

algo decadente en la tele. No tengo mucho más que ofrecerle.

(AICHA vuelve a servirse agua, se sienta y enciende la televisión.)

SOLDADO-POL 2 *(Mirando a la botella):* Le agradezco la confianza. ¿Whisky?

AICHA: Agua.

SOLDADO-POL 2: ¿Es usted árabe?

AICHA *(Lo mira pensativa):* Sí, soy árabe. *(Pausa.)* Soy árabe y creo que después voy a ir a ver a mis padres.

(El SOLDADO se sirve un vaso de agua y se sienta.)

SOLDADO-POL 2: Buena idea... ¿Mejor?

AICHA: ¿Y usted?

SOLDADO-POL 2: Mejor...

(Miran a la televisión. Están saliendo imágenes del muro.)

SOLDADO-POL 2: ¿No debería cambiar de canal?

AICHA: Sí... Los muros siguen donde estaban y la gente sigue creyéndose libre metida entre ellos.

(AICHA sigue mirando fijamente la pantalla. Después mira al SOLDADO-POL 2. Pausa.)

AICHA: ¿Sabe?

SOLDADO-POL 2: ¿El qué?

AICHA: Yo maté a Ilan.

SOLDADO-POL 2: Yo también.

(Los dos miran la televisión. Un documental de cómo se sigue construyendo el muro aparece en pantalla.)

TELÓN

(Laurent murió el 28 de marzo de 2004 en las trincheras de un hotel del centro, tras largos años de duro combate.)

SUICIDE OF AN ANGEL

Translated by Rick Hite

“MARTÍN RECUERDA” AWARD 2007

AURORA MATEOS

Development of *Suicide of an Angel* has been assisted by the
Shenandoah International Playwrights at the
Earl Hamner Playwrights' Conference (Virginia),
which is supported by the Virginia Commission for the Arts.
It was first performed on 4 August 2007, with the following...

CAST

ILAN TEILLET: Steven William
AICHA AN-LUS: Jacquie Harvey
SOLDADO-POL₂: Robert Blumenstein
SOLDADO-PSY₁: Mollie Remilard
SOLDADO-PSY₂: Robert Blumenstein
SOLDADO-POL₁: Mollie Remilard

DIRECTED by Boomie Peterson
DRAMATURG: Robert Graham Small
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER: Guinn Baker
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR: J. Taylor

C A S T

ILAN TEILLET

AICHA AN-LUS

SOLDIER-PSY ₁

SOLDIER-PSY ₂

SOLDIER-POL ₁

SOLDIER-POL ₂

SCENE 1:
TO RAISE A HAND AGAINST ONESELF

*(ILAN' s apartment. Boulevard August Blanqui, Paris.
ILAN is looking out the window. He is smoking, drinking champagne,
and watching the snow fall. He closes the window and lights a
cigarette. He keeps drinking and moving around nervous, uncertain,
looking from side to side, until he decides to sit down.
The SOLDIERS slowly pass him paraphernalia: handcuffs, a baggage
bungee cord, and a plastic bag. While he is talking, the bag is placed
over his head, tied with the cord, and finally the cuffs put on his
hands behind his back. The SOLDIERS assist him as if it were a
ritual. Sounds of a wall being constructed are heard from off-stage.)*

ILAN: People believe raising your own hand against yourself is something easy. How wrong they are! How obvious it is they never tried it! The truth is, dying is hard. Almost as hard as living... because... you have to go against gravity.

SOLDIER 1: Against the hand of God.

ILAN: Gravity is the natural force of attraction that exists between two bodies, which possess mass. This force keeps us hostage on earth and stuck to this world; something no one understands. No one. Least of all, me. But my mass lessens with every moment. My medicines, the doctors, my family, friends, my fiancée all keep trying to fatten me up, but with no success. I am getting lighter all the time, and my being less and less subject to the force of gravity.

SOLDIER 2: Like the angels.

ILAN: What breath I have left only keeps me suffering. I breathe so I'll suffer, eat just to suffer, piss to suffer. I sleep to rest and then suffer all the more when I wake up. So today I said to myself, no more. The little mass and slight force I have left will be enough to set me free.

SOLDIER 2: Free.

ILAN: *(His tone softening.)* It's no one's fault, Aicha. It's just that mass and gravitational force are directly proportional, but they don't love each other. They have nothing to say to each other when they meet. I don't count for anything in all this. My darling, you have to understand. I want to live, but you're the only thing there is holding my body to this world, and that's not right for either of us. Now, instead of love, there's only emptiness because I'm behind this wall.

SOLDIER 1: The wall.

ILAN: I shouldn't be afraid. It only takes four minutes. That's all the oxygen in the bag. Then it turns to poison. They say time is relative. Maybe I'll live ten years more each minute. That way I'll die when I'm 65 instead of 25. They'll be the happiest four minutes of my life.

(He puts the bag over his head and waits. The minutes go by, languidly, anxiously. There is no going back. The cuffs are closed behind his back and he cannot reach the bag. Time passes relentlessly. The SOLDIERS, light up and smoke. ILAN struggles violently for the last oxygen.)

(A pause. Darkness.)

(AICHA enters through the door. She rips off the bag. She embraces him.)

AICHA: Ilan. Darling. Breathe! Come on, breathe!

(Embracing him. They cry.)

AICHA: What were you doing?

ILAN: *(Coughing.)* Going away.

AICHA: I never thought you would go this far.

ILAN: I warned you.

AICHA: *(Violently taking his face in her hands.)* How dare you?

ILAN: I can't take it anymore.

AICHA: You were giving it all up! You were going to leave me? How can I live without you?

ILAN: I can't take any more!

AICHA: Yes you can! You can! *(Embracing him, trembling.)* You can't leave, you can't.

ILAN: What's the difference? We've been alone, each of us, for a long time now. Since this nightmare started. I can't even make love with you anymore. You can't look me in the eyes when I'm talking to you.

AICHA: *(Anxious.)* It's because... because you say such strange things. And... they get to me... *(Embracing him.)* But... I'll do better. We have to be more together now than ever. To get through this thing. To have a normal life.

ILAN: Normal?

AICHA: Yes. Instead of spending our time changing psychiatrists, we'll be like everyone else. We'll have a mortgage. We'll have kids and sex every Saturday. Right! Every Saturday. In the afternoon.

ILAN: Aicha. I've turned into something useless. Can't

you see that? I can't work. I can't even meet people. Because I feel so bad from the moment the sun comes up. I can't take it anymore!

AICHA: It'll get better.

ILAN: I am a problem for myself, and for you I'm nothing but pain. Every day I'm less in control of my head, and I have to put an end to it before...

AICHA: Why are you trying to hurry death? Who are you to give death orders?

ILAN: I'm crazy! Why won't you believe me? Let me go! Please!

AICHA: Nothing's stronger than us, the two of us! Don't you see that? We just have to love each other...

ILAN: I wish... Aicha. But time is stronger. Can't you feel how much time hurts? Aicha, you love me, don't you?

AICHA: Forever.

ILAN: Put the bag back on, please.

AICHA (*Looking at him hard.*): Not a chance!

ILAN: Help me get away from all this, Aicha. Please. If you love me, help me. Do it.

AICHA: It's not possible! This is not like walking out on a bad movie or being picky-picky about who you do financial consulting for just because you're a polytech grad. It's not like something you just decide on. We have to keep trying and get on with it. Period!

ILAN: But I'll just do it somewhere else... so let me do it now. Come on, untie me! I need to get on now my courage is up. To free myself. To free us. Minoo! Don't make me

have to live through tomorrow. Not tomorrow. Please. Open the cuffs. The key's somewhere on the floor.

AICHA (*Hugging him hard.*): No!

ILAN: Aicha! Open them!

AICHA: I said no. No. Because you're going to live. Like it or not. You're going to live.

ILAN: I'll hold my breath. Watch. No more breathing. Ever again. (*Holding his breath till he turns red. AICHA kisses him.*)

AICHA: Breathe! (*Kisses him again with passion.*) I need for you to live.

ILAN: (*Gulping air.*) Let me do it, please. Aicha. Why don't you try to understand? Behind my wall it would have all been possible, but not now. I'm on the other side now, Aicha.

AICHA: We won't leave this room. You hear me? I'll call out for food. I'll watch you all the time. You'll live because I say so.

ILAN: It'll never work.

AICHA: I'll watch you like a hawk to make sure you're breathing.

ILAN: And what about me?

AICHA: You? Nothing about you. All you have to do is keep breathing.

ILAN: I don't want to.

AICHA: You're going to keep living because I order you to. You understand? Because I say so. Because I order you to!

ILAN: But I can't.

AICHA: You can! You will! Because that's the way I want it. And there's nothing more to discuss.

ILAN: Give me the bag, Aicha. Please.

AICHA: *(Tearing up the bag.)* The bag? What bag? There are no bags in this house. There are no bags in this world. You get it? Not in supermarkets, not in shopping malls, not anywhere. To hell with plastic bags! *(Embracing him.)* Now just shut up, you. And breathe. Breathe. Breathe.

SCENE 2: THE KIDNAPPING

(ILAN and AICHA are in his apartment –same as scene one–. ILAN is in bed and still has his hands cuffed behind him. AICHA is cooking. She notices that ILAN is not asleep. The SOLDIERS are not there. The wind outside is heard buffeting the windows, a sound somewhat similar to that of the sounds of wall construction in scene one.)

AICHA: Still breathing?

ILAN *(In a bad mood.)*: No. I'm sleeping.

AICHA: Next month on the 28th we could go to that cocktail party our district rep is throwing. Everybody will be there. I thought I could wear the new dress you bought me. What do you think?

ILAN: Whatever dress you wear is fine with me. I'm sleeping.

(She opens the window. Snow is falling. To ILAN it looks like feathers. He remembers a day with AICHA at a cafe on Rue Barres.)

AICHA *(Opening a gift. It is a dress.)*: It's beautiful! I can't believe it! A Guivenchy! *(Turning around with it.)* I've never had anything so beautiful. And what's this? *(She takes handcuffs out of the box. She starts to laugh.)* What are you suggesting? *(She picks up the champagne from the table.)* Let's go to Quai Bourbon and with champagne to celebrate? *(Referring to the handcuffs.)* Or do you want to go back home and try these out? *(With emotion.)* Thank you. I'll never forget this day.

ILAN: One year.

AICHA: Our first anniversary. *(Still holding the package she kisses him.)* Sir. Could you take a picture of us, please? *(She pulls a small camera from her purse.)*

SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 1: Of course. *(Taking the camera)*
Do you want Saint-Gervais in it?

AICHA: Sure. Why not? Thanks.

SOL/POL 2: *(Taking photo and returning camera.)* It will be hard to forget that smile. You have a nice day now. *(Handing back the camera.)*

AICHA: Ilan, what's the matter? Do you know him? Why are you looking at him like that? *(She waves her hand in front of his eyes.)* Hey! I'm still here. *(Laughs.)* Ilan, what's going on?

(He comes out of the mist of his memory. She closes the window.)

AICHA: We've got to get the landlord to fix this window. Are you awake?

ILAN: Are you never going to leave me in peace?

AICHA: Never.

ILAN: And you're never going out again? You haven't been to work in four days now, and you've stopped studying for your exams.

AICHA: So?

ILAN: So they're going to fire you, and so you're going to fail your June exams again.

AICHA: I have money saved up, and I'll take the course again if I have to.

ILAN: Well, even in your Joan of Arc mood you could

not worry about the money and just use my credit card. Then when I commit suicide, you'll have something left in the bank.

AICHA: You don't have to remind me that your father is head of Sentier and sells clothing to half of France. I'm not exactly a street person.

ILAN: I didn't mean to offend you. What I mean is you're sacrificing yourself for nothing. Your wasting your money, your career, and your friends for something that's not worth it.

AICHA: It's no big deal. And you're going to get well. Soon.

ILAN: Not to mention your family.

AICHA: My parents are very busy getting their fourth little store open in Belleville. And they have no desire to see me until I start walking the straight and narrow. And since I have no intention of taking that walk, there's nothing to worry about.

ILAN: So you're a rebel, and your parents know it.

AICHA: I don't want to be an Arab. I want to be French.

ILAN: And what does the one have to do with the other? *(Pause.)* Don't act like an idiot. Sooner or later you'll be out on the street and have to face your life, what it really is.

AICHA: Now except for going to the doctor's, we don't have to go out for anything. I can order everything on the Internet, and they'll deliver it.

ILAN: I'll start screaming the next time someone brings something.

AICHA: I've got that one covered. See. Duct tape for your mouth if we need it. *(Pause. She is fixing their meal. Looking out the window.)* The snow looks like feathers, doesn't it? *(Pause.)*

ILAN: I have to go to the bathroom.

(AICHA brings him a chamber pot and takes down his pants.)

AICHA: Here you go.

ILAN: I can't go in to the toilet?

AICHA: I'm not letting you out of my sight.

ILAN: Just leave the door open. I'm not going to shit in this thing. I'm not a baby.

AICHA: All right.

(She walks him to the bathroom. She then continues fixing the meal while checking on him from time to time.)

ILAN: I want my baguette warmed up today.

AICHA: They're frozen, but I'm heating it in the oven. Nice hot bread.

ILAN: In other words, you don't think your man is worth real bread? That's not good.

AICHA: You could do all kinds of damage if I went out. Break the glass in the door, open it, go out, and jump off the balcony. Or just throw yourself through the window. Or whatever ideas you get when you sit there staring into nowhere. No, I can't trust you anymore.

ILAN: And I'm getting very tired of you. Seriously.

AICHA: Well, you'll just have to get used to me. *(Brings him a plate of food.)* Here. Eat!

ILAN: I don't want to eat.

AICHA *(She tries to spoon something into his mouth. He keeps mouth shut.):* Don't think you can starve yourself to death. *(She twists his ear, and he reflexively opens his mouth. She pushes the spoon in.)* Eat now. Come on. *(He spits it out.)*

AICHA *(Slapping him.):* We don't spit our food out!

ILAN: I'm not a baby. For the second time.

AICHA: You're not responsible. It's the same thing.

ILAN: So, you're torturing me until I die of disgust from looking at you. Is that it?

AICHA *(Keeps feeding him.):* Something like that.

ILAN: I don't even feel like I love you anymore.

AICHA: No one's asked about that. Eat!

ILAN: And if I could feel anything, I'm sure it would be that I hate you.

AICHA *(Laughing.):* Me too. I'm sure.

(The telephone rings.)

AICHA: Someone's calling. Should I answer it?

ILAN: Answer it! It's my mother. She might call the police if she can't find me.

AICHA: Hello... Yes, he's here. But he's busy.

ILAN *(Shouting.):* Hello, Mamá!

(AICHA throws him an angry glance, but, without a choice, holds the phone for him.)

ILAN: Hi, Mamá... How are you?... *(Laughing.)* Why are you always calling me angel?... No, no I haven't been to synagogue... You know I don't do that anymore... Why are you crying?... Soldiers?... Of course there're soldiers over there! They have more soldiers over there than rabbis...

Please stop crying... There are soldiers who want to kill everybody... But... Mamá... That's crazy... You're getting me upset now, come on... I'm with Aicha... Yes... The Arab girl... What do I do with her?... Mamá... No, no, I haven't washed my hands... they're clean... I promise... Yes... Right... A kiss. Goodbye. (*AICHA bangs up phone.*) She sends her regards.

AICHA: I'll send her my regards back the next time. You want more to eat? (*He shakes his head no.*)

ILAN: What are you going to do if she wants to see me?

AICHA: I'll tell her to go to hell.

ILAN (*He laughs.*): Sometimes I remember why I fell in love with you. (*Silence.*)

AICHA: Tomorrow we're going to the psychiatrist. (*He shakes his head no.*) Remember, now I'm in charge here. You need help. We have to go to the hospital.

VOICES OF THE SOLDIERS: Yes! To the hospital!

(*ILAN, frightened by the voices, shakes his head no.*)

AICHA: Don't be afraid. They'll tell us what we have to do to get you well.

ILAN: There is no getting well again. Can't you get that? It will always be like this? Pills and shit can't change it?

VOICES OF THE SOLDIERS: (*Laughing.*) To the hospital!

AICHA: It's just a question of time. They'll find a way.

ILAN: I don't have enough gravity to live. Why is that so hard for you to understand? God...

VOICES OF THE SOLDIERS: God. He's gone.

AICHA (*Looks at him surprised.*): You're just a little crazier

than most people. That's all. We'll make it right, and then we'll get married.

ILAN: How are we going to get married if I can't even make love with you. For how long now? Three, six months? I'll kill myself before you stop loving me.

AICHA: I'll never stop loving you whether you die or not. (*She kisses him, touches him.*)

ILAN: There's a wall between us. You'll get tired of it sooner or later.

AICHA: That's silly.

ILAN: You'll stop loving me because I can't be a man for you.

(*They begin making love.*)

AICHA (*Kissing him passionately.*): Why do I want a man when I can have an angel?

ILAN: Stop, Aicha! (*She continues kissing him, forcing him but easy.*)

AICHA: I want you so much!

ILAN: Please, Aicha!

AICHA: Let yourself go!

ILAN: No. Please, Aicha!

(*She keeps forcing him until she sees it isn't possible.*)

AICHA: What's the matter?

ILAN: My hands! They're dirty!

AICHA: What do you mean?

ILAN (*Crying.*): Please. Wash my hands! They're dirty! (*She takes a towel and washes his hands and his penis.*)

AICHA: I'm sorry, Ilan. Sweetheart. (*Embracing him.*) Are you all right?

ILAN: So dirty! Dirty!

AICHA: I' m sorry. I don' t know how that happened.

ILAN: I have to get out of here.

AICHA: Yes. We have to find some help. *(Pause.)* You see that too, don' t you?

(He shakes his head yes. They embrace.)

ILAN: I got to get out of here. They' re dirty.

(She helps get him up carefully, keeping her hands wrapped in the towel. She takes him to the door. She picks up her purse as if she might go out.)

AICHA: Everything will be all right.

ILAN *(Trembling, walking with difficulty. Sadly.)*: Don' t leave me alone. *(He breaks off suddenly. Pause.)*

AICHA: What' s wrong?

ILAN *(He stops shaking and begins to act normal.)*: Aicha. We haven' t eaten yet. Aren' t you hungry? We should eat something before we go out.

AICHA: *(Surprised.)* What? No, right. We could split a sandwich.

ILAN: Do you have the keys? You always forget the keys.

AICHA *(More surprised.)*: The keys? You' re worried about the keys? Come on, lets get out of here!

ILAN: *(As they go out the door.)* Get your coat. It' s snowing.

AICHA: Yea. It is! *(Not knowing what to think, she grabs her coat.)* Come on! Let' s go!

(They leave.)

SCENE 3:
SAINTE-ANNE HOSPITAL

(Pavilion K, Sainte-Anne Hospital, District 13, Paris.

Two SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS question ILAN

who has been admitted through Emergency.

ILAN tries to keep his hands in his pockets.)

SOL/PSY 1: Name?

ILAN: Ilan Teillet.

SOL/PSY 1: And what seems to be the matter?

ILAN: I want to die.

SOL/PSY 1: *(Noting it down sternly.)* Humm. Death... *(Looking at the other SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST and specifying the medication.)* Antidepressives! How many times a day?

SOL/PSY 2: *(Rummaging through a medicine cabinet for the appropriate pharmaceuticals.)*... Amitryptiline, imipramine, desipramine, fluoxamine...

ILAN: I' m suffocating...

SOL/PSY 1: Humm. What a week! Everybody these days asphyxiating themselves... Anoxialytics! How many times a day?

SOL/PSY 2: Flouracepam, Diazepam, Alprazolam...

ILAN: I can' t sleep.

SOL/PSY: Insomnia. Humm. How many times a day?

SOL/PSY 2: Triazolam, Midazolam...

ILAN: And there' s a wall and people...

SOL/PSY 2: Risperdal, Risperdal!

(Construction sounds from outside.)

ILAN: I can't feel love...

(From this point increasingly intense sounds of wall construction are heard. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS grow more aggressive also.)

SOL/PSY 1: Goddamn pounding! Can't they make a little less noise out there? When are they supposed to finish that fucking wall?

ILAN: I have problems having sex.

SOL/PSY 1: That's because it's dirty.

SOL/PSY 2: Very dirty...

SOL/PSY 1: That's why...

SOL/PSY 2: Tell us, Ilan, what's a fancy university prick like you doing here?

ILAN *(Beginning to panic.)*: I... I don't know... I'm sick.

SOL/PSY 2: Come on, Ilan. Tell us the whole story.

ILAN: *(Scared.)*: Tell you... Tell you what? I... Let me go. I want to go home.

SOL/PSY 1: What are you doing with her here? The cutie...

ILAN: I...

SOL/PSY 2 ... We know the whole story.

SOL/PSY 1: The whole story.

SOL/PSY 2: Your poor dear suffering mother and you betraying your own people...

SOL/PSY 1: How could you?

ILAN: I didn't do anything.

SOL/PSY 2: Your mother, always crying so much...

SOL/PSY 1: Your people, fighting for the Promised Land, and you...

SOL/PSY 2: And you with this chick...

ILAN: No! Let me go!

SOL/PSY 1: Show us your hands!

ILAN: No! Let me go! I want to get out of here!

SOL/PSY 2: Your hands...

SOL/PSY 1 *(Yanking ILAN's hands out of his pockets.)*: I knew it. They're filthy!

SOL/PSY 2: Filthy. It's the chick. It's the chick's fault.

ILAN *(Frightened, screaming.)*: No! Please! No! Aicha! Aicha!

SOL/PSY 1: Trashy people who kill their own! You're scum! You don't deserve to live!

SOL/PSY 2: You don't deserve to breathe!

(Pounding sounds of wall construction. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS start sounding like normal hospital staff.)

SOL/PSY 1: The window.

SOL/PSY 2: Just a minute. *(Closes it. Continues with medicines.)* Lorazepam, Lormetazepam, Oxacepam...

SOL/PSY 1: Are you all right? Would you like some water? Shouting... How many times a day?

SOL/PSY 2: Oxacepam,... No, better, Clometiazol...

(SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 2 hands ILAN a sedative. ILAN takes it trembling.)

ILAN *(Very anxious.)*: Aicha! Aicha!

SOL/PSY 1: Who is Aicha? Is she the young lady who

came with you to the hospital?

ILAN (*Still in a state of panic but slowly beginning to calm down.*):

Aicha is my fiancée.

SOL/PSY 1: Have you been together a long time?

SOL/PSY 2 (*Handing Ilan another pill.*): Zolpidem...

ILAN (*Taking the second and third pills.*): For three years.

SOL/PSY 1: Sex, once a day?... Hum! Where did you meet her?

ILAN: We met at a lecture about the wall in Israel. You know. That was all the thing those days. All the students, we were all going to them. Especially after the business with the International Court. All that...

(The wind suddenly blows the window open, and snow blows in, which are really feathers falling softly.)

SOL/PSY 1: It won't stay shut.

ILAN (*Pointing.*): She was sitting there a few rows in front of me, and this guy was talking about walls all through history preventing dialogue and aggravating the social fabric and all that stuff..

SOL/PSY 2 (*Whispering to SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 1.*):

We got to move on; the next patient is waiting. (*SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 1 shushes him.*)

AICHA (*In a low voice to a friend sitting in front of her.*): What the hell is this guy talking about? What does he know about walls. He never comes out of his office? Some kind of moron!

ILAN: She seemed like a very sensitive person...

SOL/PSY 1: And did she seem highly sexed?

AICHA: How can he dare say that?

ILAN: She raised her hand and started defending the Jews. I mean, she looked like someone from some back street in Fez. It seemed so strange. Like she hated her own people, and talking so openly as if it didn't matter. (*The wind hits the window again.*)

SCENE 4:
THE SORBONNE

*(Conference room at the University Paris-1. Panteon Square. Paris.
The LECTURER, possibly SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 1,
is talking to a class.)*

LECTURER: Throughout history walls have been shown to be effective in preventing dialogue and aggravating the breakdown of the social fabric as the Berlin wall and its fall in 1989 proved. (Showing a slide.) As you can see the Israeli wall is no exception. The Palestinians accuse Israel of furthering the illegal occupation of 1967 by another 10% with the wall's construction. Based on UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/40, the Court declared the construction of the wall to be contrary to international law and called for Israel to demolish it and settle claims of damage and injury...

AICHA *(Raising her hand.)*: In other words... the Jews are condemned to go on stockpiling bombs... Is that what the Court was trying to say?

ILAN: No, it was trying to say it was illegal.

AICHA: I heard very well what he said. What I didn't hear is why they built the wall.

ILAN: That's pretty simple: to fuck over...

(Some people laugh.)

AICHA *(Upset.)*: It's not funny! The wall is for defense.

ILAN *(Laughs.)*: In occupied territory?

AICHA: People are dying there just because they take a bus...

ILAN: Because they're where they shouldn't be.

AICHA: They've had to do it for their security. If you'd only read a little history.

LECTURER: Tell her to be quiet.

ILAN: You don't establish peace by fucking over your neighbors.

AICHA: Yes, and the Jews haven't suffered their share?

ILAN: The right of revenge isn't part of international law.

AICHA: You're an arrogant cretin.

(Laughs from the class.)

ILAN: *(Amused, to the class.)* Thank you.

AICHA: And you have no idea what it's like dealing with fanatics.

ILAN: Listening to you gives me a pretty good idea.

(More laughs.)

LECTURER: Students, please. Settle down. *(Another slide.)* Here you can see the concrete wall. It's in the Abu Dis area of Jerusalem where, according to legend, angels go to commit suicide...

AICHA: A great idea for a certain person right here in this room.

ILAN: Seeing what the world's like, especially the women, the angels ought to stay gravity free and just the way they are.

AICHA: There're some people, like the angels, whose feet never touch the ground, floating around their whole lives in international law.

LECTURER: I appreciate your comments, gentlemen, ladies, but I would appreciate them even more outside of class...

(Responding to the LECTURER's comments they start out of the room.)

AICHA *(Picking up her books angrily)*: Whatever you say!

ILAN: It's been very interesting. Thank you.

(In the hallway. SOLDIERS are waiting for him. They are amused by the spat between ILAN and AICHA which has caused him to get even more arrogant.)

ILAN: *(Ironically)* It's been a pleasure to meet you... *(He beads off)*

AICHA: This is not the place for a little angel boob like you...

ILAN: Don't tell me the Sorbonne is only for ultra right wing radicals these days?

AICHA: So, you have someone in your house with a veil serving the meals? Because you seemed very worked up about all this.

ILAN: I'm Jewish, just so you know. Have a nice day.

AICHA: *(Surprised)* Really?

ILAN: You know, Jewish like in the movies, with my grandfather in the concentration camp and my mother in Israel calling me every day. So, if you're through now, I'll wish you a nice day again.

AICHA: But...

(ILAN starts out.)

AICHA: Look, I'm tired of those dicks who want to wrap me in a veil and tie me down with a wedding to some cousin

from Morocco. I'm fed up with them all wanting to arrange my whole life in the name of God!

ILAN: *(Stopping and looking back at her with surprise. Pause.)* I'm really sorry.

AICHA *(Extending her hand)*: My name is Aicha.

ILAN: I'm Ilan.

AICHA: I'm sorry if I offended you.

ILAN: Forget it. No woman ever called me angel before. Especially not any of my ex's.

AICHA *(Laughing)*: I'm kind of touchy about the whole subject. I can hardly talk to my family about it.

ILAN: You have time for a coffee?

AICHA: I've got to go to work. My shift at the paper mill begins in about an hour. Then I've got to study. I want to finish up this year.

ILAN: History?

AICHA: No. Political Economy. You know, I have to earn enough money so no one can tell me again what I have to do. And you're...?

ILAN: Polytechnic.

AICHA: I thought so. *(Laughs)* That explains the lack of gravity.

(The SOLDIERS whisper to ILAN that he needs to get moving.)

ILAN: *(Upset by her comment.)* Well, anyway. Nice to meet you...

AICHA: I could give you my phone number.

ILAN: *(Smiles)* But if I call you, you'll have to say yes.

AICHA: I've already said yes.

(ILAN smiles and goes off.)

SCENE 5:
A VISIT ON ANY DAY

(AICHA is walking quickly across the gardens to Pavilion J of Sainte-Anne Hospital. The Pavilion has stone walls and large windows with bars through which she and ILAN talk when she arrives late as she has today. Beneath the window is a bench on which AICHA stands to get closer to Ilan when they talk. When she arrives, she throws a stone at the window to call him. ILAN appears at the window. He keeps his hands in his pockets. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS are not seen at the moment, but, the same as ILAN's illness, are ever present.)

AICHA: Ilan? *(Pause.)* Ilan? Are you there? Come on! Stop playing games! *(Pause.)* Ilan! Ilan! Come to the window! I know you're there.

ILAN: *(Angry.)* You're late. I've been waiting since five.

AICHA: I'm happy to see you too. Really, I couldn't get here earlier. Can you ask the nurse to let me in?

ILAN: The deaf mute's on duty today. You know what a bitch she is.

AICHA: Damn! What a day!

ILAN: You know the visiting hours are from one to seven.

AICHA: So, what's the problem?

ILAN: It's now past nine. They'll never let you in.

AICHA: Don't complain. At least you're warm in there. Look. I'm going to try to kiss you.

(AICHA gets up on the bench to reach the window where ILAN is.)

ILAN: What for? Well, if you want to. I don't know what you see in me. Really. You're the one who should be in here. You know that. Don't you? You're crazy.

AICHA: For you.

(They kiss through the bars.)

ILAN *(Crouching down to her.)*: It's been a very long day without you, Minoo. How was yours?

AICHA: I worked overtime so I could get off tomorrow to study. My father called me. He's going to Morocco Saturday. My mother's taking care of the store.

ILAN: They miss you. You should go see them.

AICHA *(Gives a negative nod.)*: How are you doing today?

ILAN: I want to get out of here and be with you in the apartment. The doctors, two of them, the head doctor and another one; they seem worried about me. They're giving me a lot of pills.

AICHA *(Nervous.)*: That sounds good. You know. On track. They'll find the right combination. But you have to trust them. You seem much better.

ILAN: Is that a joke? How do you figure I'm better?

AICHA: It's obvious. All I have to do is look at you. You're definitely better.

ILAN: I don't feel anything, Minoo. Nothing. Hate, pain, beauty. Not even a thunderstorm. I can't even feel that I love you. How long do you think I can live in this torment?

AICHA *(Her tone turning angry.)*: Don't start again! Now one is asking you about any of that. You're sick. You're going to get well. So, please, just don't talk about it! Please.

ILAN: Aicha, I'll spend my whole life in and out of this place like all the others.

(Silence.)

AICHA: Just give this feeling sorry for yourself a little rest. Please.

ILAN: I should die at that wall over there and become a man so I can be with you.

AICHA: That's enough! Stop talking stupid. Please. You're making me tired.

ILAN: Oh, well, what makes me tired is you trying to fix my problems when you can't even figure out your own. You come over here telling me what to do when you don't have the guts to tell your parents you're living with me so they won't think you're some kind of whore.

AICHA: They do think that. Already. So don't worry about it.

(Silence.)

ILAN: Did you bring me some cigarettes?

AICHA: Of course not. But I did bring you a little present.

(Gives it to him.)

ILAN: What do I want with a present?

AICHA: You're welcome.

ILAN: *(Takes out a book and some fruit.)* Again? Organic fruit! Wow! *(Laughing ironically.)* Aicha. You know what I do most of the day?

AICHA: Read the books I bring you? Watch TV? Play cards with your friends here? What?

ILAN: No, Aicha. This is not summer camp. I can't read

because I can't concentrate. I can't watch TV more than ten minutes because it's so stupid.

AICHA *(Covering her ears.)*: Don't say anymore!

ILAN: I'm stuck here all day behind this miserable wall, and the only thing I seem to be able to do is think about what my life with you might have been like. All I think about is how happy we might have been. My sweet, savage, little Minoo.

AICHA *(Again covering her ears.)*: Stop!

ILAN: That's how I spend every minute in this place: dreaming like the dead who've died too soon do. *(Silence.)* And I'm afraid of never seeing you again, Minoo. That's what scares me about death.

AICHA *(Trying to dry her tears.)*: D'you have a tissue? *(He shakes his head no. She wipes her tears with her sleeve. She goes back to her defensive tone.)* We all die sooner or later. So you shouldn't worry about that.

ILAN: There are no more happy days for us, Minoo. How can I live like this?

AICHA: Just live like some guy who gets up every morning at five and goes off to work in a factory. Like some street person out in the cold begging. Like someone born in Africa who knows he won't live to be thirty. You have to live by rote to keep going.

ILAN: The truth is nothing matters, except you.

AICHA: But, Ilan, we have to win this war. And tear down a thousand and one walls if we have to. We have to try. Promise me you'll do what they say. Promise me.

ILAN: I am trying, Aicha. I'm trying...

(They touch each other through the bars as well as they can. His cell phone rings.)

ILAN *(Answering)*: Hello. Mamá. How are you?... *(To AICHA)* Some day you'll meet her. *(Back to phone)* Me?... I'm fine. Better... Really. In fact, I don't know why they're keeping me here... No... Mamá... No, I promise. It's not because I'm trying to be a Bohemian... Soldiers? No, the soldiers are over there, not here... *(The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS are heard laughing.)* Yes... I should come over there? To Israel? Why? *(To AICHA)* She's got her funny ways, but a good heart. You want to hear her? *(AICHA leans in to share the phone. The MOTHER'S VOICE can now be heard. This could be spoken by one of the SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS.)*

MOTHER'S VOICE: To Israel? To your home, you mean! You've left me so alone. Your father and you...

ILAN: Mamá. I have to go now. I'm with Aicha... She's right here in front of me. She's listening to you... My hands are full now... I can't talk.

MOTHER'S VOICE: The Arab? I suppose she's deciding now what you do?

ILAN: Of course not, Mamá. You've got to start looking differently at Arabs. I'm sorry but I don't like that sort of thing.

MOTHER'S VOICE: *(Crying)* I don't know how you can do this. How can you talk to your mother like that? I don't mean anything to you. Or to your father...

ILAN: That's not true. Please, stop crying.

MOTHER'S VOICE: All my life struggling to give you the best, and now you throw it all away on some...

ILAN: What are you trying to say? Why?

MOTHER'S VOICE: Dirtying yourself with her. You. You were my angel.

ILAN: I haven't touched her. Mamá! And I'm not an angel!... Yes, my hands are... But she's not dirty! She's clean!... Yes. I'm sure. I'll call you later. Goodbye. *(To AICHA)* She said "hello." Didn't you hear her?

AICHA: Good. Well, goodbye!

ILAN: The poor thing. She was nervous. It's so hard for her. What happened to my grandfather in the war, she never got over it. And things aren't so good now with my father. But... Why are you going? So sudden?

AICHA: *(Brusk)* I just have to go.

ILAN: No! Don't go yet! Please! It's too soon!

AICHA: Don't forget to say hi to your mother for me the next time. A kiss?

ILAN: *(Pleading)* No. Stay!

AICHA: I'll come tomorrow.

ILAN: But, why?

AICHA: Goodbye, Ilan.

ILAN: A kiss?

AICHA: *(With determination.)* No.

ILAN: Just one?

AICHA: Tomorrow.

ILAN: But come early. OK?

AICHA: OK.

ILAN: Promise?

AICHA: Promise. And, really. You do look better. I mean it: a whole lot better.

(She goes.)

SCENE 6:
LEAVING PRISON

(ILAN is leaving Sainte-Anne Hospital. His belongings are returned. AICHA waits for him to come out. He is happy.

*The wall construction sounds
continue.)*

SOL/PSY 1: Watch, passport, nail clippers...

SOL/PSY 2: The red pill, three times a day; the white one twice a day...

SOL/PSY 1: You have to come by every Monday. You're appointment seven on those days...

ILAN: I'll follow it all just the way I've marked it down. I promise.

SOL/PSY 2: The green pill four times a day; the yellow one once a day...

SOL/PSY 1: You know now, if you start feeling like killing yourself, it's important to note how many times a day that happens...

ILAN: I feel so happy!

SOL/PSY 1: Your girlfriend is outside. Even so, it's not a good idea to see a lot of her every day... and if you make love...

SOL/PSY 2: Take one of the green pills.

SOL/PSY 1: And later, if you want to do it again, take another green one and a purple one. No, better, take two, and call us right away.

SOL/PSY 2: So we can analyze the psychological and pharmacological repercussions.

ILAN: So, can I go now?

SOL/PSY 2: The blue pill five times a day.

SOL/PSY 1: Remember, emotional attachment isn't recommended in your case... You shouldn't fall in love with anyone.

SOUND OF TV: Last night further incidents occurred in the suburbs of Paris with some 210 cars burned...

SOL/PSY 1 (*Shouting*): Can you turn down the TV?

SOL/PSY 2: Yea, sure. What do those people want? It's a good thing I moved to Rue Santé. Otherwise I'd be without a car now.

(*AICHA waves to him from outside. She is very happy to see him.*)

SOUND OF TV: In international news, two Palestinians were killed in Abu Dis near the wall outside Jerusalem, raising tensions in surrounding communities...

ILAN: (*Nervous*.) I'll see you then on Monday.

SOL/PSY 2: Yes, of course... the orange pill once a day.

ILAN (*Looking at the TV*): They're still working on that wall in Jerusalem. My Mother lives over there.

SOL/PSY 2: They don't have much left to do. It'll be finished in a few weeks. Help us beef up security.

ILAN: A new wall, so possible things can become impossible.

SOL/PSY 1: Check it out! The kid's a philosopher. Ilan, let me see your hands...

ILAN: No, not my hands!

SOL/PSY 2: They're dirty. Aren't they? You got to do it.

ILAN: Do what?

SOL/PSY 2: Become a man. For your family. For your country.

SOL/PSY 1: For your mother... who cries...

SOL/PSY 2: So much...

SOL/PSY 1: Get rid of your enemies so you can see the face of God.

ILAN (*Getting scared*): What's God have to do with this?

SOL/PSY 2: God will set you free like he's set all of us free.

SOL/PSY 1: That's why you've got to do it because you've betrayed us.

ILAN: I don't want to.

SOL/PSY 2: You've got to kill her.

SOL/PSY 1: Kill her as soon as possible.

ILAN: No. Let me go now. Please.

SOL/PSY 2: She has to die.

SOL/PSY 1: To cleanse yourself.

(*AICHA waves to him.*)

ILAN: Aicha? No! Not her!

SOL/PSY 2: Go now and do it!

SOL/PSY 1: You know how.

SOL/PSY 2: You know when.

ILAN: I won't do it!

SOL/PSY 1: Of course you'll do it because you're the angel, and you're going to protect us.

SOL/PSY 2: Because your people are dying, and it's her fault.

SOL/PSY 1: There's no other way. She has to die.
ILAN: Leave me alone! *(Threatening them with a fork which he picks up off a table.)* Get away from me! Don't you dare touch her!
SOL/PSY 1: Hey now, the kid's grown some balls!
SOL/PSY 2: His Mother and his people mean nothing thanks to that piece of Arab shit.
ILAN: Don't call her that!
SOL/PSY 1: And if we don't, what? You going to put a fucking bomb on a bus and kill your own people. That's the way people like you end up dying. Come on!
(ILAN looks at them terrified.)
SOL/PSY 2: If you kill her, at least it'll be quick. If we do it, believe me, her blood will be splattered the whole length of the wall.
ILAN: You wouldn't hurt her!
SOL/PSY 1: She'll suffer so much she'll be on her knees begging us to finish her off.
ILAN: No!
SOL/PSY 1: That's enough! I'm tired talking to a nobody like you. Just kill her! Any way you like.
SOL/PSY 2: And now...
SOL/PSY 1: Get out of here!
(He goes out to AICHA and embraces her.)
ILAN: Aicha, you have to get out of here. They want to kill you.
AICHA: Ilan, Sweetheart, Darling. Calm down. Nothing's going to happen.

ILAN: We have to be careful. You hear me? Do you hear me?
AICHA: Yes, calm down Ilan! It's all right. It's only in your head.
(The two SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS wave their goodbyes sympathetically.)
ILAN: No. They were telling me that you...
AICHA: Ilan! Stop! That's enough! Let's go home. *(He nods assent.)* Do you have everything? Your pills, your prescriptions, your... Yes?
ILAN: Yes. But we've got to go.
AICHA: Nothing's going to happen. It isn't real.
ILAN: *(Pushing her.)* Come on! Hurry! Don't let them see you!
AICHA: No! Ilan! It's all over. Calm down. *(Embracing him.)* Better now?
ILAN *(Nodding yes.):* Yes. *(They start off.)*
AICHA: We've got to go by the store. There's nothing for supper.

SCENE 7:
MONOGAMOUS DAYS

(The apartment on Boulevard Blanqui after the departure from the hospital. AICHA returns home from work on a seemingly normal day.

ILAN is in bed, inert, staring out the window. He has spent the day like this, suffering a depression which AICHA neither understands nor accepts. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS do not appear until AICHA goes out.)

AICHA: What a lousy day! The machines kept breaking down. Nothing was working. We kept falling behind on orders.

ILAN: Pity the rainforests!

AICHA: So, we're just making paper, but we're not hurting anyone. We do recycle. You know that.

ILAN: You're good at your job. I imagine when you finish your career, they'll promote you.

AICHA: So I didn't go to the Polytechnic. That doesn't mean I'm only making paper to wipe your ass like you think.

ILAN: The ass is a very worthy body part and one of the real powers in the universe. I don't know why it makes you so nervous.

AICHA: So, what did you do today?

ILAN: With your promising career you need ask?

AICHA: I like working in a factory. You know that. And I won't be insulted by you! Dinner's ready. I suppose you were in bed all day again.

ILAN: Probably.

AICHA: Can't you try to cooperate even a little? You want them to commit you again?

ILAN: Just leave me in peace! That's all I want.

AICHA: Did you take your medication? *(Waits for answer.)* Of course not. Since you didn't get out of bed, how could you have taken them? *(She goes into the bathroom, slamming the door.)*

ILAN: Put them closer tomorrow. With a glass of water. Or better, leave me a bottle of water.

AICHA: *(Coming out of the bathroom carrying a towel.)* I'm tired feeling sorry for you. You understand?

ILAN: And I'm tired of you feeling that way.

AICHA: But you don't do anything to change it. You spend the whole day lying there staring out the window. Smoking. Thinking about a wall that has nothing to do with us. Turning everything into shit.

ILAN: You can leave anytime you want.

AICHA: I'm thinking about it. Moving.

ILAN: Probably better.

AICHA: Why don't you do something? Why are you letting this thing in your guts eat you up? I don't get it. You don't love me. What's more, you never loved me.

ILAN: Find some guy who'll take walks with you. See how much he loves you.

AICHA: If you keep this up, it'll happen. Sooner or later.

ILAN: Everything will be easier with your new place.

AICHA *(Screaming.)*: Why don't you do something! Why! Get out of this room! Move your body!

(ILAN rolls over turning his back to her. She turns her back to him, puts the towel in her mouth and screams into it. Long pause.)

ILAN: The silent treatment. Are you calmed down now?

AICHA *(Wiping away tears, not showing it in her voice.)*: Yes. I'm fine.

(ILAN turns back around. AICHA undresses slowly.)

ILAN: Are you going somewhere?

AICHA: To a cocktail party. If I meant anything to you, you'd come with me.

ILAN: I don't want to go out. There'll be people every here. You know I can't... *(She continues undressing.)* You're really going out?

AICHA: Of course.

ILAN: There'll be tons of people. With eyes and hands. No. I can't.

AICHA: No one's going to do anything to you. Why are you afraid? I'll take care of you. I'll stay with you the whole time. And it'll be over early. Around eight.

ILAN: Don't go.

AICHA: I'm sorry but I'm going.

ILAN: It hurts me to look at you.

AICHA: Why?

ILAN: You're so beautiful in that dress.

AICHA: Silly.

ILAN: You're all I can dream about. Haven't you noticed.

(She has changed clothes and now wears the dress ILAN gave her as a gift.)

Can't you wear something else?

AICHA: Why?

ILAN: I can't stand seeing you like this.

AICHA: You want me to put on a veil and stay cooped up inside here while you lie there staring out of the damned window? *(Picking up cigarette butts and throwing them out the window.)* And this filthy mess! Cigarettes! Can't you find a cheaper way to kill yourself? *(He rolls over again, back to her.)* Why don't you do something? Why? *(She pushes him and pounds on him.)* Get up! Get up! You're a spoiled little brat, always giving up. Get up! No belly for a fight. That's all that's wrong with you. You've never had to deal with a single problem in your life, so now this is so impossible for you! Get up!

ILAN: Can you hit me harder and scream a little louder? The neighbors can't hear you.

(She crumples to the floor, defeated. She is crying. Long pause. The phone rings.)

ILAN: Are you going to get that? *(She's entirely indifferent. It stops ringing.)* What if it was my mother? What if she's worried about me?

AICHA: There are other people in the world besides your mother. Believe me.

(Phone rings again. AICHA answers it.)

MOTHER'S VOICE: Who is this? May I speak with my son?

AICHA: This is Aicha. Ilan's here. Just a second.

MOTHER'S VOICE: You again. Are you always there with him?

AICHA: Of course. Why does that surprise you?

MOTHER'S VOICE: I don't like it. I'm sorry to be blunt, but I don't think you're the best thing for him.

AICHA: I don't like you either, but I don't think there's any other choice.

MOTHER'S VOICE: You're not good enough for my son. You know that, don't you. You're one of those! You're only with him to bring him down.

AICHA: That's not true.

MOTHER'S VOICE: He'll open his eyes sooner or later and leave you like all the others. You ought to know that. He's had so many women he could run a dating agency with all their phone numbers.

AICHA: He loves me. In his own way, but he does. He loves me.

MOTHER'S VOICE: He'll drop you, and you'll never see him again. You hear? As soon as he comes out of this depression he's having, you'll never see him again.

AICHA: Yes, well, we'll see. Here he is. *(She hands him the phone.)*

ILAN *(Answering.)*: Hello, Mamá... Please, stop calling me angel... What were you saying to Aicha?... I don't want you arguing... Soldiers?... No, I don't want to hear anymore about soldiers... Me?... I just got out of the hospital... Don't worry, I'm fine... Yes, of course I want to see you... But I don't feel like flying to Israel... You're coming here?... When?... You can stay here in the apartment if you want to; that way you can get to know Aicha better... *(AICHA reacts with a look of panic.)* Yes, we live together...

You already know that... No, no Mamá... Don't start crying again... Please!... You don't have to worry whether I touch her or not... Besides, I can't touch her anyway... I'm an angel... No, I'm not going to leave her... Of course not... I love her... What the hell are you talking about?... Don't say that, please... I think we should talk about this when you calm down... I'll call you again. Goodbye.

AICHA: She doesn't send her regards this time?

ILAN: You're still going out? *(Pause.)* Well? Are you going out?

(For a few moments AICHA feels utterly exhausted in spite of her appearance of control. Pause.)

AICHA: I give up. *(She begins to cry.)*

ILAN: I'm sorry.

AICHA: *(Bursting into tears.)* I can't take anymore. You have to help me with this. I just can't... You can't just leave it all up to me.

(He looks at her not knowing what to do. Then he gets up and goes to her embracing her from behind.)

ILAN: Poor thing! Don't cry! Please, stop crying. *(Caressing her neck.)* I'm not going to leave you alone. *(Caressing her breasts.)* Everything will be fine. There are no soldiers. Don't cry. *(Continues caressing her from behind, her whole body, uninhibited.)* I'll take care of you. You're with me now...

AICHA: Ilan! That's enough. Too much. Everything is too much. I'm almost as far gone as you are.

ILAN: We're together. That's what's important. Come on now. Lean on me.

AICHA: And I love you. Everything I am loves you. Everything in me. Everything good. Even everything bad.
ILAN: The soldiers are gone. Nothing's going to happen.
AICHA: What are you talking about?
ILAN: Shhh! Quiet now. Be quiet! Forget about the wall, Mamá...
AICHA: What are you talking about? Ilan, you're frightening me!
ILAN: Get closer. Like that.
AICHA: Let me go!
ILAN: *(Holding her, touching her all over.)* Nice and quiet now.
AICHA: Who do you think I am? I don't know you. *(She slaps him.)*
ILAN: Aicha, my hands! Look! My hands are all dirty! *(He runs into the bathroom to wash them.)*
(Pause. AICHA dries her tears. She finishes dressing. Adjusts her make-up. ILAN comes out of the bathroom drying his hands with a towel. He appears embarrassed.)
AICHA: Ilan, don't dare touch me like that again.
ILAN: Don't say that.
AICHA: Ilan. I'm telling you. Don't touch me like that again. Ever. I'm going out.
ILAN: Please, don't.
AICHA: Then I'll come back and put out the dinner. Since that's all I'm good for around here.
ILAN: No. Sweetheart.
AICHA: I'll see you later.
ILAN: If you go, I'll kill myself.

AICHA: Don't forget to take your medication.
ILAN: Aicha! Don't go! I'll kill myself!
(AICHA leaves, slamming the door. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS appear. ILAN is confused. He doesn't know what to do.)
SOL/PSY 1: Ilan. Make dinner!
ILAN: Yes. For when she comes back. She'll like that.
SOL/PSY 2: No! Get the hell out of here!
SOL/PSY 1: Ilan! Put all the stuff out on the table!
(ILAN is trembling from the effort.)
SOL/PSY 1: Cook up some chicken!
SOL/PSY 2: No! Fish!
SOL/PSY 1: Chicken!
SOL/PSY 2: Fish!
SOL/PSY 1: Chicken!
SOL/PSY 2: Fish!
(As ILAN tries to get things together, SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 1 knocks the milk over spilling it on everything. SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 2 shakes his head. They both prevent him from getting control of things. Finally the whole thing turns into a disaster. SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 2 writes a note and gives it to ILAN. ILAN takes it and puts it on the table.)
SOL/PSY 2: Now get out of here!
(ILAN picks up a plastic bag and goes out.)

SCENE 8:
THE WAIT

(AICHA returns to the apartment from the party. It is around eight. She finds it empty and sees the disaster left by ILAN. She finds the note and becomes alarmed. She takes out her telephone and calls.)

AICHA: Ilan! Damn it! Answer your phone! *(She bangs up and dials again.)* I know you're there. You can't have gone far. Answer your phone! Answer it! Ilan! Please! *(She moves around the room not knowing what to do.)*

(At the same time ILAN, confused, is wandering about in Montsouris Park, not far from his apartment. He looks at his phone as it rings.)

SOL/PSY 1: Ilan, please, take your bag and do it over there behind those trees...

SOL/PSY 2: Right as the next train from Denfert comes through.

ILAN: What about Aicha?

(AICHA keeps trying to call from the apartment.)

AICHA: What about me? How can you do this to me? No. Nothing's happened. He's just trying to get attention. He's only playing with me. He'll be back to eat. He won't do anything. *(She looks again at the note and the disaster. Dials again.) (Shouting.)* Ilan! Please! Answer your God-damned phone! *(Dials again.)*

(The phone in ILAN's hand rings.)

SOL/PSY 2: Don't answer that! What's the point? She

went off to a party. While you walk around sick. She could care less about you.

AICHA: Nothing? Answer! Come on!

SOL/PSY 1: This is the moment. This is the day. But first you've got to hide. Security will be by here any time now. They're closing Montsouris Park for the night.

SOL/PSY 2: Putting your head in that bag will be like entering the womb. To be born again.

SOL/PSY 1: You'll be free. You'll be well. You'll have a new life.

ILAN: But Aicha? I want to be with her.

SOL/PSY 2: You'll be with her. Forever.

SOL/PSY 1: Finally you'll be able to make it with her. *(Laughing.)*

AICHA: Finally... No. He can't have finally done it. Ilan! Answer me! You have to be strong and come back here.

SOL/PSY 1: Go back there? No. You can't keep going on like this, boy. If you don't make it with her soon, she'll be off with some other guy. At one of these parties she'll meet someone, if she hasn't already. And then things get going. Especially since you can't get them going... *(Laughing.)*

SOL/PSY 2: You're such a shit. Why would she want to be with you?

SOL/PSY 1: You're less than shit. You...

AICHA: You're everything, my darling. Please come back.

ILAN: Home. I've got to go home. To be with her.

SOL/PSY 2: She won't be there alone because you aren't worth...

(The steps of the security guard are heard.)

SOL/PSY 1: Shit!

SOL/PSY 2: There's someone there!

AICHA: Is there someone there? *(Dialing again.)* Police? Boulevard Auguste Blanqui. My fiancé has disappeared... I think he could try to hurt himself... *(She hears some steps.)* Ilan, is that you?

SOL/PSY 1: Grab a knife there. Go see who it is.

(ILAN remains motionless. AICHA begins to look around the apartment. She picks up a kitchen knife and hides it behind her.)

AICHA: Come on out now. You're scaring me. *(Martial music is heard as the SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS lead ILAN toward the trees. AICHA can't see the soldiers but she hears their steps.)* Please! Get out of here! Leave me alone! *(She hears a policeman on the phone.)*

PHONE: Hello! Lady? Are you all right?

AICHA: *(Lifting the knife in a menacing gesture.)* Get out of here now, like it or not! *(Covering her ears.)* Stop it! That's enough!

PHONE: Just stay where you are. We're sending some officers over there right now.

AICHA: Ilan! Ilan!

SCENE 9: TWO AT THE DOORS OF HELL

(The police have found ILAN in the park and taken him again to Sainte-Anne's Hospital. The SOLDIER/POLICEMAN of scene 2 accompanies him.)

SOL/POL 2: Good evening, I'm here to...

SOL/PSY 1: Good evening. You must be who called earlier.

SOL/POL 2: That's right. About this young man, Ilan Teillet. Twenty-three years old. Previously a patient at this hospital. We found him in Monsouris park trying to asphyxiate himself. The security guard alerted us. He was talking to himself.

SOL/PSY 1: We know him. We've tried to get in touch with his family, but only managed to locate his lady friend. It seems his parents live abroad.

SOL/POL 2: Well, I just now talked to his mother who was at her home here. *(Handing him a paper.)* Here's her number if you want to contact her.

SOL/PSY 1: How strange. Didn't she sell her house before she went to Israel?

SOL/POL 2: You talk to her. Will he be all right here?

SOL/PSY 1: Don't worry. We'll take care of him.

SOL/POL 2: *(To ILAN.)* Don't hesitate to call us if you need anything. *(Giving him a pat on the back.)* Take care now, good buddy.

(ILAN watches the SOLDIER/POLICEMAN as he leaves the emergency room of Sainte- Anne' s. AICHA is just now coming into the hospital. The SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 2 sees her and momentarily freezes. When she sees ILAN, she runs to him and embraces him sadly.)

AICHA: You see? Today I' m not late... *(ILAN smiles.)* I' ve been so worried. I thought I' d lost you. *(She embraces him again and notices his attention fixed on the SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 2 who is leaving.)* Ilan? What' s happening? Do you know him? Why were you looking at him like that? *(Passing her hand in front of his eyes.)* Hey! I' m here. Sweetheart. *(Laughing.)* Ilan! What' s going on?

ILAN: Are you mad at me?

AICHA: No. I' m relieved. I felt how horrible it would be. To be without you.

ILAN: You deserve better.

AICHA: We both deserve better. Can you forgive me?

ILAN: No. Can you forgive me?

(They embrace. The SOLDIERS/PYSCHIATRISTS approach them. Wall construction sounds outside.)

AICHA: We' ll make it better. My love. Much better.

SOL/PSY 1: So, then.

AICHA: Hello. Ilan is going to get well... he' s going to get better, isn' t he?

SOL/PSY 2: That depends on how many pills he takes every day... and...

ILAN: May I go to the restroom? *(SOLDIER/PSYCHIATRIST 1 nods yes.)* I' ll be right back. *(He leaves.)*

AICHA: But... Is he improving?

SOL/PSY 1: What does that mean? "Improving"?

SOL/PSY 2: If he' s getting better.

SOL/PSY 1: I don' t know what you mean. But, sit down, please. We' d like to ask you a few questions.

(AICHA sits down. The two of them begin circling around her.)

AICHA: What? What are you doing?

SOL/PSY 1: We know everything...

SOL/PSY 2: We know everything?

SOL/PSY 1: Everything! He almost died!

SOL/PSY 2: That' s right! He almost died. It' s your fault.

SOL/PSY 1: Your fault...

AICHA: No! I mean, we argue sometimes. Usually I get more worked up, because he, you know, he' s so quiet and unemotional, so distant that I... Sometimes I don' t know what to do. But I' ll try to contain myself better. I promise.

(The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS take on a much more violent tone, trying to frighten her.)

SOL/PSY 2: Why don' t you just go away? Once and for all.

AICHA: I love him.

SOL/PSY 1: Don' t you have somewhere else you can go looking for a husband? Just get out of here!

SOL/PSY 2: Yea, get out of here! And don' t come back! Didn' t you hear what his mother said?

AICHA: No. I' m not going to leave him. I won' t give his mother that pleasure.

SOL/PSY 2: Who the hell do you think you are?
SOL/PSY 1: A dirty, ghetto Arab, with big ambitions.
AICHA: I don't need anything from him. I can call my parents any time I need money. They got here with nothing, and now they own three stores.
SOL/PSY 2: Shut up! We know everything about you. And you thought we weren't on to you.
AICHA: I want him to get well...
SOL/PSY 1: Show us your hands. (*He forces her to show her hands.*) I knew it. They're filthy.
SOL/PSY 2: Filthy!
SOL/PSY 1: Of course. Why not. An Arab. But this has got to stop.
SOL/PSY 2: She's got to die. (*They pull out some rope to strangle her.*)
AICHA: (*Screaming.*) No! Let me go! Let me go!
SOL/PSY 1: You've caused too many problems.
AICHA: (*Screaming.*) Ilan! Ilan!
ILAN: (*Coming back.*) Aicha! Why are you screaming?
AICHA: They!... them!...
ILAN: You see them too?
AICHA: Yes, Ilan. I see them...
ILAN: Aicha. You shouldn't see them. Not you...
AICHA: They're soldiers. Like you said. Soldiers.
ILAN: (*Embracing her.*) Why are you seeing them?
AICHA: I don't know. Ilan. I don't know.
SOL/PSY 1: She should die.
SOL/PSY 2: Die, right now.

ILAN: No. No, let her go.
SOL/PSY 2: Why? Oh, so now you're finally going to pay attention to us?
ILAN: Don't touch her. (*Pause.*) You don't need her. You've got me.
SOL/PSY 2: (*Happily.*) Finally we've done it.
ILAN: Only if you let her go.
SOL/PSY 1: I'm glad you understand.
SOL/PSY 2: We've done it!
AICHA: (*Trembling with fear.*) They're going to kill us.
ILAN: No. Not now. Just be calm. (*Embracing her tenderly.*)
AICHA: (*Still shaking.*) Tell them to go away! Ilan! Tell them to go away!
ILAN: Out of here now! Move it!
SOL/PSY 2: Should we go?
SOL/PSY 1: For now.
(*They leave.*)
ILAN: They won't go without taking one of us. Or both...
AICHA: (*Hands to her head.*) What's happening to us?
ILAN: We're both too far gone. We have to do something before it's too late for you.
(*They embrace passionately.*)
AICHA: I'm scared.
ILAN: Don't be scared. I'll take care of everything.
AICHA: What's going to happen?
ILAN: Just trust me.
AICHA: What are you going to do? I don't want to lose you again.

ILAN: Don't you see there's no other way?

AICHA: I'll go with you to hell itself. But don't leave me.

ILAN: Now you're the one being silly. Stay calm. No melodrama. We have to stay calm, Aicha. Get everything under control for once. Tomorrow we'll have a party. We'll celebrate our last moments together.

AICHA: *(Shaking her head no.)* No way!

ILAN: *(He caresses her face.)* We'll get drunk like people do whose souls are hurting. And you bring me, you know, what I need.

AICHA: No!

ILAN: Come in your dress. When we've had enough to drink you can give me the cuffs and...

AICHA: No!

(Pause.)

ILAN: It's funny.

AICHA: What?

ILAN: Now I really feel I love you.

SCENE 10:

ELATIO

(The wall of Pavilion K of Sainte-Anne Hospital. AICHA arrives late and calls ILAN. She appears tired with circles under her eyes.)

ILAN opens the hospital door and comes outside with a bottle of champagne in his hand. The SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS are waiting upstage in the gardens drinking as ILAN goes over to AICHA. They are just barely visible.)

ILAN: You're late. We were going to have a party.

AICHA: I know. I don't want to think about what happened yesterday.

ILAN: What do you mean?

AICHA: It was all the emotion. Seeing you. It got me disturbed a little. That's all. What are you doing outside?

ILAN: They're waiting for me inside at the discharge desk, but I didn't want to go without saying goodbye to you.

AICHA: Who's waiting for you?

ILAN: No more questions! Champagne pour mademoiselle?

AICHA: They don't allow alcohol out here.

ILAN: Thanks for reminding me.

AICHA: You know you can't mix alcohol with your medication.

ILAN: What a marvelous little know it all!

AICHA: As far as I know there's nothing to celebrate.

ILAN: You're wrong. We're celebrating because I'm

leaving the hospital for good, and you and I are never going to see each other, ever again.

AICHA: What? When did they tell you that?

ILAN: They been discussing it for a long time, but they just decided for sure a couple hours ago. Just after our little talk with... you know.

AICHA: Are you feeling better?

ILAN: Stupendous! (*Drinks.*)

AICHA: Check-ups? Treatment? What will you have to do?

ILAN: Absolutely nothing.

AICHA: Are you serious?

ILAN: Now stop looking so surprised and have a little drink with me. (*Filling two glasses, giving her one and downing the other with one swallow.*) Aren't you happy for me?

AICHA: And why aren't we going to see each other ever again?

ILAN: The sick and the sane. Hasn't any one ever told you, they don't mix? Like oil and water. And the sick are the way they are because of the sane. You didn't know that? (*Laughs.*) Without sane people there wouldn't be any sick people. It's obvious.

AICHA: You're delirious again.

ILAN: Let's make a toast.

AICHA: Why?

ILAN (*Shamelessly.*): Because I'm cured. But you're not. (*Laughing shamelessly.*)

AICHA: Cured?

ILAN: Look! (*Holding out his hands.*) Walls don't exist for me anymore.

AICHA: Your hands!

ILAN: And since I'm cured I can do whatever the hell I want without explaining it to everyone. (*Filling the glass again.*) Drink! You seem a little stressed out.

AICHA: (*Drinking.*) It's your imagination.

ILAN: What's the matter? Are you afraid they won't keep me locked up in here? So you can come and go as you please? Afraid you won't have me under your control?

AICHA: What the hell are you talking about?

ILAN: No electric shock, no lithium, no Risperdal, no fucking other shit. From now on I don't belong to you. So, you can start looking for other ways to have your fun. (*Raising his glass.*) You want some more?

AICHA: What game are you playing now? It's not enough seeing how bad I look?

ILAN: You're empathizing really well lately. I was sure you'd get around to understanding me some day. Do you want me to slip you some of my sleeping pills? I've got them in all colors. Let's see, what color do you like?

AICHA: (*Crying.*) That's enough! Just leave it! I give up.

ILAN: Are you sure now you know what you're saying?

AICHA: (*Afraid but sure of her decision.*) Yes, and it's over now. (*Pause.*)

ILAN (*Shifting tone to suddenly nice.*): That's exactly what I was wanting to hear. (*Pause.*) It's all over, Minoo. That wall won the battle a long time ago.

AICHA: I'm all worn out. I'm sorry.

ILAN: Well, we tried, my love. And I'll always carry with me the memories of the best days of my life, like the day I met you, and every anniversary day because they'll remind me that I have been with you.

AICHA: We've had so little... Ilan. It hurts so much!
(Crying.)

ILAN: I envy the bastard who'll be lucky enough to marry you.

AICHA: Don't think about that.

ILAN: But we'll still be together one way or another. Remember that.

AICHA: Why are you an angel?

ILAN: So I can love you forever. (Embracing her.) You've given everything for me. (AICHA shakes her head no.) Now you have to take care of yourself.

AICHA: Don't torture me with this.

ILAN: No, it's nothing bad. It's the only thing I'm asking of you. Now we have to hurry. My beauty. Our last glass. My mother is waiting for me inside. I'm taking a trip with her.

AICHA: You're going with your mother to Israel?

ILAN: (Nodding.) Yes.

AICHA: Can I meet her?

ILAN: Of course not. But I don't want to see you so sad. This is a party. Let's have one last toast!

AICHA: I'm so afraid!

ILAN: There's nothing to be afraid of now, Mino.

(Kissing her tenderly.) I won't let anything bad happen to you.

AICHA: I know.

ILAN: Now you have to take care of yourself. And don't let them come back.

AICHA: (Crying.) I'll miss you so much.

ILAN: You have to be safe and get free of all this.

AICHA: I won't forget you.

ILAN: No more tears. It's a party. (Filling glass again.)

AICHA: Fill it all the way up. (He does so, smiling.) To the two of us!

ILAN: Chin chin! No. To her!

AICHA: Her?

ILAN: To Death!

AICHA: (Agreeing.) To Death!

(They both down their glasses. Pause.)

ILAN: Now, give the things to me.

AICHA: Ilan!

ILAN: You have them in your bag. I know you were listening to me yesterday. So give them to me.

(AICHA, trembling, gives him the plastic bag, the rope, and the cuffs. Then he goes over to the SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS and hands it all to them.)

ILAN: (Shouting back as the SOLDIERS/PSYCHIATRISTS push him off.) From now on I'll be watching over you.

AICHA: My love!

ILAN: They won't be back. You understand. From now on, you have to be happy for both of us.

SCENE 11:
THE PROSPECT OF THINGS TO COME

(It seems as if ILAN has come to Israel with his mother. He walks alone through Abus Dis on the outskirts of Jerusalem. After wandering the streets for hours he is tired and confused. It is night, and the surroundings are illuminated by fires set by boys in the streets. He walks now with some difficulty. His hand trembles as he tries to light a cigarette. Failing to do this he leans against a wall, his hands in his pockets. He appears frightened. His face is pale from the cold. He is disbeveled and wears a four day beard suggesting, however, tenderness and compassion, something of a mystic beauty.)

SOL/POL 1: There's someone over there.

(They shine flashlights on him.)

SOL/POL 2: Halt!

ILAN: The light's hurting my eyes. Please, turn off the lights. I can't see.

SOL/POL 1: What are you doing out here?

ILAN: *(Dazzled and confused by the light.)* Are you them? Yes. You're them.

SOL/POL 1: What is it you want? It's very late. You shouldn't be out here at these hours. With the disturbances so close.

ILAN: Is this Abu Dis?

SOL/POL 2: No. It's not around here as far as I know.

SOL/POL 1: This guy's strange. Where could he be from?

ILAN: I'm a Jew.

SOL/POL 2: Sir, what do you want?

ILAN: I'm looking for where the angels... we'll do it here.

SOL/POL 1: This guy's no Jew.

SOL/POL 2: So it seems.

SOL/POL 1: Identify yourself.

ILAN: Ilan Teillet.

SOL/POL 2: Ilan who? Who are you, Friend?

ILAN: I don't know. I wish to God I knew.

SOL/POL 1: Who are you running from?

ILAN: From you. The soldiers.

SOL/POL 1: Soldiers?

SOL/POL 2: We're the police. Don't be afraid.

ILAN: You want to kill her. Don't you?

SOL/POL 2: We better call this in. They might know what this is all about. This is too scrambled for us to figure out.

ILAN: You're not going to hurt her!

SOL/POL 1: Why would we want to kill her? What did she do?

ILAN: You know. The Arabs. The wall.

SOL/POL 2: Is she one of the demonstrators?

ILAN: We have to free our country from the insurgents.

SOL/POL 1: I think there's something fishy about this guy.

SOL/POL 2: Let's don't jump the gun now. OK? But something about the guy doesn't square.

SOL/POL 1: So, you're going to wait till we're blown to pieces?

SOL/POL 2: Take it easy. Don't get nervous. *(To ILAN.)*
 What do you want us to do? Don't move now. Please.
 What do you want?
 ILAN: I want to be a man. Where's the wall?
 SOL/POL 2: Look, Friend. We'll take you there. Just
 keep cool.
 ILAN: I want to die in Palestine.
 SOL/POL 1: You see. He's one of those bastards throwing
 Palestine in our face. Get your hands up.
 ILAN: No. They're dirty.
 SOL/POL 2: Please, steady now. Just show us whatever
 papers you've got on you.
 ILAN: God! Give me the light to live. Please.
 SOL/POL 1: Shit! Now he's talking to God. He's got a
 bomb on him. *(On phone.)* Base three here. Suspected suicide
 bomber.
 SOL/POL 2: You really want to kill yourself, Friend?
 ILAN: Yes. Of course. I can't stand it anymore. Everything
 will be easier. The wall will disappear.
 SOL/POL 1: Affirmative. Suicide bomber. He's confess-
 ing.
 SOL/POL 2: Are you really carrying a bomb?
 ILAN: I'm carrying death inside of me.
 SOL/POL 1: *(On phone.)* What's this shit you're busy with
 fires on the west bank. Forget the fucking cars and get
 down here!
 SOL/POL 2: If you kill yourself now, we'll all die. He's
 got two kids.

ILAN: No more wall. Never again. I'll find salvation.
 SOL/POL 1: Salvation? We've got a Salvation wall too.
 So, just get your hands up or I'll shoot.
 SOL/POL 2: Please, do what he says.
 ILAN: No. No. Not my hands. They're dirty.
(The SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 1 shoots ILAN.)
 ILAN: *(Falling to his knees.)* See. The wall. It's falling.
 Falling. Bit by bit. Free.
(SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 2 approaches ILAN.)
 SOL/POL 1: What are you doing? Are you crazy?
 SOL/POL 2: I know you, don't I? *(Looking at him more closely.)*
 ILAN: I'm free. *(Close to death.)*
(SOLDIER/POLICEMAN 2 takes his hand.)
 SOL/POL 1: Don't touch him!
 SOLDIER 2: *(Touching ILAN's chest.)* No. He's not carrying
 anything. I've seen you before. You were in the park in...
(Realizing he has nothing on him.)
 ILAN *(Giving him a letter.):* Aicha...
 SOL/POL 2: Call an ambulance! *(To ILAN.)* But... Why?
 Good Buddy. Why?
 SOL/POL 1: Here base 2.8.3...
 SOL/POL 2: No, don't do that. Damn it! Don't die on
 us! Come on... Breathe... Breathe... Breathe, damn it!!
 SOL/POL 1: Get an ambulance over here. Saint Denis.
 Rue Saint Laurent.
 SOL/POL 2: *(Reading no pulse, getting up, kicking the wall.)*
 God damn it all! He was clean! He was clean!

SCENE 12:
THE PARDON

(AICHA is in the apartment which she shared with ILAN. She is collecting his things, throwing some stuff in the trash, saving other things to donate. She obviously finds it hard handling his clothing, as if the actual contact with his personal belongings is devastating her. She puts on the dress ILAN gave as a gift.)

AICHA: Sometimes the living stay attached to the dead and have nowhere to go. They can't move on. The living stay put, like me, now. Still here, watching how the dead keep on living. And while I look on, the earth turns, the clock circles each hour, the seasons pass. But I just stay here, unable to move on. Remembering. *(She smells the pillow ILAN used to lie on.)* You've gone. And yet us remains. *(She picks up a photo of the two of them. She kisses it, and places it in one of the boxes.)* I miss you so much the pain keeps me awake. So do we dream when we die? Am I dreaming now? *(She picks up one of his T-shirts, smells it. She puts it on. She turns on the TV and watches it.)* Now I know nothing but you. I don't know what to call myself, where I come from. I don't know why people kill or why people die. Now I remember nothing but you. *(She puts one of the shirts in one of the boxes. Then she opens a wardrobe and finds the handcuffs, plastic bag and cord, sending shivers through her.)* Here we have the prospect of things to come *(Looking at them intently.)*, the door to the black hole where gravity is so strong nothing being near can escape,

not even me. *(She opens the bag and speaks into it.)* Are you in there? Can you hear me Ilan? Do you hear me? Now you have so much gravity that your space and time are infinite. And I haven't even enough to live without you. *(She looks with uncertainty at the bag. She doesn't know whether to step into the void or not.)* It only takes four minutes. That's all the oxygen in the bag. Then the air turns to poison. They say time is relative. Maybe I'll live ten more years each minute. So, they'll be the happiest four minutes of my life. *(She puts the bag over her head, ties it with the cord, but leaves her hands free. More than a minute goes by. There's a knocking at the door.)*

SOL/POL 2: Is anyone home?

(AICHA appears indifferent towards the person at the door.)

SOL/POL 2: Can I come in?

(AICHA removes the bag. She is breathing hard. The visitor enters.)

SOL/POL 2: I'm sorry. The door was open. Is this number 28? *(He sees the bag on the floor. He approaches her and attends to her.)* Take a deep breath, Ma'm. Breathe.

AICHA: *(Coughing)* It's fine. I'm fine. *(Looking at him she realizes who he is.)* The soldiers again! *(She tries to hide but can't because she is half asphyxiated.)*

SOL/POL 2: But what were you doing? Don't be frightened.

AICHA: *(Realizing that he is quite normal.)* What are you doing here?

SOL/POL 2: I'm looking for a Miss Aicha Al-Anlus.

AICHA: That's me. *(Still having difficulty breathing.)*

SOL/POL 2: You feel all right now?
AICHA (*Recovering. Standing up now.*): I don't need any help now. Thanks.
SOL/POL 2: I don't want to bother you, but...
AICHA: But you are.
SOL/POL 2: I'm worried, that's all.
AICHA: It's not your problem.
SOL/POL 2: Yes it is. It is...
AICHA: Why?
SOL/POL 2: Because it is. Let's leave it at that.
AICHA: It's over now. Don't worry. It was stupid. I know. Sometimes it's hard to fight memories. (*Wiping off perspiration. She pours herself a glass of something from a bottle.*) Would you like some?
SOL/POL 2: No, thanks. But we've met before, haven't we? Now I remember. How could I forget? It was...
AICHA: (*Looking at him strangely.*) You came here to find apartment 28 to tell me this?
SOL/POL 2: No. I'm here to tell you something important, but first maybe we should look for an emergency room to get you some help.
AICHA: It was nice to meet you. Close the door on the way out, please.
SOL/POL 2: I guess you miss him a lot.
AICHA: (*Pouring herself another glass.*) What are you talking about?
SOL/POL 2: I was there when your fiancé died; he was your fiancé, wasn't he?

AICHA: Yes.
SOL/POL 2: I came here to give you this. He was carrying it with him. (*Gives her a note.*) We tried to call you several times, but you never answered, and even the local police couldn't locate you.
(*AICHA puts the note on the table.*)
SOL/POL 2: Aren't you going to look at it?
AICHA: What for?
SOL/POL 2: Because it's to you. Look. It has his name on it...
AICHA: Angel! It has Angel on it. Doesn't it? That's not for me. I'm very human. Maybe too much. So, anyway, thanks for coming all the way here.
SOL/POL 2: I'm pretty sure he asked me to come although it was hard to understand what he was saying. He was wounded. I was on duty in Saint-Denis while they were burning cars, and he was looking for some place in Jerusalem.
AICHA: I thought he was with his mother in Israel until I ran into one of his colleagues.
SOL/POL 2: Although she's a very conservative Jew, she's never been there. But Ilan did spend some time working in a kibbutz while he was at the university.
AICHA: A few months before we met.
SOL/POL 2: Apparently it was just after he got back that he started having problems. According to his mother.
AICHA: What does it matter where he was? Did he suffer very much?

SOL/POL 2: He was smiling. Funny, isn't it?

AICHA: *(Smiling.)* No.

SOL/POL 2: I think a lot about him. Believe me.

AICHA: There are those dead you cry for a little while and those you cry for your whole life. Ilan was one of the second kind.

SOL/POL 2 *(His sense of security failing him. His voice trembling.):* It ought never to have happened.

AICHA: He wasn't doing so well. I suppose you know that.

SOL/POL 2: That's what they told us. But he looked to me like a guy with everything to live for.

AICHA: He was staring death in the face for a long time.

SOL/POL 2: I'm not so sure.

AICHA: Trust me and believe it.

SOL/POL 2: What happened keeps eating away at me. Because even though he was in a bad way, we didn't have to be the ones to spill his blood. You understand? That's why I'm asking if you think you could forgive us? Could you?

AICHA *(Looking at him intently, then lowering her glance. Pause.):* Have a drink.

SOL/POL 2: He'll go on living as long as you do. Thanks for your time. I've bothered you enough. I'll be going.

AICHA: Don't go yet. You've been very kind. Stay a bit. Please. *(Pause.)* Have a drink with me. We can watch something decadent on the TV. That's about all I can

offer you. *(She pours herself another glass, sits down, and turns on the TV.)*

SOL/POL 2: *(Looking at the bottle.)* I appreciate your trusting me. Whisky?

AICHA: Water.

SOL/POL 2: Are you an Arab?

AICHA: *(Looking at him pensively.)* Yes. I'm an Arab. *(Pause.)* I'm an Arab, and I think I'm going to go visit my parents.

SOL/POL 2: *(Pouring himself a glass of water.)* Good idea. Feeling better?

AICHA: And you?

SOL/POL 2: Better.

(They watch the TV which is reflecting images on the wall.)

SOL/POL 2: Should we change channels?

AICHA: Yes. The walls still stay where they were, and the people keep thinking they're free while penned up inside them. *(She continues focusing on the screen. Then she looks at him. Pause.)* I killed Ilan.

SOL/POL 2: So did I.

(The two watch the TV. A documentary begins about the continuation of the wall.)

CURTAIN

(Laurent died on 28 March 2004 in the trenches of a hotel in Paris after long years of hard combat.)

SE ACABÓ DE IMPRIMIR EN GRANADA
EN ENERO DE MMVIII

