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Adael, or "The Bottom of the North Arabian Sea":
A Remediation of Godwin's *Caleb Williams*

The tragedy of my life began with a concealed body, and ended with a concealed body. Had the veil that covered the body been uncovered at any point during the two and a half long helicopter ride that I shared with the body it is possible that this insanity may never have struck, but such is life that the innocent are often consumed by mysteries without answers. It was, to be specific, the lack of grace with which the body was treated that began to cause me to question the assertion that the shawl covering his face was meant to serve as respect for the dead. Here before me, lay a conqueror that was truly of our modern era, one that struck fear into the hearts of an entire world while apparently hiding out in every caves and basements in between Islamabad and Kandahar. His power was never in his army or armies, but always in his ability to evade his pursuers wherever we chased him. The video he sent us which mocked our failure to catch him, struck as just as hard as a Boeing 767-223ER smashing into the side of the skyscrapers that used to dominate the New York skyline.

And this, my dear reader, is why the body of the man they said was Osama Bin Laden claimed me as his final victim. Even in his death, with nothing more than a thin sheet a fabric over his face and the sacred orders of my superiors not to unveil him, he continued to elude me and deny me the chance to definitively bear witness to his death. Falklands had seen him, and Falklands had shot him, but no other member of SEAL Team Six had gazed upon the man they said was Osama, neither in his life nor his death. Yet before me, Adael Goldsman, lay a Pandora's box with Schrodinger's Cat inside of it. Due to the very fact that I had been so specifically ordered not to lift the shawl I was so strongly tempted to lift it. My curiosity being roused by such an action's forbidden nature, the man beneath the shawl couldn't be Osama in the flesh unless I could gaze into the wrinkled and bearded face that I had

spent the last decade memorizing to the finest detail. His features had become so jagged and pronounced in my mind I almost imagined that I could make out his face through the shawl. But all I could make out was what seemed to be the wide smile of an enemy that even in death has evaded its predator.

It was not just curiosity that so compelled me forward on my mission to unveil the corpse, but also a sense of romantic justice. Adael Goldsman, whose name means God is Witness, whose father was suffocated to death on the 34th floor of the second tower, and who comes from a long line of worriers back to the grandfather who shot his way to Berlin, could be one of three people to see the destroyed body of America's greatest enemy. It was not for the good of myself, that I felt compelled to the body but for the good of my nation and my family that I should take part in the final conquest.

I was reminded suddenly of being on patrol in Kabul's airport in 2001 directly after the invasion. While we scrutinized every man for recognizable features from the face of the villain that had been burnt into our memories, the veiled figures of women drifted effortlessly through our checkpoints. They wore veils that obscured their bodies from head to toe, and behind each of them I imagined a cackling Osama, eluding us because we chose to respect his culture in a way he had never extended to any other but his own.

Now once again, the figure of a veiled Osama presented itself to me, and once again I was told that for the sake of respect I must not unveil him. However, this time there was no one else around to prevent me should I be so inclined to reveal him. The rest of the team had been instructed to stay behind, with me alone entrusted with the responsibility of laying the body to rest at the bottom of a vast sea. This was to be Osama's final hiding place, for at the bottom of the ocean he could hide for much longer than he ever could in any cave or secret compound.

When the chopper lifted off the ground, I began to ponder his face over the racket of spinning blades and buzzing engines. They said he was a religious man, but I wanted to know if he died with his religion on his face. Did he smile and accept his fate peacefully, believing 72 virgins and other rewards awaited him in the afterlife? Or at the moment of his death did his face betray the hate and fear of simultaneously

realization of his inability to evade us, as well as the fact that nothing but more torment could await him in his afterlife?

When the helicopter flew over Karachi, I had made up my mind to briefly uncover the veil, but suddenly I was forced to question what it meant when I was alone. How could I hide my secret transgression of authority from those with hidden cameras the size of insects? And if I did lift the veil to find a body other than Osama's how could I hold my secret for the rest of my life from those from whom no one in the world could successfully hide anything. I questioned therefore, not just the truthfulness that Osama's body lay before me, but whether or not anyone really trusted me enough to leave me unsupervised with the body of the enemy.

Suddenly the very fact of my placement inside the helicopter seemed a cruel and elaborate joke. As if some higher power within the navy had seen fit to extend my torture in the most baroque manner, knowing full well that I would never actually be able to believe I was truly alone and unsupervised. Given my intimate knowledge of the system to which I had pledged my life's service, it seemed altogether ridiculous that there would not be a camera recording my every action. I knew well that I lived in a world of powers that feared internal betrayal just as much as an external threat, and that to them even one man disobeying the order to keep the face covered was a crime that could never occur unnoticed.

Therefore it came to be that fear, and not restraint, held me back from lifting the veil all the way to the point of no return, and that I did in fact dump the unknown body to the depths of the North Arabian Sea. Not once, even when I held the body in my hands did I allow the veil to slip off and reveal the identity of the man beneath. In doing so I sentenced myself to live the rest of my life in uncertainty, with the only thing that could make me believe in truth again lying at the bottom of the sea. I had been inches away from completing my quest for vengeance against the terrorist, but I had failed because I had been afraid of ending. How could I call myself a defender of my people and my nation when I knew such cowardice existed inside of me? What does God bear witness to in Adael Goldsman except a coward of the highest caliber?

On the night before my own death I returned to the helicopter where Bin Laden's body lay. Watching from the sidelines was Falkland, Obama, Hitler, my Grandfather, my God, and 2,996 corpses from a fall day in downtown Manhattan. In front of me lay the body, once again concealed by a veil. However this time I ripped the veil off the body to finally gaze upon it's condition. I saw the brown stains across the pants from when his bowels had emptied at the moment of death. I saw the Qu'ran he pathetically clutched when the bullets entered his body. I saw the beard that so defined his person, but it looked messy and pathetic instead of imposing and fear inspiring. I saw the face, not the face of a proud conqueror, but of a pathetic and desperate old man. Finally I looked into his eyes, I saw neither fear nor pride, neither hate nor love, but the acceptance of man who knows exactly the weight of the terrible things he has done but believed to his death that those things were righteous.