place where he can belong if he wouldn't be so stubborn. I have - this.



**TOMMY**

And us.

**JULES**

Look at us! Me and you talking where everyone can see and no one will dare to say anything about it. I outrank some of these bastards now. Look at what we're both doing.

**TOMMY**

Three. There's three of us.

**JULES**

We could belong to something much bigger.

**TOMMY**

I'm happy with the three of us.

**JULES**

But we could do so much more with so many others.

**TOMMY**

Too many birthdays to remember.

**JULES**

All that unity.

**TOMMY**

All those personalities.

**JULES**

The solidarity.

**TOMMY**

The opinions.

**JULES**

Listening to us.

**TOMMY**

Judging us.

**JULES**

Following us.

**TOMMY**

Until they find out we haven't been playing by the rules the whole time.

**JULES**

You're trying to distort the truth. Who are you?

**TOMMY**

Someone who realizes how The Faith can be used purely.

**JULES**

Don't forget why we left. Don't forget what we wanted.

**TOMMY**

I'm with you, ok? With you and Omer.

**JULES**

You can't have it both ways. Don't be deceived by your compassion. You won't be able to stand in the middle forever.

**TOMMY**

I will never give up on us.

**JULES**

Why do it alone? Let the larger family of The Faith help you.

**TOMMY**

Yeah - but /

**JULES**

Stop putting your personal desires ahead of what's important! It's good to question the path to your destiny, but you will remain on it. I'll make sure of it.

**TOMMY**

Or what? What will you do?

*She smiles at him and opens her arms as if to say: Who knows?*

*A gunshot.*

*INTERLUDE:*

*JULES grabs TOMMY's hand and moves him into the drill. OMER is late joining them.*

*No one gives up and no one falters, but they are out of sync. All we hear are breaths in the silence, rhythmic and contrapuntal despite the unsynced movement.*

*A double gunshot and they stand in place looking at one another.*

SHIFT:

SLEEPLESSNESS

*Night. TOMMY is asleep - mumbling. OMER tries to read from The Book.*

*Elsewhere JULES pops bullets into an AK-47 magazine slowly. She reconstructs the rifle. She tidies her appearance.*

**JULES**

(reciting quickly like an actor memorising lines - it might be slightly inaudible - but should grow louder as the scene movements goes on)

Al i5wat well a5wat tumreedoo! Ta3aloowa hooneh! Noo hayeeyikum eelayaneh! Nahnoo hoona lakum! Matha setef3aloo? [repeat until TOMMY sits up, then:]

*[Brothers and Sisters rise up! Come to us! We welcome you! We are here only for you! What will you do?]*

Tumreedoo! Tumreedoo! Tumreedoo! Ta3aloowa hooneh! Noo hayeeyikum eelayaneh! Nahnoo hoona lakum!

*[Come to us! Come to us! Come to us! We welcome you! We are here only for you!]*

*Over the above text. TOMMY'S mumbling intensifies and he becomes restless. OMER looks carefully around making sure everyone else is asleep. He starts to move for TOMMY, then reconsiders halfway, watching him some more.*

*OMER sits at TOMMY's feet. He puts his hand on his calf in comfort.*

*TOMMY sits up in a cold sweat, but OMER doesn't notice him. He is out of time and place. He gets up and gets dressed while OMER comforts the echo of the body left behind.*

*TOMMY walks into a stark pool of white light. He opens his mouth in a scream and all we hear is the Chaotic Noise.*

*The sound cuts out and we are restored to a waiting area.*

SHIFT:

THE LAST TEMPTATION

*The TRIO are nervous in their own little ways.*

This is it. **TOMMY**

It's too soon. **JULES**  
(a little too quickly)

They didn't say why? **OMER**

Nope. **TOMMY**

Nothing at all? **JULES**

Maybe they're kicking me out. **TOMMY**

Doesn't work like that. **JULES**

And why call us as well? **OMER**

Moral support? **TOMMY**

Maybe we're all being kicked out. **OMER**

There has to be a mistake. **JULES**

Maybe they'll make us go Hunger Games and fight each other. **TOMMY**  
(nervously chuckling)

*Nervous pause.*

Feel like I'm gonna shit myself. **TOMMY**

What did you do? **JULES**

**TOMMY**

What do you mean?

**JULES**

You've been distracted and lazy lately. The last battle you were all over the place. You're not a prime candidate for the special mission.

**TOMMY**

If that's why I'm here.

**OMER**

Real warmth there.

**JULES**

Neither are you. Don't think I didn't see you hiding.

**OMER**

I wasn't.

**JULES**

You seem awfully calm about this.

**OMER**

(forcefully paces nervously)

Here. I'm worried. See?

**JULES**

I don't know why you both can't be honest with me.

**TOMMY**

I swear I didn't know anything. I still don't!

*\*In the following instances normal / rules don't apply -  
read the entirety of the lines.*

**JULES**

You've been helping each other. / Trying to keep me out.

**TOMMY**

What alternate dimension are you / living in?

**JULES**

You're too weak to follow through on anything / so you let him be the hero.

**OMER**

Oh you've really lost it now. / Can you believe this?

**JULES**

From day one you've walked around here thinking you're the big man and you're just a coward / hiding behind words.

**TOMMY**

Ok can we calm / down.

**OMER**

Says the girl who from day one did whatever she could / to get ahead.

**JULES**

Go ahead and say what / you mean.

**TOMMY**

Keep it /down.

**OMER**

Nice mask and gun you / got there.

**JULES**

I worked hard / for them!

**TOMMY**

Shut / it!

**OMER**

You worked something I'm sure.

*JULES punches OMER.*

**TOMMY**

Are you nuts?!

**JULES**

Get up and say that to me again.

**TOMMY**

What's wrong with you? We don't do this to each other.

**JULES**

That mission is everything.

**TOMMY**

Fine! If I AM here for the mission then I'll convince them to give it to you instead.

**JULES**

I don't want your failures on my conscience. I want to earn my pride.

**TOMMY**

Make up your mind! Look - let's say this IS about the mission. I get some infiltration or surveillance thing. I successfully complete it and they - what? - put me on some Golden Throne and I - what? - never see you again? Do you think I would do that to either of you? For all I know I get to pick a team or something and that's gonna be you guys and then it's all fine. I can't believe we're letting what-ifs turn us on each other like a bunch of kids.

**JULES**

It's not fair!

*They look at her. She's proven his point.*

**TOMMY**

Now apologize to each other.

*They look at him.*

**TOMMY**

You heard me. Apo-

**MALE VOICE (V.O.)**

Abu Mukhtaar.

*They stand there for a moment.*

**TOMMY**

You're gonna feel really stupid when you realize the arguing has been for nothing.

*He takes a moment then walks off. JULES & OMER look at one another then move into their own little spaces. 5 seconds pass.*

**OMER**

He's right.

**JULES**

I don't want to argue.

**OMER**

Neither do I.

**JULES**

Then stop talking to me.

*4 seconds pass.*

**OMER**

I'm sorry.

**JULES**

You say that a lot. It loses something after a while.

**OMER**

But I am.

**JULES**

You might be.

**OMER**

Then accept the apology and let's move on.

*3 seconds pass.*

**JULES**

Why can't you both tell me the truth?

**OMER**

There's nothing to tell.

*2 seconds pass.*

**JULES**

Everything is going to change.

**OMER**

It's been changing.

**JULES**

And you blame me.

**OMER**

Guilty conscience?

*1 second passes.*

**JULES**

You've both been pushing me away for weeks.

**OMER**

We've been pushing YOU away? You've become obsessed with this place.

**JULES**

And you've given up on it. We came here for a reason. We're so SO close and you want to give it all up. Where's your fire gone?



**OMER**

You can't burn the world to save it.

**JULES**

It's the only way!

**OMER**

No it's not. Why doesn't anyone here understand that?

**JULES**

There is no place for those who can't follow willingly and become a part of the whole.

*He pauses and studies her.*

**OMER**

Is that a threat?

**JULES**

It's a fact.

*He tests the air.*

**OMER**

Is this really where you can do the most good and change the world?

**JULES**

Look what I've changed so far.

**OMER**

Remember what we promised at the border.

**JULES**

Look at how they listen to me.

**OMER**

What you promised.

**JULES**

They're even talking to me about recruitment.

**OMER**

Please remember.

**JULES**

Wa ja3alna asama'a sakohfen ma7foothan wahoom 3an ayateeha mu3reethoon.

*[And we made the sky a protected ceiling, but they, from its signs, are turning away.]*

La ikraheh fee addeennee.

**OMER**

*[There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] religion.]*

Fahal 3asaytum in thawalaytum an toofseedoo fee al-owthee wa twocuttee3oo ar7amakoom?  
*[So would you, if you turned away, cause corruption on earth and sever your [ties of] kinship?]*  
So could you? Turn away?

**JULES**

*TOMMY walks back in slowly carrying a vest bomb on a hanger. OMER blanches. JULES is an odd mixture of relief and pride. A palpable pregnant pause hangs in the air. It should be uncomfortably long - for the trio and the audience*

They're not asking for volunteers anymore.

**TOMMY**

*A moment.*

And us?

**JULES**

*TOMMY shrugs and shakes his head.*

You can't do this.

**OMER**

Didn't sound like I had a choice.

**TOMMY**

You know what it would mean.

**OMER**

Glory.

**JULES**

The senseless violence.

**OMER**

It's for a cause.

**JULES**

Is it?

**OMER**

Isn't it? We come, we learn, we change the world, we have a voice.

**JULES**

**OMER**

You lose your voice this way.

**JULES**

His voice will echo throughout history. I only wish it was me.

*OMER grabs the vest and tries to hand it to her.*

**JULES**

(smiling)

Part of the whole and every part has their function.

**OMER**

Convenient.

(to TOMMY)

If they take the choice out of your hands then the action means nothing afterwards. No salvation. It goes against all the tenets of self-sacrifice. We have a loophole. Use it.

**JULES**

And then he faces the shame of cowardice.

**OMER**

He can still contribute to the whole somewhere else.

**JULES**

You don't understand the price of glory.

**OMER**

You use that word but don't understand it's weight.

**JULES**

I know it's importance.

**OMER**

You know it's seduction.

**JULES**

I know the opportunity to seize it doesn't come often.

**OMER**

(holding out the vest to her)

So here's your opportunity then. You want glory? Have it!

*She looks at TOMMY. She takes the vest from OMER.*

**TOMMY**

You're not doing this.

Well you clearly won't. **JULES**

None of us do it. **TOMMY**

He's a kid! We're all kids! **OMER**

**JULES**  
No! We made ourselves a promise. We step up. We become something worthy./ Your fear // will not -

/ That's not what we promised. **TOMMY**

// I'm not scared. **OMER**

**JULES**  
- WILL NOT infect us. Or him. Don't let his fear eat you alive, Abu Mukhtaar.

The same fear I see in your hands right now? **TOMMY**

It's excitement. **JULES**

*TOMMY grabs the vest from her. She does not relent.*

I won't have this on my conscience. **TOMMY**

Either take the glory or sacrifice it. **JULES**

**OMER**  
(to TOMMY)  
No matter what she or they say you have them up against a wall. If they force you to do this they show themselves as hypocrites.

Then everyone would finally listen to you. Believe you. **TOMMY**

. . .The price isn't worth it. **OMER**

**JULES**

He'll do so much with one small action.

**OMER**

You have nothing to prove to them. You won't lose face. No one will know but us.

**JULES**

Word gets around. It finds a way.

**OMER**

Then forget them and leave. We all leave.

**JULES**

Oh - did you also save me a seat on the transport next week, Omer?

*OMER snaps his head to her.*

**TOMMY**

What?

**JULES**

(surprised)

You had no idea.

**TOMMY**

Tell me you didn't.

**JULES**

One for all and all for one, eh?

**TOMMY**

You promised me.

**OMER**

And you promised me.

**TOMMY**

I haven't decided anything!

**OMER**

You shouldn't have to be deciding anything!

**TOMMY**

You're not in a position to be lecturing me right now.

**OMER**

It was just in case. I wasn't going to leave you here.

**JULES**  
You?

**OMER**  
Us. I wasn't going / to leave -

**JULES**  
Us?

**OMER**  
Shut up!

**TOMMY**  
You promised me, man.

**OMER**  
Come with me. Please. We didn't come here to die.

**JULES**  
Don't be naive about it all now. We've seen others do it.

**OMER**  
But they volunteered.

**JULES**  
You'll be just like Abu Musa. Think of how they still talk about him. What is the target?

**TOMMY**  
I walk into an American base looking for help.

**JULES**  
An entire base? They've never before - The brilliance of choosing you. I understand now.

**TOMMY**  
I'll be beaten up - bloodied - bruised. So they'll be concerned about medical attention. They take me in. And when I'm far enough / and then

**JULES**  
This will change everything. Don't you see? We eliminate an entire base and it pushes them out. We'll have no opposition. No one to stand in the way as we change the world. This will be it! We're going to win!

**OMER**  
Unarmed soldiers and civilians.

**JULES**  
You don't need to hold a gun to be guilty or dangerous.

**TOMMY**

The things they'll say back home.

**JULES**

Who cared about you there? This far outweighs what even Abu Musa did. You are never going to be forgotten for this.

**TOMMY**

But you both -

*JULES kisses TOMMY. With purpose.*

**JULES**

So that is what Glory tastes like. Incredible.

**OMER**

(taking the vest)

Give it to me.

**JULES**

You can't be serious.

**TOMMY**

I won't let you.

**OMER**

Why not? Everything I've tried here has failed. Maybe this makes them pay attention to me. Maybe they see the hypocrisy and look at The Book more carefully. Maybe they remember what The Faith is supposed to stand for.

**TOMMY**

That's a whole lot of maybes and no definitely's.

**JULES**

I give you a gold star for at least trying.

**OMER**

If not you or him then why not me?

**TOMMY**

Because it's not you.

**OMER**

And you're not Alex!

**JULES**

Careful.

**OMER**

Don't be like him.

**TOMMY**

If good can come from it then why shouldn't I?

**OMER**

You're not some American cowboy trying to save a town. You don't have to be that kind of hero.

**TOMMY**

Isn't that what we do best? And if it could heal even two people then why not?

**OMER**

You can't bet your life on an 'if'.

**JULES**

I accept the gift.

**TOMMY**

Cut the crap, Jules. And you - don't.

**OMER**

I'm not -

**TOMMY**

I see it in your eyes and don't.

*OMER regains his composure. TOMMY takes the vest and hangs it up. He puts his hand out in the center.*

**TOMMY**

Hands in the center. Put your hand in, Omer. Put it in.

(He does. TOMMY turns to JULES.)

Now you. Put your hand on top. Give us your hand, Jules. Give us your hand. Jules! PUT YOUR HAND IN!

(She does.)

I promised.

(to OMER)

You promised.

(to JULES)

You promised.

(JULES tries to move her hand away. He grabs it and clamps it down.)

No! We stay here until we figure this out. We can do this. Is this what we wanted?

(to JULES)

What did you do?

(to OMER)

What did you do?



What have I done? I don't know. I dunno. Maybe you both need this. To knock sense into you. Maybe Alex was a hero after all. Maybe you'll understand everything if I'm not here. But the guilt - would you feel guilt - I don't want you to feel guilt. Every part acting for the whole. I would act for you - for the whole that is you two - the three of us. And then what would you do?

(to JULES)

Move your hand again, Jules - I swear move it again -

I need this - but I also need you. My family. MY family. How do I keep you and not lose me? Or maybe you don't need me. Maybe I go away. And only you two are left. Do I matter enough? Will you feel empty when I'm gone? Will see that you're stronger - better people - when you're together?

(to OMER)

You taught me this: Giving up blood as an unconditional expression of love and protection for your family - to strengthen ties of friendship and help those who are in need. This is the Faith's greatest lesson, right? I'll show everyone the same lesson by doing this. You taught me this. You can teach her. You can teach all of them.

(to JULES)

We wanted to create the world for ourselves - in OUR image - not in theirs. Where we could be whatever wanted. Not to become something they expected us to.

I see how you both can change the world. But what do I - I don't have your words, Omer. Or your strength, Jules. I have - I can give you somewhere to begin. Because they chose me. They - chose - ME. I - mean something to them. I can mean something to everyone. Maybe I'll put it on YouTube, right? Be a viral sensation for the world. Show them the only way people like us can matter.

(he laughs manically)

Stop looking so scared, Omer. I could do this. I could do this for you. And for you, Jules. For me. For them - no fuck them - this is for us. This is our time. OUR time. You said I mattered to you so let me matter to you! Let me matter for something! I don't think - I don't know - isn't this how we - I don't - I can't - I don't - don't don't don't don't

*The Chaotic Noise seeps in and starts to grow, but it's almost as if TOMMY is the only one who can hear it.*

**OMER**

Look what you've done to him.

**JULES**

This is all on you.

**OMER**

You've been pressuring him

**JULES**

And you've been / distracting him

**TOMMY**

You're not listening to me. / You're not.

**OMER**

You let this camp change you.

**JULES**

I've let it improve me. Like you should /have been.

**TOMMY**

You didn't hear a word I said. / You didn't hear me.

**OMER**

(laughing)

With what? Lies and manipulation?

**TOMMY**

You're not hearing me!

**JULES**

With truth. With the promise of glory.

**TOMMY**

You're not helping. This is not / helping me. This is not helping me.

**OMER**

You would sacrifice his life for empty glory.

**JULES**

His sacrifice is our salvation.

**TOMMY**

Stop it!

**OMER**

Think of after.

**TOMMY**

Stop it!!

**JULES**

I'm thinking of the future.

**TOMMY**

STOP!

**OMER**

His death will be on our hands.

## JULES

My hands are clean.

## TOMMY

PLEASE STOP!

*The Chaotic Noise blares louder than ever. JULES and OMER continue to argue but we don't hear their words.*

*A sense of calm falls on TOMMY. He goes to where the vest bomb hangs. The lights fall around him and he is alone. The noise cuts out.*

SHIFT:

## WHAT THEY DID

*1) We are left with TOMMY's breathing. He dresses himself in American garb [into the clothes he arrived in]. Once he finishes, he stares at himself. He goes to and dons the vest making sure it's all put together. Then puts a jacket over it, zips up, and leaves. As he does all this:*

*2) OMER is illuminated wearing Western garb. He is back in Melbourne. He prays but has trouble focusing on The Book. He eventually stops praying. He looks at The Book. He fetches a pen and after a moment's hesitation starts rewriting. It gets more frenzied. The pen tears through the thin pages. He eventually throws the book on the floor and walks away.*

*Simultaneously with 1 and 2. We only hear her at first.*

## JULES

La yereedoona. 3aeelatuna. 7ukoomateena. Asdaqaheenah. La yefhumoonaa. Walan yefhumoonaa abadan.

*[They don't want us. Our family. Our government. Our friends. They don't understand us. They never will.]*

*JULES is illuminated. She pulls a headband from her pocket and wraps it across her forehead.*

3almuhum mahdud. Imtithreen almaloo walooneeyat wal7azhata lee ithbat qematihem. Na7noo moo7asareen feel wasata. Nooreed 3alamin mu5talif - 3alamin afdal.

*[Their knowledge is limited. They are influenced by money and selfishness and the need to prove their worth. And we are trapped in the middle. We want a different world - a better one.]*

*JULES is becoming unsteady and unhinged.*

Al i5wat well a5wat tumreedoo! Ta3aloowa hooneh! Noo hayeeyikum eelayaneh! Nahnoo hoona lakum! Matha setef3aloo? Matha setef3aloo? Matha setef3aloo?

*[Brothers and Sisters rise up! Come to us! We welcome you! We are here only for you! What will you do? What will you do? What will you do?]*

*A loud explosion rocks the stage. JULES rips off the headband and balaclava. She is an emotional mess.*

Matha fa3alna?

**JULES**

*[What did we do?]*

*We are plunged into darkness.*

### **A BEGINNING IS AN END**

*The border of Syria and Turkey. A pre-dawn light floods the stage.*

*TOMMY wanders around, dressed every bit the suburban American teen and traveling light. He's nervous and curious and unsure. Looking around for something - someone.*

*JULES appears, cautiously, and sees the back of TOMMY. She's dressed in her best chav matching trackies and trainers - and a makeshift modesty scarf that only covers her hair. She watches him for a moment. He turns and sees her. They lock eyes.*

Jules?

**TOMMY**

Yeh. Tommy?

**JULES**

**TOMMY**  
Obviously. Face isn't all that different in real life is it?

**JULES**  
(getting in closer)  
Jesus you's a big one innya? Didn't expect you to be that tall.

*TOMMY hugs her.*

**JULES**  
(extracting herself)  
Oh yeah alright mate relax we just met and all innit.

Sorry. I'm a hugger.

**TOMMY**

All you Americans. Mental. **JULES**

Look at you. Look at us! **TOMMY**

Yeh. **JULES**

You ok? **TOMMY**

Yeh, mate. Just weird, innit. **JULES**

**TOMMY**  
All those months talking on WhatsApp and FaceTiming and now it's real.

Mental, mate. Mental. **JULES**

**TOMMY**  
Come on get excited. We fucking did it!

**JULES**  
Just a lot to take in all at once. This. The journey. You.

**TOMMY**  
Hey you can relax, ok? It's just me.

I know, mate. **JULES**

Same old me. **TOMMY**

Yeh I know I know. **JULES**

*They move awkwardly around one another.*

Fuck it's bleak here, innit. **JULES**

**TOMMY**  
All those mountains - reminds me of the cliffs in the Nebraska panhandle. That's some pretty shit.

**JULES**

I could murder a loo right now. Driver couldn't understand me - kept motioning like a div trying to get him to under - What's wrong? Why you starin' at me?

**TOMMY**

I didn't think anyone else would actually come.

**JULES**

Mate - when I say something I do it.

**TOMMY**

Was expecting to be alone here.

**JULES**

Nah, mate, I's committed. Ain't no going back now.

**TOMMY**

Haven't stepped over the border yet.  
(looking around)  
Not that I'm sure where the actual line is.

**JULES**

Think O backed out?

**TOMMY**

If someone like him backs out then we have no hope.

**JULES**

Maybe we's in the wrong place?

**TOMMY**

We can't both be wrong if we both ended up here.

**JULES**

Fair point.

*A tiny moment.*

**TOMMY/JULES**

This is crazy.

*They warmly chuckle.*

*The infamous twig crack. TOMMY and JULES jump.*

**JULES**

(hiding behind TOMMY)

Shit the bed what is that! If it's a fucking snake I'll go mental.

*OMER appears looking like the prepared hiker - a very prepared hiker. She looks around TOMMY and sees him. Everyone looks at one another. Then:*

**OMER**

Salam 3alaykum. *[Peace be upon you.]*

**JULES & TOMMY**

(JULES is passable. TOMMY butchers it and mumbles halfway through.)

Wa-Alaikum-Salaam. *[And peace unto you.]*

**OMER**

(nods to TOMMY)

Tommy.

**TOMMY**

Hey man.

**JULES**

Alright, O?

**OMER**

Alright, Julie.

**JULES**

Whoa, mate. You ain't my priest. It's Jules.

**OMER**

Sorry. Alright, Jules?

**JULES**

Yeh.

*TOMMY hugs OMER, catching him off guard.*

**JULES**

Americans.

**OMER**

OK this is a lot, mate.

**TOMMY**

(pulling away)

Shit, sorry, I probably smell like ass from all the traveling.

(to Jules)

Shit is that why -

No. **JULES**

Oh. **TOMMY**

I've got that 21-hour plane smell. **OMER**

Shoulda smelled my driver. **JULES**

Never been on so many planes in my life. **TOMMY**

Never been on any. Loos are bloody tiny innit. **JULES**

Think the last truck ride broke my bum. **OMER**

Team's all here! Yeehaw! **TOMMY**

*They awkwardly look at him. He turns away feeling the idiot. They all start to examine their surroundings*

Bit bleak out here, eh? **OMER**

*JULES looks at TOMMY's as if to say 'You see?'*

You have any problems getting out? **TOMMY**

Benefit of being the good child. No one asks where you're going. Put on my best 'G'day mate' smile at the airport and bish bash boom here I am. **OMER**

T? **JULES**

Nah. Easy as pie. **TOMMY**  
(flashes his passport)  
This is like having a VIP pass to any hot club. You?



**JULES**

Head down hands in pockets walk straight and if anyone asks: Gap year.

**TOMMY**

Sound.

**JULES**

This one thought we was gonna back out.

**OMER**

Why?

**TOMMY**

Dunno. Thought maybe it was a practical joke or something.

**OMER**

Not exactly the ideal scenario for a humorous trick.

*Awkward pause. JULES studies the area. TOMMY kicks around some rocks. OMER looks back and forth between the two.*

**JULES**

Still don't feel real.

**OMER**

It's so weird seeing your faces.

**JULES**

Innit! I said the same.

**TOMMY**

Ok why are we being all weird? This is weird. We've seen each other over and over again.

**JULES**

Online.

**OMER**

Going to have to get to used to this real-life thing, eh?

**JULES**

Innit.

**OMER**

(to JULES)

You sound more nasally in real life.

**JULES**  
(to OMER)  
You looked darker on FaceTime.

**TOMMY**  
(blurting it out)  
Ok I admit it I'm nervous.

*A moment.*

**OMER**  
Me too, mate.

*Silence. They look at JULES.*

**JULES**  
(sucks her teeth)  
Nah, blud.

*Sideways glance.*

**JULES**  
Yeh alright maybe a little - A LITTLE.

**TOMMY**  
No shame if we turn around now.

**OMER**  
What?

**TOMMY**  
I sorta remember the way back. Wouldn't be the end of the world.

*A moment's consideration.*

**JULES**  
Yeh good one. And once we get home? 'Sorry, mum, took me a bit longer to get ciggies from the shop.'

**OMER**  
They said we were ready.

**TOMMY**  
Yeah. I know.

**OMER**  
And we agreed we were more than ready.

**TOMMY**

I know. I just -

**JULES**

Everyone in the WhatsApp group and they chose the three of us.

**OMER**

We have a fighting chance with them.

**JULES**

We couldn't find good enough reasons to stay.

**OMER**

Not with the way we were being treated.

**JULES**

Ignored.

**OMER**

No futures.

**JULES**

None.

**TOMMY**

I'm just being cautious - I guess. Want to make sure we haven't forgotten any other - you know what - never mind. Ignore me. I'm excited. That's all.

**JULES**

It's gonna be great, yeh? Little adjusting here and there but we's gonna be golden. You heard them - we get to have a future here - save the world and all.

**OMER**

We're ready. We have been. Or they wouldn't have let us come over.

**TOMMY**

Just a big change. Like a massive one. All those creature comforts from back home.

**OMER**

All material.

**TOMMY**

Freedom?

*JULES and OMER laugh.*

**JULES**

Come on, mate.

**OMER**

Freedom like we had that is for wallies.

**JULES**

We ain't gonna live in no illusion anymore.

**TOMMY**

(shaking it off)

Argh. You're right. You guys are right. Fuck it.

**OMER**

We should probably watch our language from now on.

**JULES**

Aw shit - think so?

**OMER**

I guarantee it.

**JULES**

We should like get it out of our system or something yeh?

**TOMMY**

Good idea!

**OMER**

What - scream a bunch of epithets into the heavens?

**JULES**

'Epithets.' Get him, T. 'Epithets.'

**TOMMY**

Nerd.

**OMER**

I don't really curse anyway.

**TOMMY**

Get creative. On the count of 3 and be as creative as you want. 1 - 2 - GO!

*Next three lines all together.*

**TOMMY**

Fuck shit bitch asshole motherfucker son of a bitch shithead pisshole COWFUCKING BASTARD!

**JULES**

Cunt cunt bugger bell end fanny tosser pikey pillock bollocks fuck shite wanker wanker twat.

**OMER**

Wally drongo - um um um - wombat derro - eh - bogan wristy slagger.

**JULES**

Cow fucking bastard?!?!

**TOMMY**

YEAH! MOOO MUTHAFUCKAS!

*They laugh.*

**JULES**

Mental.

**OMER**

Wally.

**TOMMY**

Ok ok ok - can we make a promise to one another?

**OMER**

Everyone in a Hollywood movie would say 'yes' in this moment.

**JULES**

Seriously?

**TOMMY**

Yeah, sure, come on. Actually - no - even better - we each make one.

**OMER**

Wouldn't it be easier to cut a thumb and share blood or something?

**TOMMY**

Nah this is better.

**JULES**

You go first. Lead by example.

**TOMMY**

Ladies first.

**JULES**

Oi - none of that, hear? I ain't no different than any of you.

**TOMMY**

Just wanna think of the perfect one. Go, Jules!

**JULES**

Alright. Alright - erm - alright. We promise that we're always gonna be there for one another.

**OMER**

That's a little vague.

**JULES**

Like we help each other through it all. One falls behind the others help push them forward.

**TOMMY**

Easy 'nuff.

**OMER**

Yeah - sure.

**TOMMY**

Wait wait wait - hands in the middle. Let's be connected while we speak the promises.

**JULES & OMER**

Americans.

*They relent and put hands into the center.*

**TOMMY**

Go, Jules.

**JULES**

We promise to help each other through it all and be there to lift up whoever falls.

**TOMMY**

Omer.

**OMER**

We promise to remind each other this is better for our lives and to make sure we have a future.

**JULES**

Sick.

**TOMMY**

Nice one.

**JULES**

T, you're last.

**TOMMY**

We promise that no one breaks us apart. We become a family.

**OMER**

Tall order.

**TOMMY**

All things are probable.

**JULES**

What kind of family?

**TOMMY**

The kind we all didn't have. The kind who believe in one another, see our true selves, understand our flaws, and love one another no matter what happens.

**JULES**

(laughs)

Fuckin' hell.

**OMER**

Big dreamer.

**TOMMY**

Don't overthink. It's easier than it sounds. On three we all say: I promise. One, two, three.

**ALL THREE**

I promise.

**BLACKOUT.**

**END OF PLAY.**