

The Face in the Algorithm - Replicas for Deception

It was five in the morning, the darkest hour, right before dawn.

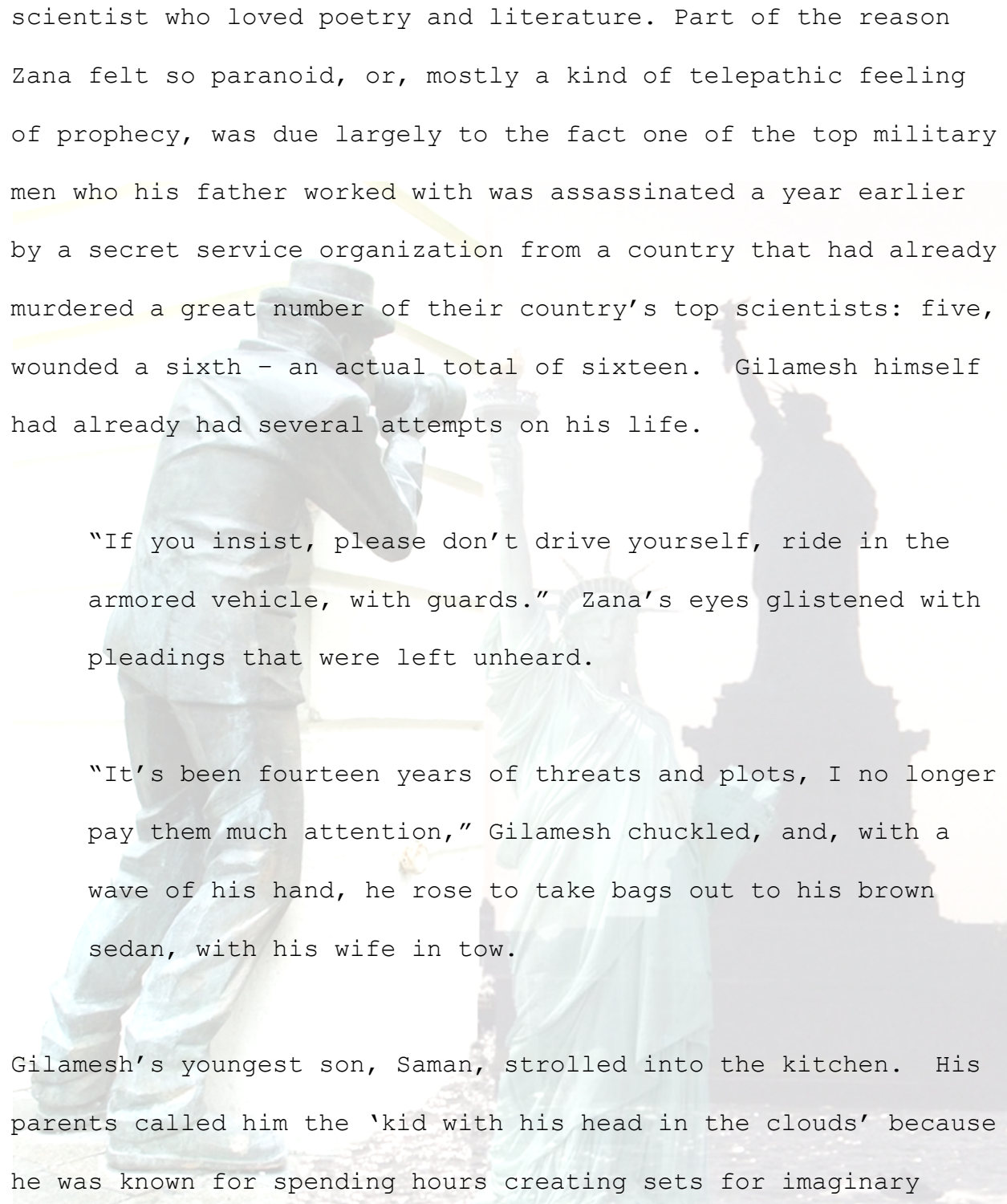
"Dad, please don't go to the Caspian Coast, I'm begging you," pleaded Zana, Gilamesh's older son.

"You are acting like a woman with your worry," His father scolded, smiling and returning back to his aged copy of a book of Poems by one of his country's greatest poets.

"We have word they will try to take your life, take this seriously," his son cajoled, holding a long hard stare into his father's eyes.

"Free societies have the potential to become virtuous societies because the good people in free societies have the freedom to pursue virtue," Gilamesh parroted a section from the text he had been so concentrated upon.

Zana could feel gloom in the air. He wasn't sure why, but he knew what he felt. As a child, his father held the status of the kind of person Zana wanted to be when he grew up - a



scientist who loved poetry and literature. Part of the reason Zana felt so paranoid, or, mostly a kind of telepathic feeling of prophecy, was due largely to the fact one of the top military men who his father worked with was assassinated a year earlier by a secret service organization from a country that had already murdered a great number of their country's top scientists: five, wounded a sixth - an actual total of sixteen. Gilamesh himself had already had several attempts on his life.

"If you insist, please don't drive yourself, ride in the armored vehicle, with guards." Zana's eyes glistened with pleadings that were left unheard.

"It's been fourteen years of threats and plots, I no longer pay them much attention," Gilamesh chuckled, and, with a wave of his hand, he rose to take bags out to his brown sedan, with his wife in tow.

Gilamesh's youngest son, Saman, strolled into the kitchen. His parents called him the 'kid with his head in the clouds' because he was known for spending hours creating sets for imaginary characters for movies he created using the camera on his cellphone. Saman opened the cupboards, taking down ingredients for sculpting human faces he used as props:

"Mother, did you remember to pick up the modeling clay?"

Saman wondered, turning to quickly snap a photo of his parents, something he rarely did.

After posing in the best pose she could encourage her husband to participate, his mother reached past Saman, smiling, taking down a box that was right in front of his face, just a little to the left. She tried to plant a kiss on Saman's forehead before he could make his quick exit to his bedroom to work on another great cinematography masterpiece that none of them were allowed to see until the finished project.

Hold on mother, father, I just need to add a few finishing touches," Saman yelled from his bedroom.

Gilamesh and Adir took turns hauling bags to the car. She, as usual, had packed too much stuff for a simple week-long trip, but her husband knew that when she packed, she did so with such anxiety that overpacking was a kind of distraction to take her mind off of any danger she might have sensed over the years that they'd been told his life would be taken from him by some clandestine entity in the foreign government of a country less than a two days ride.

"You are such an idiot, you fiddle with your movies, making those faces out of clay and the silicone father brings from the lab, while our father's life is threatened, this is our father, Saman," Zana scolded his brother, brows furrowed.

Saman sprinted back into the room, seemingly obliviously to his brother's admonishments. He had two life-size torsos, one in each hand:

"Put these in the front seat of the guard's car, you know the one who's first to get to the security gate at the summer house, see if it can trick the face recognition." Saman announced, with almost no emotion.

"It looks just like you Gilamesh," Exclaimed Adir, bursting with admiration for her son's talent with sculpting realistic faces.

"I can't believe you used all that silicone I brought home, looks exactly like your mother and me though, skin feels, real, and, and they blink," his father added, in a voice steeped in disinterested shock, the kind a parent uses when one child is a rocket scientist and the other a slacker who barely passed math.

"The average human blinks 15-30 times per minute, Saman announced, checking a book on anatomy, then adding finishing touches to the hair on both of his hyper-realistic forms. "The eyes shut for about 250 milliseconds during each blink too," he continued, beaming.

"Dolls, he makes freaking dolls," Zana scolded, rubbing his neck, staring out at the packed car.

Whatever his father and brother knew about science, Saman knew, equally, about anatomy and art.

"Your father once told me that a great philosopher said *It's rain that grows flowers, not thunder,*" Adir piped, tears welling up in her soul, defending Saman since he started to walk. "While the ones trying to take your father's life shout loud and violently behind acts of state-sanctioned duplicity, your brother promotes the logic dominant behind words."

"Maybe your brother's experiment will fool my assassins," Gilamesh chortled, lifting them under both arms, while his wife held the door.

"Father, how could you joke like that?" Zana spat, his voice cracking with horrified anxiety.

Saman was too occupied with some kind of gadget he was using to adjust the veins, muscles and expressions on the faces of the doppelgängers of his mother and father to stop and fight with his brother. Though Saman had become aware of the dangers of the kind of work his father did, he felt that the way to deal with the threat was to prepare a strategy against it ever having come to fruition. However, no one in the family appeared to take him seriously. All of Saman's ideas were considered outlandishly sophomoric by both his father and brother.

"Your father will be teaching a virtual class, you can log in, in a few hours," his mother, Adir, assured both, focusing more on Zana.

About twenty-nine hours away, another young man named Ben Levi logged onto his computer and stared at the screen. He wasn't a scientist, he was a killer whose specialty was assassination of men who his leader believed was a threat to their country. Both countries were located in a section of the world where were conflict, religion and distrust were served for breakfast. Ben Levi had, at his disposal, the most sophisticated technological

tools of the assassination trade. His assignment was to successfully eliminate Gilamesh.

"We can't get into Gilamesh's country, so killing him with a high-powered rifle mounted under a telescope is out of the question," Ben Levi barked at the screen.

"What's wrong with a drone?" Another agent offered.

"Gilamesh's military leaders will shoot down anything coming into their airspace.

"We pay a double agent in Gilamesh's own military to carry out the assassination," A third man suggested.

"If they find him alive, he will compromise our other informants, he will talk," Ben Levi moaned, caressing his chin.

"We know Gilamesh is working on the development of a nuclear device, his underground network of suppliers is on a list from Latin America to North Korea to Eastern Europe - this information came from reliable sources - same ones

we deal with." The first man affirmed, leaning on Ben Levi's desk.

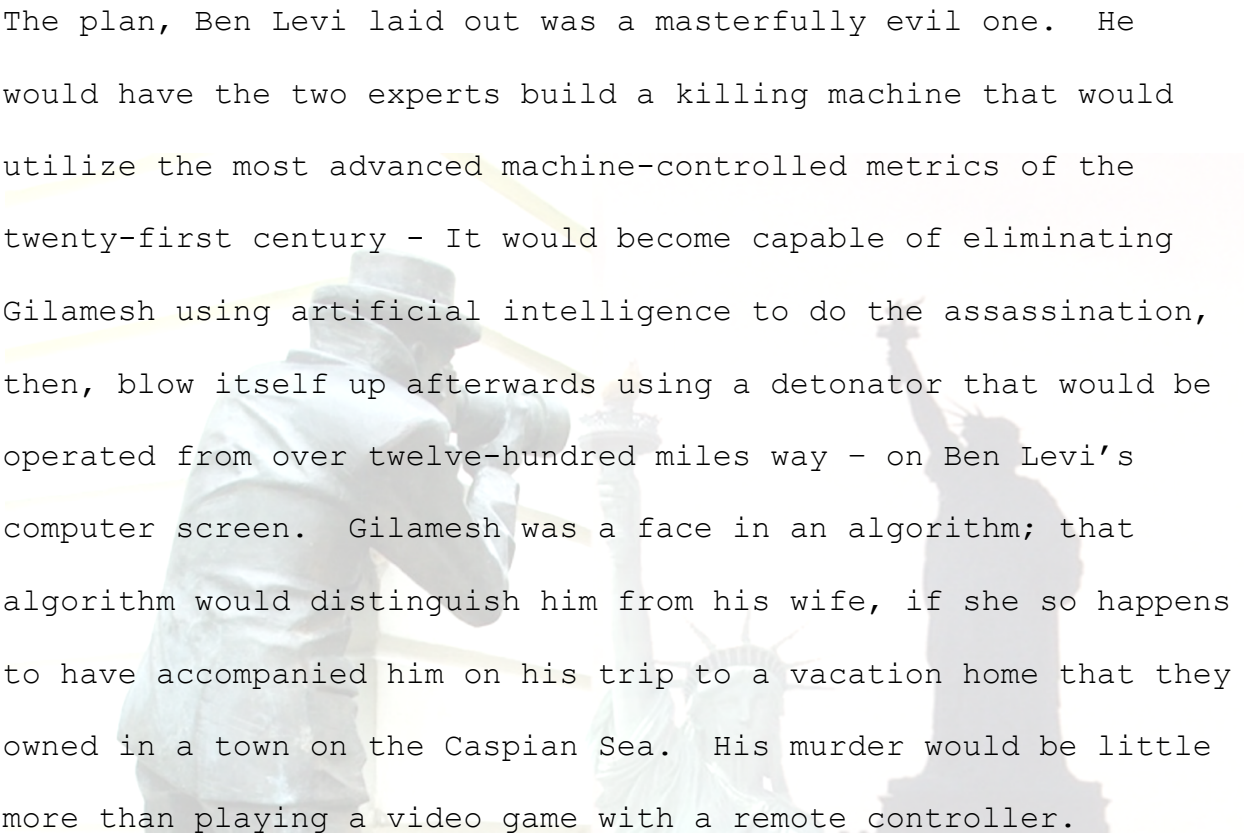
"The Americans are voting in a new leader, our window of opportunity to take out Gilamesh is ticking, we have to act now, the Second agent worried, looking from the first man to Ben Levi.

"I got it," Ben Levi exclaimed, peering down into the abyss of the faces of Gilamesh, his two sons and his wife, Adir, popping up in the face recognition software on his monitor.

"What, how?" Both men asked in unison.

"We'll build a robot assassin, ship it to Gilamesh's country and reassemble it there." Ben Levi decreed, rubbing his hands together in victory.

Ben Levi began consultations with two people in his organization, overseeing work on new techniques for clandestine murders on foreign soil; one was an expert in face recognition and the other was an engineer who specialized in the building of robotic arsenal that incorporated that very same industrial science.



The plan, Ben Levi laid out was a masterfully evil one. He would have the two experts build a killing machine that would utilize the most advanced machine-controlled metrics of the twenty-first century - It would become capable of eliminating Gilamesh using artificial intelligence to do the assassination, then, blow itself up afterwards using a detonator that would be operated from over twelve-hundred miles way - on Ben Levi's computer screen. Gilamesh was a face in an algorithm; that algorithm would distinguish him from his wife, if she so happens to have accompanied him on his trip to a vacation home that they owned in a town on the Caspian Sea. His murder would be little more than playing a video game with a remote controller.

Killing people who Ben Levi considered enemies of his country and state did not pose a moral dilemma for him. His brother, Omri, played the piano, he terminated people. Ben Levi's father had been in charge of an elite force of killers - Ben Levi followed in the old man's footsteps - the apple, it seemed, never falls very far from the tree - except in his brother's case.

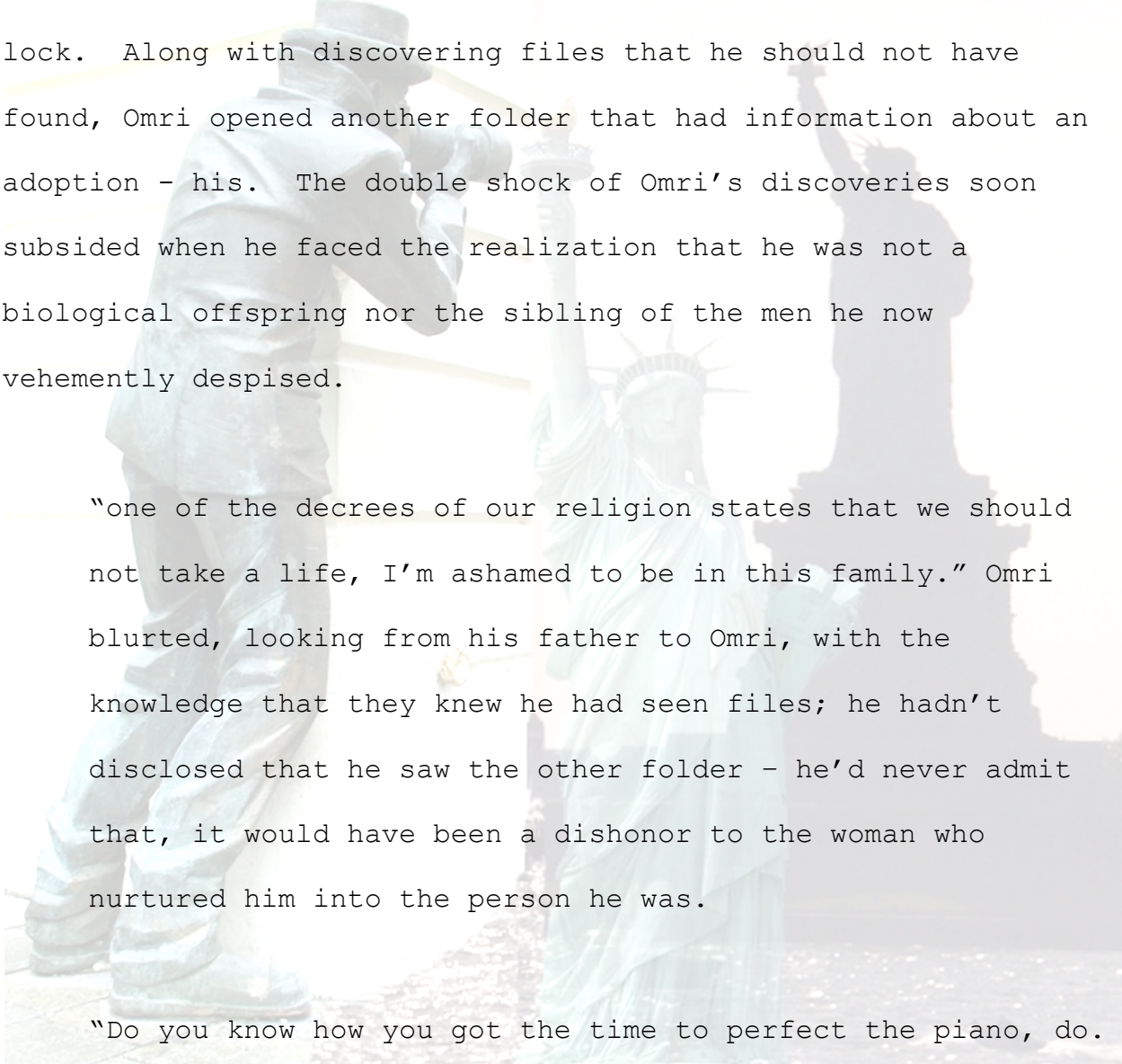
"A brilliant plan, if you pull this one off, you will be promoted to a position higher than I ever rose," Ben Levi's

father gleamed with pride, looking quickly away, a few days later, at dinner in their home.

"Do you even have a moral compass?" His younger brother chastised, looking through both of them, then, fingering his best rendition of Beethoven's Concerto in D Major.

"If I, we, let these monsters succeed, you would not have a country to play your piano in. Ben Levi reminded his brother.

There always had been a great divide between the two siblings; One was a pacifist, the other a belligerent, super patriot of warfare deception. Their mother had died from cancer when they were young. His brother, Omri, thought it was punishment from G-D for the professions of Ben Levi and his father. For quite some time, his younger brother did not know what either of them did for a living. It was only after one of Omri's piano concertos at a town center in which both the father and brother were absent, for the sixth time, that Omri discovered that his parent and his older sibling were in a kind of business that was not only secretive, but gravely immoral.



After one such performance had ended, Omri took a taxi back to the apartment that he shared with his brother and father, furious of their absence, he ventured into his father's study and began reading through a computer that he found in a drawer; the key to the normally secured drawer had been left in the lock. Along with discovering files that he should not have found, Omri opened another folder that had information about an adoption - his. The double shock of Omri's discoveries soon subsided when he faced the realization that he was not a biological offspring nor the sibling of the men he now vehemently despised.

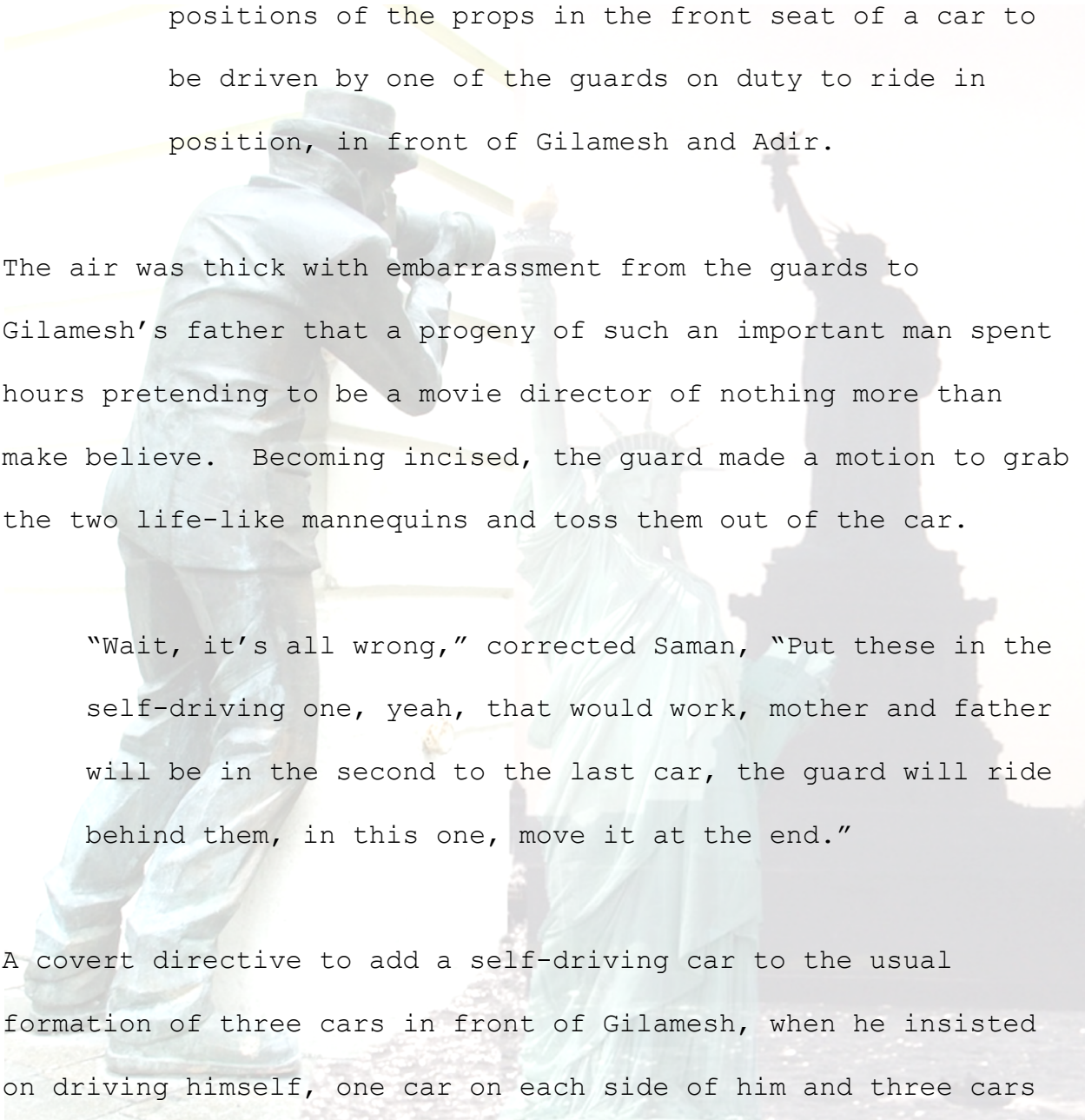
"one of the decrees of our religion states that we should not take a life, I'm ashamed to be in this family." Omri blurted, looking from his father to Omri, with the knowledge that they knew he had seen files; he hadn't disclosed that he saw the other folder - he'd never admit that, it would have been a dishonor to the woman who nurtured him into the person he was.

"Do you know how you got the time to perfect the piano, do. You?" Ben Levi grilled, slamming the cover of the piano that missed smashing Omri's fingers by inches.

Omri's face registered guilt, the kind that uncovers the conflict of a contradiction between one's principles and the granting of the protection of that principle by the very method for which one's principle is adverse. Omri's father's influence kept him out of the dreaded army, a requirement of all males and females who were citizens of the place.

"The threat is no longer hostile neighboring states, but asymmetrical and unconditional threats such as the growing preponderance of a man named Gilamesh, his country's group of scientists and their aspirations to develop a nuclear weapon." His father's face wore the fury of a man who believed what he needed to believe to keep his job and status.

"If our country relied solely on the requirement of absolute preponderance for survival, but you and many like you, refused to do their duty, what chance would we have against a nuclear attack by our neighbor?" Ben Levi's smug persona and steadfast political arguments always had a way of sending Omri into deep trepidation of foreboding locked jaw. His father and brother did not believe their killing was breaking any laws. It was fulfilling a sentence sanctioned by whatever prime minister of the day.



"Have a nice day, mother, father," Saman bid his parents, in a sing song manner, fine-tuning the positions of the props in the front seat of a car to be driven by one of the guards on duty to ride in position, in front of Gilamesh and Adir.

The air was thick with embarrassment from the guards to Gilamesh's father that a progeny of such an important man spent hours pretending to be a movie director of nothing more than make believe. Becoming incised, the guard made a motion to grab the two life-like mannequins and toss them out of the car.

"Wait, it's all wrong," corrected Saman, "Put these in the self-driving one, yeah, that would work, mother and father will be in the second to the last car, the guard will ride behind them, in this one, move it at the end."

A covert directive to add a self-driving car to the usual formation of three cars in front of Gilamesh, when he insisted on driving himself, one car on each side of him and three cars in back - now became four cars coming up the rear with guards on each side, protecting hyper-realistic replicas of Gilamesh and

Adir. No one thought this was a good idea except Saman's mother, and that was only because she loved him.

At the precise time of 7:15 AM, when a lovely sunshine, that iris of fire, stretched out its golden arms and called to the soul of the land like a mother to a child, Ben Levi's team received a signal that Gilamesh, his wife and the entourage of armed guards were departing for their journey.

"The count is off," Ben Levi growled, studying his screen. "Why is there an extra vehicle?"

"Stop worrying, the face recognition knows which car Gilamesh is in," Assured one of his top software engineers.

"The team that we put in place has already assembled the gun, it is calibrated to blow Gilamesh's brains out as soon as we lock on his face, the wife won't feel a thing, except, maybe, the loss of a husband."

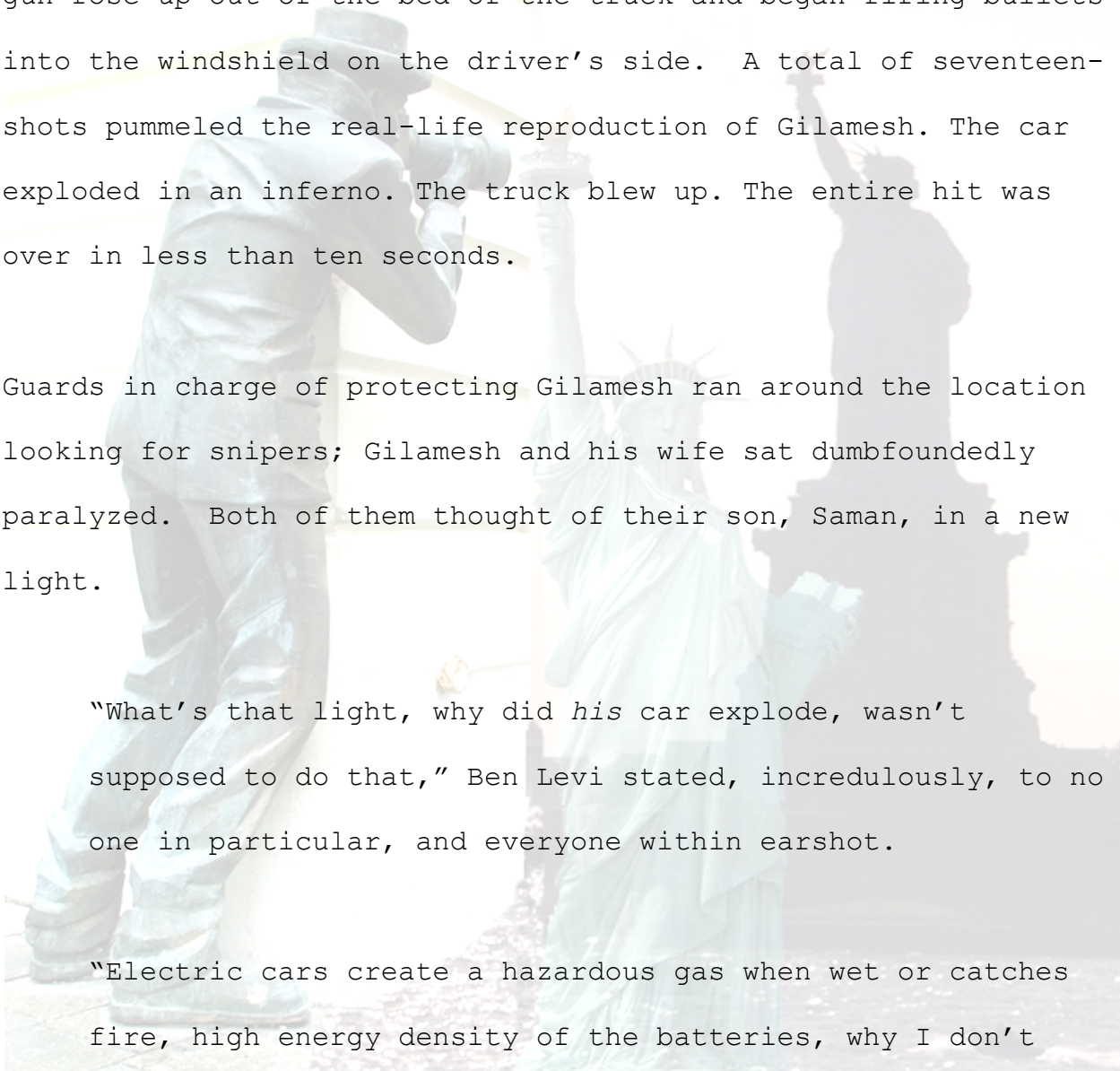
"They must be up to some trick, adding a car, our informant didn't mention this," Ben Levi scratched his forehead.

"Remember that guy in Nairobi who tried to fool our man with a dummy of himself?"

"Our software is so precise, it knows how to detect camouflages, a human face has to blink, and blink at a specific number of times, no one has figured out how to master that, trust me," The artificial intelligence specialist assured, brushing aside Ben Levi's concerns.

They were sitting at the intersection of earth's largest inland body of water and a country steeped in nuclear controversy, with little concern about the previous warnings regarding an attempt on Gilamesh's life when the entourage passed a broken down, old model truck along the shoulder of the road leading to his weekend house. The vehicle was empty of any driver or passenger, a seemingly disabled piece of junk with the back tire missing, the whole thing resting on a makeshift jack.

The road entering Gilamesh's weekend retreat was a narrow one that cars had to enter one, by one. Two of the guards in front continued on to the house to check for bombs or other devices before Gilamesh and his wife's entry. The third car, in front, moved to the side of the road to inspect the surroundings, the guard got out, using a gun with a scope to surveil the area.



This left the vehicle with Saman's carbon copies of his parents a few feet alongside the truck. Saman had added an extra touch, he installed a small detonator in the duplicate of his mother - Saman loved action films. Within a few seconds, a large machine gun rose up out of the bed of the truck and began firing bullets into the windshield on the driver's side. A total of seventeen shots pummeled the real-life reproduction of Gilamesh. The car exploded in an inferno. The truck blew up. The entire hit was over in less than ten seconds.

Guards in charge of protecting Gilamesh ran around the location looking for snipers; Gilamesh and his wife sat dumbfoundedly paralyzed. Both of them thought of their son, Saman, in a new light.

"What's that light, why did *his* car explode, wasn't supposed to do that," Ben Levi stated, incredulously, to no one in particular, and everyone within earshot.

"Electric cars create a hazardous gas when wet or catches fire, high energy density of the batteries, why I don't drive them," the engineer sneered.

"Just he was supposed to die, I made sure to lock the face recognition software only onto Gilamesh's, it's going to be a shit storm, the wife, fuccckkkkk," Ben Levi groaned, looking around the room at a sea of astonished faces, down at his keyboard, then over to third monitor that flashed an "X" over another enemy successfully eradicated.

(opens with killing of Gilamesh and wife, the audience sees them dying - then we see them alive and the audience wonder how and why = then we see Saman creating these real-life replicas - and they get it)

