

CREATED BY
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LAPIS
LAZULI

MANY SONS AND A LOT OF GUNS!

#BLESSED

A small taste of the story I am currently developing.

A dark, satirical journey - very much in the spirit of *Men Who Stare at Goats*.

Two privileged high school graduates set out on their “work and travel.” After crashing their private jet over the Mediterranean, they are rescued by a refugee boat, then captured by FRONTEX on a refugee island, and finally deported - to an active war zone in the Middle East.

CHAPTER 1 - GRADUATION PRANK (true story)

Justus and Lisa were young, eligible step-siblings from a suburb where Porsches, BMWs, and Daimlers stood around like garden gnomes.

They led a cow named Elsa through the corridors of their private high school, which they would soon leave behind. It was their graduation prank. Elsa snorted, let her warm tongue glide over the posters, and nibbled on a Mohammed caricature that hung in the room for political education. Hebdo. Westergaard. Paper tastes the same as ink.

On the ground floor, the fifth graders stared, and on the first floor, the snotty kids from middle school applauded. Everywhere, the teachers froze in shock. Then came the banal downfall of a perfect plan: elevator too small, cow too big. And cows, as Justus and Lisa learned that minute, will walk upstairs but never back down. A rule as relentless as tax law for the middle class.

The dairy farmer waited outside the school, drumming his fingers on his watch. Justus handed him a wad of cash — just enough for him to still afford some drugs. Ownership changed hands. Elsa now belonged to the graduates.

The butcher arrived. In the religion classroom on the second floor, the life of the cow - the cow Elsa - came to an end. On the wall hung an excerpt from the Quran: Surah 2, verses 67-71 - Al-Baqarah (“The Cow”).

CHAPTER 2 - CAR PARADE #1

After the graduation prank, the class rolled through the capital in an euphoric car parade. The leather of their German luxury cars smelled of money and of iron from the flesh of the cow Elsa. They raced through Berlin honking, convinced that anything was possible as long as the tank was full and the bank account covered.

CHAPTER 3 - THE DEAD ARE COMING

In front of the chancellor’s office, traffic had come to a standstill. Commuters honked and stuck their hands out of their windows in disbelief. In that line of impatience and bad moods, the graduates kept celebrating undisturbed, blasting loud music. They simply enjoyed life.

A display of refugee corpses was taking place and blocked the road. Lisa and Justus got out curiously and followed the activists carrying coffins. The Center for Political Beauty staged a funeral for those the Mediterranean had swallowed. An imam spoke solemn words and quoted Surah 2 - Al-Baqarah. Next to the grave stood two cows: one yellow, one red.

Justus and Lisa, slightly tipsy, pupils dilated, sank into the chairs reserved for the absent: chancellor, foreign minister, interior minister, etc. - seats of reproach. The smug graduates amused themselves by asking the activists' press spokesman, Mr. Hahn, ironic questions.

They received the same answer to everything: Allāhu yaḥkumu baynanā ("Allah will judge").

Lisa whispered an idea into Justus's ear: "When borders tighten, defense budgets grow." Rheinmetall rang in their ears like the jackpot of a slot machine. They bought shares on their phones while the coffins were being lowered. Money doesn't stink - corpses do.

CHAPTER 4 - BARBECUE PARTY

At the estate of Justus and Lisa's parents, the appetizer consisted of caramelized Israeli dates drizzled with sinfully expensive Greek olive oil garnished with sea salt from the Aegean. The main course was roasted pigeon on foie-gras terrine, accompanied by buntings. For dessert, they served crème brûlée made from quail eggs and chocolate mousse with ostrich-egg cream.

The culinary theme of the evening was clear: the chicks are leaving the nest.

Afghan hostesses walked around with trays of champagne, making sure with polite smiles that no one in the company stayed sober. All their school friends and their parents had gathered for the celebration. Their father, Toyota's CEO, ranted about the supply-chain law, but the oil states would soon make sure that the EU revised it again. Their mother oversaw water extraction and bottling for Nestlé. She agreed passionately with her husband.

The meat of the cow Elsa didn't end up on the grill. Not even the dogs got it. The cow Elsa perished in a hungry trash can.

No party without presents. The parents led their children away for the gift-giving. They stopped before a painting in the mansion. It showed the Virgin Mary, in a cloak of ultramarine, with the holy child. The father handed his son Justus a watch adorned with lapis lazuli. The mother gave Lisa a necklace, also of lapis lazuli. The Madonna in the painting silently continued to care for her newborn.

Justus and Lisa proudly showed their gifts to their friends and spoke excitedly about their upcoming year of work & travel. They explained their world trip to all the parents: surfing in Australia, the Full Moon Party in Thailand - in other words, getting to know "the real world." The parents didn't care, as long as they would please come home afterwards to study business or law.

"Send a postcard!"

Their Republican cousins were there too - U.S. Army soldiers stationed in Israel. They saw themselves as holy knights for American Evangelicals and Baptists, much like the Templars during the Crusades. Their goal? To bring about Armageddon faster so that Jesus Christ could return - this time as a warrior, with a sword and an AR-15. And that would only be possible if Israel existed.

CHAPTER 5 - THE AIRPORT

Justus, Lisa, and their friends waited at the terminal for their chartered private jet.

The line was very short.

Behind their sunglasses, they hid their sleepless eyes. Another clique from their graduating class with the same plan greeted them. They would first fly to Greece, then to Thailand. The two groups promised to see each other again in Thailand at the Full Moon Party.

CHAPTER 6 - THE CRASH

Traveling in a private jet really was a lot of fun. The glow of the bright half-moon illuminated the champagne from France, the cocaine from Ecuador, and the heroin from Afghanistan.

The evening's film was *Life of Brian* - which no one really watched.

The world of Justus and Lisa shattered amid roaring noises. A jolt, a screech, an explosion. The jet crashed. Justus and Lisa survived. The others sank as shadows into the depths of the Mediterranean, gasping for air.

They were now alone - without a phone, without a passport, without hope.

CHAPTER 7 - REFUGEE BOAT

Time refused to pass. On the horizon, a fishing boat pattered along, but their cries for help went unheard. After a while, their bodies began to freeze dangerously.

The next day, when the sun was already at its zenith, rescue finally came. An overcrowded smuggler's boat crossed paths with the two graduates. Hands reached out toward Justus and Lisa and pulled their weak bodies over the railing.

The boat was packed with refugees. The smell of salt, sweat, and diesel hung in the air. They gave the two shivering castaways dirty blankets to keep them warm. Slowly, their lips turned from dead blue back to nouveau-riche pink.

A man sat down next to them. His name was Mohammad. He asked why they were drifting at sea. They answered that their plane had crashed. They had been on their way to their vacation. Mohammad understood only half of it. He didn't know the word "vacation," but he understood "plane explosion" all too well. They asked him where they were. Mohammad explained that this was a refugee boat. But they need not worry, he said - the bad men, the smugglers, had already left the ship.

Lisa asked him how he could speak English so well. "The Americans taught me," he said sadly. "But then one day, they were gone." Mohammad had fled his homeland with his son Yusuf and his daughter Amira to escape the terrorists. He smiled wearily and looked out over the sea. Help would come soon, they had been promised - in paradise. In Europe.

CHAPTER 8 - FRONTEX

Justus and Lisa were awakened by the sound of helicopters. All the refugees on the boat were silent with fear. Only a baby cried.

Rotor blades sliced through the sky. The immense force of the FRONTEX helicopters pressed the air onto the surface of the sea, whipping up saltwater like only a storm could.

Minutes later, men boarded the ship - they looked like soldiers. They ordered everyone to line up properly and made it clear with their rifles that this was not up for discussion.

Justus and Lisa found themselves in a queue once again - this time longer than the one at the airport terminal. And in handcuffs.

CHAPTER 9 - REFUGEE CAMP GREECE

FRONTEX handed the people over to the overwhelmed, overworked, and understaffed helpers of the refugee camp. Between Greek olive trees, the air smelled of the same oil as at the barbecue party - only without the barbecue, and without the party.

Justus and Lisa wanted to be heard by an officer. But the queue was very long. It could take days before they were called for their first inspection.

Mohammad lent them his phone. They didn't know the phone numbers of their parents or friends by heart. They tried calling the secretariat at their parents' offices, but the unknown number was blocked.

The olives on the trees ripened. Food was distributed in rations. Once again, Justus and Lisa stood in a line - this time for food. The days consisted of endless waiting in lines. Justus and Lisa arrived too late for distribution and got nothing.

“Even animals have more rights than we do in the EU!” Lisa shouted, and Justus didn't argue.

Their outrage got them nowhere. They would have to get to know hunger. They sat, desperate and starving, under an olive tree. A white dove landed on an olive branch, like in a picture book. It reminded Lisa of the Nestlé logo, where her mother worked. Then she picked up a stone. The stone flew. The chicks had finally left the nest. In France, that's considered a delicacy.

To distract themselves from hunger, they played soccer with Amira and Yusuf, Mohammad's children. They knew Thomas Müller, Messi & Ronaldo. The ball rolled to the fence of the camp. There, Justus and Lisa caught sight of the beach. When they looked closer, they saw the sea washing up the corpses of their friends from the private jet.

The other clique from the terminal stood nearby, disgusted and hungover. But they didn't hear the cries for help from their fenced-in friends and walked away from the holiday beach in revulsion.

At last, an officer had time for an initial inspection. Justus and Lisa were examined. They had neither a phone nor any form of identification. The only things that had survived the crash were the drugs in their pockets - which they had completely forgotten about.

The verdict was clear: Human traffickers and drug smugglers.
Deportation.

CHAPTER 10 - DEPORTATION

At night, they were taken from a cell and transferred into a cargo plane. The graduates from the wealthy suburb now found themselves next to murderers, thieves, rapists - and Mohammad with his sleeping children. He saw the confusion in their faces and whispered to them that the EU no longer accepted all asylum seekers.

“Allah will judge,” rumbled through the cabin.

When they landed, each person received the equivalent of one thousand euros as start-up money. The Middle East welcomed them. Mohammad, Yusuf, and Amira were immediately taken away by bearded men.

The bearded officer was watching an Egyptian soap opera. He was puzzled to see two white people in the building.

His verdict was clear: tourists.
He kindly sent them outside.

CHAPTER 11 - UN

Justus and Lisa wandered aimlessly through the streets, constantly shooing away begging children. Some of the boys wore girls' clothes. They were Bacha bazi - dancing boys, prostitutes.

Western aid workers picked up the lost ones by the roadside, mistaking them for UN staff. At the aid camp, Justus and Lisa were given internet access and new clothes - German football jerseys.

They managed to retrieve their parents' phone numbers from their emails and called them. Their parents didn't take the call seriously. They were drunk - it was cheese and tequila night with the conservatives at the notorious China Club Berlin. Besides, Thomas Müller was there.

Justus and Lisa were at their wits' end.
Luckily, their stocks were still in the green.

CHAPTER 12 - FAMINE

They were allowed to stay only if they helped distribute relief supplies. The next day, they drove vehicles full of food to the outskirts of the city. There, many hungry men, women, and children had already gathered, holding bowls up in the air, pleading.

On the other side, there was nothing but barren, rocky mountains with bombed-out ruins.

Justus and Lisa began distributing the supplies. Suddenly, among the people was little Amira. She pointed anxiously in one direction. Justus saw two figures lying on the ground near a ruin in the distance. The heat made the air waver - it looked like a mirage. But there was no water. Water!

Justus grabbed a large bottle and ran after Amira. From afar, his fear became clearer with every step. It was Mohammad and Yusuf, lying unconscious on the ground. Two vultures were slowly creeping toward them as if they were prey. More vultures circled above the ruins, screeching.

Justus lifted Yusuf into his arms. He began to pour water into his mouth, trying to revive him. Amira went to her father and did the same. Eventually, Mohammad woke up - only to see his dead son in the helpless arms of Justus, who refused to believe he had starved to death.

CHAPTER 13 - ATTACK

In the distance, a caravan of Toyota Hilux trucks rolled closer. They were filled with bearded terrorists. The vehicles kicked up clouds of dust. They wanted to steal the relief supplies.

In the desert storm, Lisa fought back instinctively until someone struck her over the head with a Kalashnikov. The UN workers and the starving civilians fled.

Justus didn't resist. He fainted as they dragged him away, leaving behind Yusuf's lifeless body - and a vulture that immediately pounced on it.

CHAPTER 14 - THE BEHEADING

Poppy flowers swayed gently back and forth in the wind. Justus and Lisa slowly opened their eyes. Their heads throbbed, but without pain. Before them stretched a sea of beautiful flowers. On a hill stood a golden calf, looking down on them.

Was this a dream?

They were in the middle of a vast poppy field. A bearded man set up a camera in front of them. Next to them knelt an American journalist, trembling with fear. On the other side knelt Mohammad, with Amira by his side.

No - this was a nightmare.

A man approached, whom the cameraman called Sardar Ramin. He appeared to be the leader. He shouted loudly and unintelligibly into the camera. Then he went to the journalist and "freed his country from the American imperialist."

He took a step aside and approached Mohammad. The leader, Sardar Ramin, declared that cooperation with the West was also a mortal sin. Mohammad turned to Justus and Lisa.

"He who calls the Djinn has to get rid of him."

He asked his tormentor and judge one final question:

“Has the country become better since you’ve been in power?”

Sardar Ramin turned red and screamed in rage, “Infidel!” He raised his sword in fury. Mohammad said his last words to the world:

“I will see you again, in hell! (Jahannam)”
“Allāhu yaḥkumu baynanā (Allah will judge).”

The strike was swift and clean. Amira was torn away from the headless body of her father. At twelve years old, she was deemed old enough - she would now be married to one of the bearded men.

Justus and Lisa stayed silent, even as Mohammad’s head rolled right in front of them. The leader, Sardar Ramin, examined the two foreigners. Then he noticed the German football shirt Justus was wearing.

“Müller? You know Thomas Müller? I know Thomas Müller!”

Justus and Lisa stared at him in confusion and nodded.

“But also Messi, right? Or better Ronaldo?”

Sardar Ramin proudly demonstrated his football skills. He took a few steps back, ran, and kicked Mohammad’s head high into the air across the poppy field. Then he ordered their shackles removed and told them to turn off the camera.

CHAPTER 15 - SHARIA COURT

Ramin led Justus and Lisa through a former CIA base. He told them that the American pigs had left all their weapons here when they fled like little children.

He - the great Sardar Ramin - had defeated the Americans.

After that, the base had been converted into a prison and a rehab center for countless heroin addicts. Everywhere, trembling, emaciated, bald-headed men crouched on the ground, waiting in lines for something to eat.

The courtroom was a simple room with many carpets. The judge had to decide what to do with the foreigners. Some wanted to kill them, but Sardar Ramin had other plans. The judge studied the Quran, open on the floor. He stroked his long beard as he thought, then looked sharply at Justus and Lisa.

“Your friend - he looks like a woman. Tell me, my friend, why don’t you have a beard?”

“The Americans, they shaved it.”

“If you join us, you will need to grow a beard. Allāhu yaḥkumu baynanā (Allah will judge).”
Everyone else in the room repeated, *Allāhu yaḥkumu baynanā.*

“And you must join us. Otherwise, you will die.”

Justus and Lisa swallowed hard and asked what their task would be. Ramin grinned, his gold teeth flashing. Are terrorists still terrorists if they successfully run the country?

CHAPTER 16 - TOYOTA CAR DEALERSHIP

Justus, Lisa, the leader, and a few henchmen stood in line at a Toyota dealership. They were the token non-terrorists.

More waiting in line.

In the background, a commercial played on a screen, showing the CEO of Toyota - Justus's father - smiling and giving a thumbs-up. Beforehand, the leader had explained to them that they needed new trucks. Always trucks. Toyota Hilux - the holy grail of the dusty road. Maybe his father could give them a discount?

The salesman was Egyptian. The leader and his men liked him very much. Egyptians had a special status in the Middle East because of their film industry - everyone in the Orient watched Egyptian movies and soap operas. The leader said:

“When you speak, I feel like I'm inside a movie.”

The negotiations were like a bazaar. Hands were shaken. Ownership changed hands.

CHAPTER 17 - CAR PARADE #2

Another car parade - but this time, trucks instead of luxury cars. It was daytime. They drove through mountain passes, listening to Fairouz. On the road signs, heads were missing - faces were considered a sin.

CHAPTER 18 - THE STONE OF HEAVEN

The mountain range was wild and deadly. It marked the outer edge of the Middle East and was considered the geographical border to Central Asia. The mountain pass was dangerous and overlooked by countless checkpoints.

The mines were no longer controlled by the government but by bearded men with Kalashnikovs. Justus and Lisa had to start working immediately. They were part of the group - but also slaves.

The chief of the mines told Justus and Lisa that finding a stone was better than getting married.

The work was exhausting. In unsecured tunnels, they dug deeper into the mountain using dynamite. An hour after every explosion, they went back into the dust without masks to keep digging. At night, they heard the music of Umm Kulthum (Enta Omri) echoing through the camp as they worked.

Justus found a chunk of lapis lazuli that glowed in the dark, as if someone had broken off a piece of the sky.

Match cut:

The stone to the full moon in the sky. The full moon in the sky to its reflection on the surface of the sea - the Full Moon Party in Thailand, where the other clique was dancing.

CHAPTER 19 - WEAPONS MARKET & DRUG MARKET

Justus, Lisa, and the others unloaded the lapis lazuli and raw heroin from the trucks and carried them to the notorious weapons and drug market. Along the market stalls, dancing boys offered themselves.

Once again, they waited in line - this time with gemstones and opiates.

Sardar Ramin negotiated skillfully and sold all the goods very quickly. Now came the main event: new weapons!

They went to the arms dealers, who treated them like honored guests. They sat on beautiful cushions. A child brought them steaming saffron tea. The child greeted them timidly. Justus and Lisa froze. It was Amira.

She told them that she was now a woman, but that her husband treated her badly. She even lifted her veil briefly, showing a bruised and inflamed blue eye filled with tears. Yes, she said, she was finally a real woman - her husband had made sure of it, against her will, at night.

The arms dealers performed a show - a traditional weapons dance and circle dance - in the middle of the market.

Amira disappeared. Justus and Lisa were paralyzed with fear. They applauded the performance so as not to stand out.

“Many sons and a lot of guns,” said one of the dealers with a smile, showing them the first of many weapons.

CHAPTER 20 - CAR PARADE #3

Heavily armed bearded men rolled toward Jerusalem in countless Toyota trucks. The vehicles were loaded with weapons.

CHAPTER 21 - ATTACK ON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (JERUSALEM)

They stood on the Mount of Olives. It was snowing in Jerusalem. The entire city was covered in white.

Some Palestinian and Israeli children were having a snowball fight on the Temple Mount. Other children happily built a snowman.

Sardar Ramin gave a speech. He told them that he had been there, back when freedom flowed through Egypt. At that time, he said, he had felt tall - not just him, but all Muslims. They had felt like victors in a football stadium. Ramin wanted to free Jerusalem so that everyone could feel that way again.

Before Al-Malḥamat al-Kubra (the Apocalypse), the Dajjal (Antichrist) would appear. And the Dajjal, he declared, was the American enemy in Jerusalem. The U.S. embassy was the Dajjal. Therefore, the Al-Malḥamat al-Kubra had already begun.

A massive assault on Jerusalem followed. They attacked the Old City with trucks from one side - the Americans from the other, supported by helicopters.

The children on the Temple Mount continued their snowball fight. But one boy picked up a stone and threw it at another's head. Blood dripped onto the white snow. An explosion startled the children. They stopped, listened, and fled.

The battle was brutal and began at the border of the Old City. Americans and Israelis versus Muslims.

Justus and Lisa's truck hit a landmine. They survived and fled into the city for shelter.

CHAPTER 22 - ARMAGEDDON & AL-MALḤAMAT AL-KUBRA & END TIMES

They ran through the city. The Via Dolorosa was no longer covered in snow. Blood now flowed down the street like a river.

In front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, they met their cousin again - the one they had last seen at the barbecue party. He grinned fanatically and held a sword in his hand. He shouted in a strong Southern accent:

“This is it! We’re bringin’ peace back to the Middle East!”

Other soldiers rappelled from helicopters and landed beside him. They all wore the same fanatical expression.

*“Guys, we are inside the Armageddon!
Jesus will come for a second time — as a WARRIOR!”*

They drew their swords and marched toward the Temple Mount.

CHAPTER 23 - GOD, WHERE ARE YOU?

Justus and Lisa fled into the cool Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Justus collapsed.

“God, where are you?”

The answer came as an echo from afar: gunfire, screams, inferno.
A statue of Mary wept.

The Wailing Wall had already collapsed, the Temple Mount and the rest of Jerusalem were burning. On the Temple Mount, Sardar Ramin and the cousin from the U.S. Army stood facing each other. Sword and saber were drawn, ready to strike.

Ramin: *“The Antichrist has arrived!”*

Cousin: *“I am a warrior for Jesus. And he shall return in glory.”*

Ramin: *“Yes, my false friend. That is what the Antichrist would say.”*

Everything was burning. Now the Church of the Holy Sepulchre collapsed in on itself, releasing a massive cloud of dust.

CHAPTER 24 - GREETINGS

Air conditioners wheezed inside an airport.

Justus and Lisa were once again standing in a queue, leaning over a postcard that smelled of dust.

“Greetings from Jerusalem, the City of Truth. Weather: sunny. We’ve experienced a lot. See you soon - Justus & Lisa.”

In the background, gunshots rang out, but no one turned around. They stuck a stamp with a weeping Mary onto the postcard and dropped it into a yellow slot.

#CityOfTruth #WorkAndTravel #BLESSED

End credits - selfies from war zones.

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