

**THE GOLEM**

by

Edward Cohen

(As of March 31, 2006)

The development of "The Golem" was made possible in part by a New Commission in Jewish Theatre grant from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture and the performances were made possible in part by grants from The Jim Henson Foundation, Greater Jackson Arts Council, Mississippi Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts.

1800 Westmoreland Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90006  
(323) 735-5909

© 2005 Edward Cohen

## CAST OF CHARACTERS AND ACTORS

Jacob – the Narrator, actor on stage - LARRY DENMAN

### 3D PUPPET CHARACTERS/VOICES

RABBI LOEW of Prague. 1525-1609. A learned holy man and master of the Kabbalah. Tall, imposing, a man of high ethics, great devotion to his people and his God—and a sense of humor.  
– ANDREW McLARTY

(Young) JACOB HA-LEVI

Jacob ha-Levi, Rabbi Loew's best pupil and assistant as a young man - the young Jacob is a player in the story represented by a puppet. – DAVID LIND

PERLA

Rabbi Loew's wife. The temple bookkeeper, she's practical and down-to-earth, a counter to the rabbi's head-in-the star. – ROXIE RANDLE

MAISL, The mayor and wealthiest person in the ghetto. – JAMES RICE

YITZHAK HA-COHEN, Rabbi Loew's son-in-law and assistant. – ANDREW THOMAS III

GOLEM

An artificial man created by Rabbi Loew out of mud, he's clumsy, dangerously strong, simple-minded - a 2-year-old in a giant's body. – (pre-recorded) ANDREW McLARTY

EMPEROR RUDOLPH II of Bohemia, and Hungary (1552-1612).

Troubled, capricious, melancholic, forever in cycle between lunacy and piercing intelligence. – JAMES RICE

KARL VON RUMPF

Rudolph's chief minister, Wants to remove the emperor and install unbalanced child-heir, Julius Caesar, whom Karl can control. – MATTHEW BLACK

JULIUS CAESAR, Rudolph's illegitimate son (1585-1609) – JAMES BROWN (“JR”)

ALCHEMIST – ANDREW THOMAS III

CROWD IN THE STREET & AT THE CEMETARY – ROSCOE FORCH, & all other available males & females

GUARD (speaking) – ANDREW THOMAS III

OLD MAN – JAMES RICE

WOMAN – RACHEL HAVIRD

MAN & WOMAN AT THE SYNAGOGUE – MATTHEW BLACK, ELIZABETH BOTELER

YACHYM – (panting & screaming in pain) – ?

HORAK – ANDREW THOMAS III

VOICES OF MOB – (males only)

CHILDREN VOICES – KATIE MEDLIN, SARAH KOCHER

MAN & WOMAN at the synagogue

### **GOLEM 2D PUPPETS FOR SHADOW PUPPETRY**

Yachym

mob w/torches (orange light)

Horak CU

Horak

Rabbi

Unformed Golem

Man on a horse

CU of Golem's cradled in Rabbi's arms, open close mouth for inserting shem

Golem

Jacob

2 puppets are blowing shofar

Golem carries Rabbi on his shoulders

Jewish Crowd

2 Vandals

2 Armed Guards with halberds crossed

Palace Guard

Translucent Rabbi

Golem w/cat

little girl

Maisl

translucent Golem

Rabbi offered a crown

Golem offered a crown

Mothers arms raising children

Golem with a crown

cats

child

archers shooting arrows

Golem with arrows in his back

parents

Rabbi's son

Golem's head with letters being erased

Act I  
(Scene 1 - 1:20)

The stage is dark. On the screen a moonlit river and distant spires of the city. JACOB, the narrator, enters STAGE REAR and lights a candle. Its amber light reveals a man of middle years, young enough for enthusiasm, old enough for regret. We are in the early 1600's in a cluttered Prague basement storeroom, lit only by a small window near the ceiling. Dusty packages, wooden crates, wagon wheels, cast-off clothes, an ancient cape hanging on a hook, a sturdy bench, a stand-up work table. It all looks like it's been here through the entire Dark Ages.

JACOB

The rabbi's old storeroom, quiet now, but here is where he kept it, the thing he made. The first thing I'd like to say is, the great Rabbi Loew of Prague was no saint, even if there were Jewish saints, which the rabbi would have said, emphatically, there are not. The rabbi had too short a temper and too soft a heart. But Rabbi Loew was a Tzaddik, a wise man, a master of the Kabbalah, whose closeness to God allowed him to perform miracles, very curious miracles. And this brings me to the wondrous, some say terrible, thing the rabbi did. Was I wrong to help him? I was young, no more than nineteen, a loyal student of the rabbi. I ask myself, is good that comes with ill all bad? And so I tell my story. I must, for I am the only one who remembers.

On word "remembers," lights down on Jacob and up on a screen - his memory.

(Act I -Scene 2 – 0:11)  
16th CENTURY PRAGUE - NIGHT

SOUND of thundering horses. As the sound nears, we hear a person RUNNING, his GASPS of air.

JACOB

It was, like many others, a bad time for the Jews...

The two sounds, RUNNING and HORSES, merge the horses are almost on us.

(Act I - Scene 3 – 0:12)  
STREETS OF PRAGUE GHETTO - NIGHT

A MOB, some on horseback, breaks through the gates of the ghetto and chases YACHYM, an elderly Jew, through the cobblestone streets, their torches lending a sinister orange illumination to the chase. The SOUNDS are louder now that we are near. An anti-Semite, HORAK, urges them on.

HORAK

He's slowing down, boys, I can smell the old Jew!

(Act I - Scene 4 – 1:03)  
RABBI'S STUDY

By candlelight, JACOB, then a young student, studies with RABBI LOEW. He's bearded, a tall vibrant figure of mature years with a flowing beard. The rabbi's desk, room, everything, is covered with books and papers.

JACOB

It was very late one night. We were studying the Kabbalah, the mystical and very powerful Jewish writings on Torah and God. It was said the Kabbalah taught the secrets of the universe, even, some say, how to become like God. But the lessons were very difficult.

RABBI LOEW

Listen carefully, Jacob. You are falling asleep. It is very simple: Ten are the numbers, as are the Sephiroth, and twenty-two the letters, these are the Foundation of all things. Of these letters, three are mothers, seven are double, and twelve are single.

JACOB

Then the rabbi heard something. But heard is not the right word. He sensed things, I don't know how. It was the reason I studied Kabbalah, so I could know things that others didn't, secret forbidden things.

Rabbi Loew stares into the candle flame.

The screen behind them reveal what the rabbi is perceiving—which is Yachym, as he takes refuge inside a dark building. The mob nears, their torches throwing shadow monsters on the street and walls.

(Act I - Scene 5 – 0:10)  
GHETTO STREET - NIGHT

Rabbi steps out of his house onto the street, his robes flowing like a vengeful Old Testament prophet. Though an impressive figure, he is old and we see he must walk with the aid of a rough-hewn wooden staff.

RABBI LOEW

In the name of God, stop!

But they knock his staff away, then trample him and surge inside after Yachym.

RABBI

No!

It's more a cry than a word.

(Act I - Scene 6 - 0:40)  
GHETTO SLAUGHTERHOUSE

The mob rages in, past sides of beef hanging from hooks, setting them swinging and casting long shadows, creating a strobe effect on Yachym as he flees. From the mob, SHOUTS of pleasure as at a rabbit hunt.

MOB MEMBER 1

He's cornered in the slaughterhouse!

MOB MEMBER 2

Who said Jews were smart? Right, Herr Horak?

HORAK

Easy now, boys, keep it organized.

(then shouting)

Murderer, child murderer...

MOB

(under narration) Murderer, child murderer ...

JACOB

It's an old, old lie, a tragic falsehood, told every year at Passover, that Jews murder Christian children. It was told by those who hated the Jews and every year Jews died.

MOB

(taking it up)

Murderer, child murderer...

Yachym's terrified face as he SCREAMS. Then we lose sight of him as the mob surges over him like swarming rats. Rabbi Loew, desperate to get through, pushes his way through the WHOOPING crowd. His staff is gone and each step is a gamble.

A final CRY OF PLEASURE from the mob. The rabbi is too late.

Yachym hangs by a noose from a butcher's hook, his shadow swinging from light to dark between two slaughtered cows in a mockery of Kosher.

HORAK

Good work, boys, justice is done to the child killer. Home, now, there we go.

The mobs swarms out, forking like a river around the figure of Rabbi Loew as he stares at the shadow of Yachym. Jacob comes to stand beside the rabbi.

RABBI LOEW

Alev-Ha-Shalom. May you rest in peace, my old friend.

(to God)

Dear Lord, I am your servant but I have to ask, Why did I come too late? Why did you let me?

(Act I - Scene 7 - 0:42)  
GHETTO STREETS - MORNING

The funeral cortege winds its way through the narrow streets, led by the rabbi as lights come up on Jacob on-stage.

JACOB

The rabbi had known Yachym since they were children together in shul. I remember him, a harmless pious man. In capable of hurting any of God's creations, even a fly, much less murder a Christian child. So, along with haroseth and lamb shank, Passover also meant death.

LIGHTS DOWN ON JACOB

(Act I - Scene 8 - 0:17)  
GHETTO STREETS - DAY

On the screen as the rabbi follows the funeral wagon, many frightened people imploringly reach their hands out to him. Jacob walks alongside.

RABBI

(to Jacob, despairingly)

What can I do for them? Nothing, except bury them. Where are armies of Judah Maccabee? Or even David with his slingshot?

PERSON IN CROWD  
(calling after the rabbi)

Why has God abandoned us?

WOMAN CHORUS

Why? Why?

(Act I - Scene 9 - 0:18)  
JEWISH CEMETERY

An ancient place, row after row of headstones. Rabbi Loew performs the funeral service. Yachym's family CRIES as the rabbi recites the KADDISH.

RABBI

Yis-ga-dal v'yis-ka-dash sh'may ra-bo 'ol-mo dee-v'ro bir-u-say, v'yam-lech ma-lhu-say ...  
(KADDISH words under as Jacob narrates.)

Bechay eychon uv'yomechon uvchayey d'chol beys yisroel, baagolo uvisman kroiv,  
vei'imoro Omein....

JACOB

How many times had Rabbi Loew said these sad holy words over another murdered Jew from our Ghetto. How many times more will he have to say them?

RABBI

(concluding the prayer)

...Oseh sholom bimrov, hu berachmov ya'aseh sholom olaynu, v'al kol yisroel, vimru Omein.

He concludes with a handful of dirt onto the lowered coffin, and the others do the same, THUD after THUD.

(Act I - Scene 10 - 0:52)

RABBI'S STUDY - NIGHT

Lit by amber candlelight, the rabbi prays and davens. He stops davening and addresses his wall of untidy books, as if God inhabited the dusty shelves.

RABBI

God, I do not wish to try your not-so-endless patience but I bring up an old matter. My people beg me to help them. I look ahead and you, beloved God, know what I see... Do you know how many of us they've killed this year? Yes, of course you know. And that's only Prague. All these years of studying Kabbalah—but I can change nothing on this earth. I mean no disrespect, I ask not for a miracle, only for guidance ...

He waits. Nothing. He turns from the books.

RABBI

(grumbling)

Or maybe just a sign, would it be too much to ask, nu?

For a second, no more, the jumbled bookshelves take on a shimmer but the rabbi has already turned away. Dispiritedly he sits at his desk and wearily picks up his yad (pointer) to read an ancient scroll, looking for answers...as a faint glow from the areas of the books watches over him.

(Act I - Scene 11 - 0:19)

LATER

Rabbi Loew sleeps, his head resting on the open scroll. Tiny Hebrew letters seem to flame off the page and disappear into the rabbi's head like subatomic particles.

On the screen we see his dream: Hebrew letters flaming into being and one by one, the Hebrew letters spelling "Ata Bra Golem Devuk Hakhomer VeTigzar Zedim Chevel Torfe Yisroel."



## BLEND OF DREAM VOICES

Ato bra Golem Devuk Hachomer V'Tigsar Khavel Torfe Yisroel

In the background the Kabbalah "Tree of Life" (see Google/Tree of Life for example), with energy pulsing in each branch. Then, from behind the letters an ominous red and brown shape begins to form, growing taller...

(Act I - Scene 12 - 1:04)

## RABBI'S STUDY

RABBI

(still asleep in the dark lit only by the screens and a candle)

Please God, no!

Rabbi jumps up - the shape disappears abruptly when PERLA, the rabbi's wife enters. She's as practical as he is mystical.

PERLA

The same nightmare?

RABBI

A different one.

PERLA

What?

RABBI

It was nothing.

PERLA

For nothing you scream? Come to sleep. It's late. You're not so young any more.

RABBI

Soon, my beloved wife.

PERLA

So vermischt, is my Esteemed Rabbi, leader of the ghetto, wisest man in the empire, his left shoe doesn't match his right.

It's true: one foot sports a boot, the other a slipper.

RABBI

It's a new fashion, Mrs. Esteemed Rabbi.

PERLA

(with deep affection)

From what do you know about fashion?

She puts a nightcap on his hoary head and he suffers her to settle a blanket around his thin shoulders.

PERLA

(as she exits)

Five minutes, no more.

The moment she leaves he's back into his fevered studies. By candlelight, as the rabbi reads aloud from the Kabbalah scroll, we see the letters and words he's reading appear, the same as before in the dream.

RABBI

(reading)

Ata Bra Golem Devuk Hakhomer VeTigzar Zedim Chevel Torfe Yisroel

On the screen, the dream's ominous blood-red shape forming, coalescing, rising ...

RABBI

(reading, with horror)

"Create a Golem out of clay who will destroy all the enemies of Israel."

It is a huge monstrous misshapen man. The image disappears.

(Act I - Scene 13 - 0:48)

LIGHTS UP ON JACOB.

JACOB

I can still hear the rabbi telling me of his dream. I felt a thrill - - of excitement and also of fear. A Golem was a creature from the most secret part of Kabbalah, a creature frighteningly strong, close to a man but closer to monster. Creating a Golem should be undertaken only by the purest of hearts, the strongest of wills, the most learned of all rabbis. Usually it is forbidden, for only God should create life. Yet God's people were suffering and there had been the dream, the command --

LIGHTS DOWN on Jacob. Only the screen is lit as we see shape continuing to form...

JACOB

(whispering)

Ata Bra Golem Devuk Hakhomer VeTigzar Zedim Chevel Torfe Yisroel

We are back in the rabbi's study

(Act I - Scene 14 - 0:58)

RABBI'S STUDY

Rabbi Loew pushes the scroll away from him, closes it, pushes it farther. The rabbi turns toward the wall of books to pray.

RABBI

Beloved God, Beloved God...

(pausing to weigh his words)

Let me be plain with you -- I am afraid. How can I know the dream is true? How can I know if my heart is pure enough? Or my knowledge of Kabbalah is sufficient. There are other rabbis, younger rabbis. I will tell you another truth, I am a little tired. You and no one else know the pain in my heart is more than sadness for our people. Could I perhaps be so bold as to request a sign, just one more sign?

He takes a coin from the table.

RABBI

If this coin is heads, God grants me approval, if tails, God forbids.

He flips the coin high in the air, SLO-MO as it turns and turns, heads, tails, heads, tails... and it lands on its side. Rabbi keeps looking at the coin from all angles, falls asleep.

(Act I - Scene 15 - 1:23)

RABBI'S STUDY

The rabbi asleep at his desk – we see unsettling images on the screen behind him.

JACOB

Every time Rabbi's eyes closed, he saw Yachym running from the mob, saw himself unable to help, saw his old friend hanging from a meat hook. And when the rabbi finally fell into an uneasy sleep, dreams swept down like vultures ... century after century of pogroms, of mobs killing Jews. Then he saw a mob pull a young man from a synagogue. The rabbi tried to save him--it was Bezazel, his only son. The Rabbi saw the mob tie his son to a wagon, with his head dragging the ground, hears the horses whipped to go...

Images disappear as Perla enters and wakens her groaning husband.

PERLA

Another nightmare.

RABBI

The old one.

Sympathetically, she touches his hand

Perla...

RABBI

He hesitates.

RABBI

Before, in my study. I had prayed for a sign of what I can do to protect the Jews of Prague. I heard these words: "Ata Bra Golem Devuk Hakhomer VeTigzar Zedim Chevel Torfe Yisroel."

PERLA

Create a Golem.

She takes in a deep breath. Even she is in horrified awe. ...

RABBI

Who am I to create life, even monstrous life, another villain to roam the Earth?

PERLA

God's done well enough on that account.

(beat)

Has it ever been done successfully?

RABBI

So they say.

PERLA

I mean, safely?

RABBI

You mean, when it didn't turn on its creator?

PERLA

I mean when it didn't kill its creator.

RABBI

Think if Bezazel had been protected by a Golem. We would still have a son. Let other mothers and fathers keep theirs.

She takes the rabbi's hand in silence.

(Act I - Scene 16 - 1:00)  
OUTSKIRTS OF PRAGUE - NIGHT

A dark cloud stabs the full moon. Three men, carrying torches, hurry toward the River Moldau. Rabbi Loew, carrying a Torah in his arms as if it were a baby, is accompanied by Jacob and Yitzhak, the rabbi's son-in-law.

Lights up on Jacob.

JACOB

According to the Kabbalah, to create Golem, three are needed, male and over 13. I volunteered - how could I miss this remarkable spiritual adventure? Yitzhak was an unwilling conscript.

YITZHAK

How much farther, rabbi? My feet begin to hurt.

RABBI

You know the distance to the River Moldau, my son-in-law. It has not changed since the time of Noah.

YITZHAK

A little rest before I collapse.

RABBI

Strength, son-in-law. This long night has just begun.  
(to himself, a little afraid )  
I too wish for its end, to be safe in my bed.

The cloud obscures then reveals the moon, obscures then reveals, making nightscape and river seem to strobe.

(Act I - Scene 17 - 5:13)  
MOLDAU RIVERBANK

A fire has been built. The three men stand together, backs to the audience, as they prepare to conjure an unseen Golem. The moon's on-off reflection in the water casts Rabbi Loew in a strange flickering glow. Jacob and Yitzhak bow their heads as the rabbi prays, looking upward at the stars.

RABBI

I seek to create life tonight, Lord. Yet to you I reaffirm these, my Watchwords of our faith,  
"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."  
(adding)  
And only one.

JACOB

The rabbi waited for a moment longer, as if hoping still for a sign - - the earth splitting open, an angry crack of thunder, even a spear from God to strike him dead --- to tell him, "Stop!"

But all he hears is the RIVER'S SOFT MURMUR and the CRIES OF INSECTS all around.

RABBI

So we begin.

He takes three breaths, each slower and deeper than the previous. Then he then begins an incantation of Hebrew letters, each one resonant as a liturgy.

RABBI

Ayin van balel, tet chen, ayin van balel gimel tet...

With the still-strobing moon and clouds, the scene takes on the mood of an altered state. It's a little frightening, like voodoo or a séance.

JACOB

The rabbi had told us we risked our souls. It didn't matter to Yitzhak --his only God was a bowl of borscht and a soft bed. And me? I'd have followed the rabbi into hell.

Three flames ignite as the three men breathe deeply, 1, 2, 3. The flames burn brighter.

JACOB

We sank our hands into the soft river clay, kneading it like dough.

The men, in unison, recite the following Hebrew letters, faster and faster until by "dayin," they are unintelligible, more and more urgent until unbearable.

RABBI, YOUNG JACOB, YITZHAK (in unison)

Vav, hay, daled, gimmel, bet, aleph, chaf, kaf, yud, tet, chet, dayin, ..

JACOB

From the branches of a tree, Yitzhak crafted the arms, I the legs, as the rabbi molded the body and head. It was a ... thing in the rough form of a man, nine feet tall, without eyes or ears or mouth.

YITZHAK

Rabbi, are you sure...?

RABBI

It's too late to stop.

Small jagged lightning CRACKLES from the sky. A cloud obscures the moon and a shadow falls on the three.

RABBI

Now, Yitzhak. You know what you must do.

But Yitzhak hesitates.

YITZHAK

I'm afraid, Rabbi.

RABBI

Know this, he will never hurt a Jew.

YITZHAK

All right, then.

Yitzhak begins to chant as he kneels there.

YITZHAK

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha.

(repeat)

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha.

Flames and multi-colored smoke from where the form lies.

JACOB

Seven times, moving fast as if pursued by a demon, Yitzhak circled around the lifeless form...

YITZHAK

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha.

JACOB

... and as he did, the clay began to dry, until by the seventh circle the form burned red as molten iron.

Fire and shadows around the unseen form of Golem..

JACOB

It was my turn. The full meaning of what we were doing struck me for the first time and all my courage drained from me like sand. But the rabbi wasn't afraid. I'd never known him to be wrong ... like God.

Young Jacob CHANTS.

YOUNG JACOB

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha...

Thick steam rises, obscuring.

JACOB

As I circled, the baked clay form slowly cooled, vapors writhing and rising to merge with the

high clouds of the night sky.

JACOB

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha.

The steam dissipates.

JACOB

Until, by the seventh circle, we beheld the rough image of a man.

The rabbi's torch pulses brighter.

JACOB

Then it was the rabbi's turn. He bowed toward the heavens, east, west, north south, then stared at a bright distant star. It seems to blink, once. Then he circled, carrying the Torah aloft, chanting ...

RABBI

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha...

Fire and mist rise and fall.

RABBI

Shanti, shanti, dacha, dacha...

JACOB

As the rabbi neared the seventh circle, we saw...  
(revulsion in his voice)  
hair and nails sprout on the figure. Then the thing jolted once.

YOUNG JACOB  
(afraid)

Rabbi...?

RABBI

There is one thing more.

JACOB

And then we said, from Genesis, the holy words...

RABBI, YOUNG JACOB, YITZHAK

"The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the earth and he blew into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being."

JACOB

Quickly, the rabbi kneeled and, with his finger, drew rough features on the thing's face -- holes for eyes and ears, a slit for a mouth.



JACOB

I felt sick, Yitzhak too and, I guessed, even the rabbi.

A RUMBLE of THUNDER from the sky.

JACOB

Then he drew the Hebrew words "Aleph" -- for Adam, the first man -- and "emet" -- for truth.

The rabbi hesitates.

JACOB

Then came the last step -- writing the true name of God, the name that under Jewish law could never be spoken aloud under pain of blasphemy.

The rabbi inscribed the Hebrew letters Y H W H. When the last letter was written, the borders of the shem, the parchment, began to burn with a blue flame. The rabbi held the shem toward the heavens Then placed it on the thing's tongue.

RABBI

Now I am become God, creator of worlds.

Golem's eyes fly open, they look like burning red coals. Yitzhak SCREAMS. Golem's arms and legs begin to move, as if testing them out after a long sleep.

RABBI

Golem! You have been created for only one purpose-to protect the Jews of Prague. That is your task.

The creature's eyes flash.

RABBI

You are not a man. You will never speak. You are a body without a soul.

They flash again.

RABBI

If you disobey me, I will send back you to the darkness from which you came, and it will be as if you never were.

It nods, slowly.

RABBI

Stand, Golem!

Slowly, Golem rises, inch by inch, taller and taller, blotting out the moon. The creature is massive and frightening, easily three feet taller than the rabbi.

RABBI

(in awe more than triumph)

My God, we have done it.

JACOB

The rabbi seemed stunned by what he had done - he had, like God, created life. I was suddenly afraid for the rabbi's soul - and for mine.

(Act I - Scene 18 - 0:20)

THE DISTANT CITY - DAWN

Golem and his creators near Prague as the sun rises.

JACOB

Exhausted, we returned to Prague, one more than when we'd left. Golem followed the rabbi like a baby duckling, imitating everything he did.

A horseman is watching. He wears the Hapsburg coat of arms.

JACOB

In the distance, I saw a horseman, watching us. On the man's tunic, there was an emblem, I thought, a two-headed-eagle. He quickly rode away.

ACT II  
(Scene 1)

THE RABBI'S STOREROOM – MORNING

Bars of light fall across Golem as he sits on a bench. Unmoving, head on his hands, unconscious. Outside, the CROWING of a rooster.

JACOB

For many months, Rabbi Loew kept Golem a secret, while he taught him his duties. It was my great honor and even greater terror to assist him.

The heavy lock is turned and Rabbi Loew enters. Jacob nervously follows. The rabbi re-locks the door with a large key.

YOUNG JACOB

Is he learning, rabbi? Anything?

RABBI

(a little edge of weariness in his voice)

If not, it won't be for want of trying.

The rabbi goes to a crude stand-up desk littered with small scraps of parchment. Jacob stays a safe distance away. The rabbi begins muttering Hebrew words, letters, numbers and these appear on screen, each flaming.

When the flames are stable, the rabbi picks up a feather quill and, as before at Golem's creation, writes the Hebrew letters for YHWH on a slip of parchment. The blue flame springs up along the parchment borders and the rabbi holds it toward the feeble light from the ceiling window, and a beam of light intensifies the blue flames.

The rabbi gently takes Golem's huge head and opens his crude mouth. From this angle Golem looks surprisingly vulnerable, his head cradled in the rabbi's arm, reminiscent of a baby.

JACOB

As he did each morning, the rabbi revived Golem with a piece of parchment containing the same Hebrew letters with which he'd created Golem - Yod-heh-vav-heh.

Rabbi Loew inserts the shem, closes Golem's mouth and steps back as Golem jerks into life.

JACOB

Golem knew no more than a baby -- a thousand pound baby.

RABBI  
(to Golem)

Good morning, Golem.  
Let us review. Lift your left arm, Golem.

Golem lifts his right arm.

RABBI

Your left.

Golem raises his right arm then turns around. It might now be reasoned that it's his left.

RABBI

It's still your right arm!

It's not easy to read Golem's crude features but he looks almost sad, his head hangdog.

RABBI  
(demonstrating)

This is left, left, Golem. Nod once if you understand, twice if you don't.

Golem nods three times. The rabbi throws his hands up in disgust and stalks around the storeroom.

RABBI

I give up! For the thousandth time, I give up!

JACOB

If a creature of mud could have feelings, then I knew how Golem felt. The rabbi had many fine qualities -- wisdom, generosity, Tzeddakah - but patience with stupidity was not one of them.

RABBI  
(to himself)

It's not his fault if he's a stupenagel, a shlemiel, a doppelganger, not his fault he's a schmendrick.  
How could I, I, have created such a Golem ...?

GOLEM  
(Golem makes a terrible CRY from his unformed throat.)

Immediately, the rabbi returns to the Golem.

RABBI  
(really trying)

You are a very good Golem.

Golem makes an uncertain NOISE.

RABBI

Isn't he, Jacob?

YOUNG JACOB

The best in Prague.

RABBI

See, Golem? And I am very pleased with your progress.

A calmer SOUND from Golem.

RABBI

(with great patience)

Once again. Left arm.

Golem lifts his both arms.

RABBI

(forcing himself)

An excellent try.

(Act II - Scene 2)

LIGHTS UP ON JACOB

JACOB

Soon, Golem could follow simple commands -- pick up that rock, lift me to the ceiling -- I hated that lesson -- even do a little dance. He learned how to face cavalry, how to pull a man off a racing horse. But what was going on inside Golem -- if anything -- I, a not-so-brilliant student, couldn't tell. Could Golem feel joy, sorrow, anger, all the human emotions? I asked the rabbi once, and he became suddenly very sad. "I hope not, Jacob. I hope not."

LIGHTS DOWN ON JACOB.

(Act II - Scene 3)

THE OLD PRAGUE SYNAGOGUE

It's surrounded on three sides by the Jewish cemetery. The rabbi is on the bema. A community meeting is in progress.

JACOB

Finally the day came when the rabbi was satisfied that Golem was ready to perform his mission.

RABBI

I have been your rabbi for many years. I have seen many of you born, watched --

He looks at the candle-lit memory wall.

RABBI

-- too many of us die. Mysterious are the ways of the God of Israel, and his love for His people is surely as great as His judgments upon us. Yet we are murdered day by day. Is God displeased with us, his people? If justice is without mercy, is it justice at all? I cannot find it in my heart that God intends us to be slaughtered to the last man, woman and child. But we are not soldiers, we have no weapons -- until now.

This mysterious reference causes a stir. The rabbi regards MAISL, a rich man, now with three bodyguards.

RABBI

Unlike Maisl, our mayor, we have no money for well-fed bodyguards.

MAISL

A man of my position. I may hire another.

RABBI

And a thousand more, for every Jew in the ghetto? Some have called me wise and learned, but learning without purpose is no wisdom. I have prayed. I have used what knowledge I have -- so that we may all of us live unafraid.

A growing murmuring excitement in the congregation.

RABBI

May God have mercy on me -- for I have brought you a soldier, protector, bodyguard, Maccabee -- Golem! Step forward!

A collective GASP and falling back in terror as Golem steps forward through a doorway, filling it. His eyes glow red, he towers over the nearby congregants, who scramble away from him. Congregants SCREAM. Golem's footsteps THUD, the walls shake as he steps into the room.

RABBI

(yelling to be heard)

Peace, peace, he will not harm you!

Jacob stands at the exit door as some flee.

YOUNG JACOB

(unconvincing)

He will not harm you, it is perfectly safe, the rabbi just created him one night out of river mud, he has no soul ...

MAN

You have brought us a monster!

OLD DEAF MAN

The Messiah?

OTHERS

Monster, monster!

ANOTHER

Anti-Semite!

They panic again. The rabbi's voice is huge as he calms them.

RABBI

An anti-Semite, no! A monster, perhaps -- but he is OUR monster!

MAN 2

A Jewish monster?

JACOB

For us in the ghetto, as always, we had only one question.

OLD DEAF MAN  
(to his wife)

Is it good for the Jews?

RABBI

Golem, come to me.

As Golem moves through them, congregants part as neatly as the Red Sea. Golem nears the rabbi.

CONGREGANT

Rabbi, be careful!

ANOTHER

He's going to kill the rabbi!

Golem stands in front of the rabbi. Because of the bema, the rabbi is eye to eye with him. The rabbi places his hands atop Golem's head.

JACOB

Then the rabbi gave his final blessing. He had worked long hours to perfect the words that would initiate Golem to his mission.

RABBI

Remember the watchwords I have given you this day -- Never harm a Jew.

As he speaks, the screen shows flaming Hebrew letters for the phrase. Golem nods once and makes a horrid SOUND in his clay throat. It is agreed.

RABBI

Never harm a Christian unless he harms a Jew.

As before, as he speaks, the screen shows flaming Hebrew letters for the phrase. Golem nods once and makes a horrid SOUND in his clay throat. It is agreed.

RABBI

Thou shalt not kill.

As before, as he speaks, the screen shows flaming Hebrew letters for the phrase. Golem nods once and makes the horrid SOUND in his clay throat. It is agreed. Golem nods thrice.

RABBI

Finally, in all things be faithful to the Lord of Israel.

Screen shows the Hebrew letters "Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh," Golem, nods four times. It is agreed.

RABBI

(softly, so only Golem can hear)

All right, then, mein friend. We are ready to embark on our great mission together. God be willing.

Suddenly Golem's hands close in like pincers on the rabbi. CRIES of fear from the congregation as Golem lifts the rabbi as if he's no heavier than a baby high into the air -- more CRIES of fear -- and settles the rabbi on his broad clay shoulders, like a rajah on an elephant.

A collective cry of relief and jubilation, the sound of a triumphant SHOFAR carries to the next scene ...

(Act II - Scene 4)

OUTSIDE

A grand triumphant processional through the winding streets of the ghetto, lined with residents of the ghetto. Some CHEER, some march gaily in front of and behind Golem, others behind. SINGING a triumphant rendition of "Shalom Havorim." Jacob's thankless job is to keep anyone from being crushed.

YOUNG JACOB

Please make way, this is really his first time in public, yes, the rabbi baked him, yes, like a cookie, nothing to worry about, make way please ...



Yet some mothers are still afraid. One CHILD runs into the street and is almost crushed by Golem's foot. The mother grabs the child, OTHER MOTHERS pull their children back. Some SCREAM.

YOUNG JACOB

Please, please don't run away ...

OLD DEAF MAN

Our great rabbi is the Messiah!

RABBI

No! But while we wait and wait, we have a friend, a friend to every Jew and enemy to our every enemy!

A huge CRY from the crowd. Most of the townspeople are thrilled.

MEMBERS OF THE THRONG

Peace, peace we will live in peace ...

No one will dare harm us...

they will accept us among the nations of the earth ...

Our Samson!

Our protector! ...

Golem puts Rabbi Loew atop the high ghetto wall.

Horseman is watching them.

(Act II - Scene 5 is dropped)

(Act II - Scene 6)

JEWISH CEMETERY – NIGHT

Golem patrolling the ghetto streets.

JACOB

There followed a year of peace as Golem stalked the streets, protecting the Jews of the ghetto. The rabbi was proud of his creation. No more would vandals desecrate our cemetery, painting "Christ-killer" and "blood drinker" on the headstones.

(Act II - Scene 7)

Horak and his mob approach.

JACOB

One night, Horak the anti-Semite returned with his band of drunkards and mommers. But all it took was one glimpse of Golem, his eyes glowing red, his hands reaching for them ...

Horak and his mob flee. From around a corner, Jacob watches.

JACOB

The rabbi often dispatched me to watch Golem perform his duties. I did not myself volunteer. I was still just to the smallest degree nervous around Golem. How he crushed stones as if they were no more than matzo meal. Made building tremble at his footstep. Pretty he wasn't. Despite all the good that he had done, many feared him.

(Act II - Scene 8)

REVERSE ANGLE -- FROM OUTSIDE THE GHETTO

The same lone horseman from the night of Golem's birth.

JACOB

And still the horseman watched us.

The horseman hears Golem's distant ROAR, turns and gallops away.

(Act II - Scene 9)

RABBI'S STUDY

The rabbi is studying a scroll. A tray of untouched food atop the mountain of papers on the desk. Perla enters with a tray.

PERLA

So, Esteemed Rabbi, perhaps you would like to have breakfast in place of the dinner you did not come to eat?

She switches trays.

RABBI

Busy, Perla, very busy.

PERLA

The Esteemed Rabbi is so wise that he survives merely on air. It is a miracle.

She feels his brow.

PERLA

A fever.

RABBI

Soon I'll take some time off, soon. We'll go study at the great library in Minsk.

PERLA

That's a vacation?

RABBI

What about the ancient library of Pinsk? They have borrowed many manuscripts from Minsk.

He's teasing her but she won't let him have the pleasure of seeing her exasperation.

PERLA

So how is your Mr. Golem, who it seems to me, though I am your mere wife and bookkeeper for the temple, should be giving you more time to rest, not less.

RABBI

Everything is very peaceful, thanks to God.

PERLA

Then maybe you could spare me your Mr. Golem for one day. It wouldn't kill him to help me a little around the house. Passover's coming and maybe he can clean the house of chamets, that's a job that'll keep him out of trouble.

RABBI

Golem's job is to protect the Jews, not do their chores.

Perla tries to tidy the mountain of papers on the rabbi's desk.

PERLA

With all due respect, Esteemed Rabbi, that's an easy thing for a man to say.

The rabbi ROARS with laughter.

PERLA

Then at least let me clean up back there your Mr. Golem's room. It makes me crazy, all the schmutz and dust and I don't know what, I don't know where.

RABBI

Ah, but I do know what and exactly where.

Perla throws up her hands, picks up the tray and goes toward the door, passing Young Jacob on his way in.

PERLA

Gornisht helfin. Nothing will help.

(Act II - Scene 10)

Young Jacob enters. Perla passes him on the way out.

PERLA

Maybe you can talk some sense into him.

YOUNG JACOB

I'll try.

RABBI

She's looking tired. Don't you think, Jacob?

YOUNG JACOB

With all respect, it's you who have been looking tired, Rabbi.

RABBI

I will confide something to you Jacob. Golem is always in my mind. I have to protect him as well as the people of the ghetto. I made him, not God, and I can never forget that.

YONG JACOB

But it was with God's blessing.

RABBI

There are some days -- have you noticed? -- when Golem's aleph starts to fade and with it, Golem. So sometimes I give him a little of my life to get him through the day.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi!

RABBI

I get it all back when I see the peace of the ghetto. And in my dreams, I am replenished in my dreams.

YOUNG JACOB

But, with all respect, Great Rabbi, you almost never sleep these days.

RABBI

I'll go to sleep now.

YOUNG JACOB

Let me help you to the bedroom.

RABBI

(waving him away)

No need, no need. Go to bed, it's late.

YOUNG JACOB

You promise you'll sleep?

The rabbi waves his hand, Go on, go on. Jacob leaves.

RABBI  
(to himself)

As soon as I check on Golem.

(Act II - Scene 11)  
WORKROOM - NIGHT

Golem is slumped on the bench in his de-shemmed unconscious state. On the stand-up desk, numerous used shems from previous days.

RABBI

So, Golem. You've made a good start.

(Sits down next to Golem)

I've told you, haven't I, about my son, Bezazel? He was the sweetest little boy. And smart! He was a rabbi, you know. Don't feel sad if some people run scared from you. We are all very grateful, none more than I, for the gift of peace you bring us.

(He rises.)

Rabbi Loew turns off the light and exits, softly closing the door. In the semi-darkness, Golem turns his head to watch after the rabbi.

(Act II - Scenes 12 and 13 are combined)  
WORKROOM - NEXT MORNING

The CLICK of a key opening the lock. Perla enters the dark room. She carries a lantern and swings it back and forth, but she can only see a few inches in front of her.

JACOB

The next morning, after the rabbi left for the synagogue, Perla had an idea.

PERLA  
(to herself)

The rabbi knows everything. But what he doesn't know can't hurt him.

(Calling) Golem? Hallo?

(To herself) It's so pfinster, dark, in here, I can't hear myself think.

Her lantern briefly illumines the tabletop, strewn with used shems.

PERLA

Look at this mess! How can he stand it? And where is his Golem? Yoo hoo?

She swings the lantern another direction and suddenly horrible Golem is visible. Perla SCREAMS. The lantern swings the other way, darkening Golem. Now light, now dark, as Perla terrified, stumbles over a pile of books on the floor and falls, losing her lantern. Except for the small area lit by the lantern, total darkness.

PERLA

Where are you? Mr. Golem?

Her hand clutches along the floor and finds the lantern. When she raises it, it's directly under Golem's huge head and gaping mouth. Lit from below, it looks terrifying. And Perla is lying in Golem's lap!

She SCREAMS and jumps off.

PERLA

Don't you dare! Don't you touch me!

Of course, Golem is immobile, unconscious. She makes several tentative jabs at Golem with her broom, passes her hand in front of his eyes, but he doesn't move.

PERLA

So, Mr. Golem, you know me, the Esteemed Rabbi's wife, just come down for a nice morning schmooze. So, how are you? Me, couldn't be better, a little arthritis in the bones or maybe it's only exhaustion from tending to the Esteemed Rabbi, but who can complain?

She regards Golem.

PERLA

Passover's very soon. Many things for one old person to do: clean all the shmutz out of the house, no speck of dust can be left, cooking for the entire family and no one knows how many poor people the Esteemed Rabbi drags home.

She's unable to keep herself from straightening the rabbi's desk.

PERLA

So the rabbi says, use Golem for only sacred purposes to save the Jews. And if cooking the Passover meal isn't protecting the Jews, or at least some Jews, from an empty stomach, I don't know what is.

She leans on her broom.

PERLA

So, let's go, Mr. Golem, today you can protect this Jew from going meshugge with so much to do and no one to help her.

He doesn't move. She puts her hands on her hips.

PERLA

Stand! Go! Come! Get up!

She makes several futile gestures to awaken Golem.

PERLA

Shazoom!

Then she notices the shems.

PERLA

Ach! I remember. The shem.

She sticks a shem in Golem's eye, nose, ear, no luck. Finally she sticks it in his mouth and he jolts to his feet.

PERLA

Finally! Now, Mr. Sleepyhead, we are going to have fun today like you wouldn't believe. First you're going to the market to shop and buy me a nice fish for supper. Verschteht, understand?

He shuffles and makes a little noise, I'm game.

PERLA

Wait, it gets better. Then you're going to the river and wash all our clothes!

Golem moves about excitedly, he can't wait.

PERLA

And then, then--this is the best--you're going to clean the house top to bottom!

Golem can't control himself, he dances around the room - then accidentally kicks the heavy storeroom door closed. The lock clicks. Perla and Golem stare at the door.

PERLA

Uh oh.

Golem makes a MUTTER that sound like Perla's cry and begins to flap his arms about in distress.

PERLA

Oy vey ist mir.  
A nice young man but what a stupenagel.

(Act II - Scenes 14 through 17 were dropped)

(Act II - Scene 18)  
RABBI'S HOUSE

The rabbi returns home.

RABBI (off stage)

Perla, bubbeleh, I'm home. Where are you?

(Act II - Scene 19)

THE DARKENED STOREROOM.

A CLICK of a lock and a wedge of light illumines the room as the door opens and the rabbi enters. Perla and Golem are fearful of his wrath.

PERLA

We're sorry, Esteemed Rabbi. Forgive us!

Golem makes a pitiful little NOISE and offers up a clumsy rendition of the Russian kick dance.

RABBI

(trying to be stern)

Perla, I told you. I told you .

Golem makes another move and Perla joins him. For an instant it's like vaudeville. The rabbi can't control his LAUGHTER any more. He hugs Perla, then

AN IMPORTANT MOMENT:

Then the rabbi puts his hand on Golem's shoulder, his first display of affection for his mud man.

Golem looks down at the rabbi and softly lays his heavy hand on the rabbi's shoulder.

(Act II - Scene 20)

LIGHTS UP ON STAGE

JACOB

Then came an end to the year of peace. In those days, the empire was ruled by the Emperor Rudolph II, a man of brilliant but troubled mind. Some days his mood was so melancholy he couldn't rise from bed. On his bad days, the reins of power passed to his first minister, Karl, and with Karl, the answer to our ancient question, "Is he good for the Jews?" the answer was "no." So I was worried when one day the rabbi was summoned by Karl to the emperor's castle.

LIGHTS DOWN on JACOB.

(Act II - Scenes 21-25 ARE COMBINED)

A coach with the ominous Hapsburg coat of arms moves very fast, near and far, near and far.



(Act II - Scene 26)  
OUTSIDE THE CASTLE GATE

Raising a cloud of dust, the coach deposits the rabbi and races on. TWO GUARDS are stationed at the heavy entrance door while a Guard in a little booth self-importantly checks his list.

GUARD

You will have to wait.

RABBI

I have, literally, eternity.

The rabbi finds a bench and begins to quietly CHANT to himself Kabbalistic phrases and again, halelu-yah. Slowly the screen glimmers into life as we see his spirit leave his body through the crown chakra atop his head. See illustrations of chakra points. If possible, some small magical-like effect here to make the transition into out-of-body.

(Act II - Scene 27)

Now the SCREEN is the dreamlike POV of the rabbi's spirit looking down as he soars back to Prague.

JACOB

Only the most adept practitioners of Kabbalah were able to leave their bodies at will and, of course, Rabbi Loew was one of these. He told me that sometimes it was very frustrating, because though his spirit could witness things of this world, he did not have the power to intervene. Even so, he liked to check up on things when he was away.

He flies over his house, sees Perla outside hanging out wash, then he banks and soars over the maze of streets until he sees Golem high in a tree rescuing a cat while its owner, a little girl, waits tearfully on the ground. He grabs the cat and it viciously scratches him across the face. Golem ROARS with anger and for a moment it looks as though he will hurl the cat into the air, but his rage swiftly subsides and he leaps down to give the cat to its owner.

JACOB

As his spirit flew over the ghetto, he saw many things, Perla hanging out wash, Maisl in his rich robes, children walking to Hebrew school--and there, in the tallest tree in the ghetto he spotted Golem and on the ground, a crying little girl. And at the very top of the tree was a lost cat that Golem was trying to rescue. Golem climbed and climbed, he reached out, he captured cat-but it viciously scratched him across the face. The rabbi watched in horror--

GOLEM

ROAR of anger

JACOB

--as Golem lifted high the little cat to hurl it to its death. But instead, Golem cradled the frightened creature in his strong arms and leaped all the way to the ground and presented the cat to the little girl. She hugged Golem's massive leg in thanks, and tears would've come to his eyes if they could, because no one had ever hugged him before.

RABBI'S SPIRIT VOICE

Good work, my boychick.

The images in Rabbi's SCREEN begin to shake.

(Act II - Scene 28)

OUTSIDE THE CASTLE GATE

The RABBI'S SCREEN OUT as the MAIN SCREEN FLASHES TO LIFE: the guard is shaking the rabbi.

GUARD

His Excellency Karl von Rumpf will see you now.

(Act II - Scenes 29 - 30 COMBINED)

The huge doors open. The rabbi walks in and the doors immediately slam shut. He's in a cavernous marble entryway where his footsteps echo all around him.

A VOICE (KARL)  
(echoing)

Welcome, Rabbi Loew.

The echo continues

VOICE

You honor us with your learned presence.

Dramatically, out of the darkness strides KARL, dressed very severely in a black coat. He's whippet-thin, with a lean and hungry look. Behind him, a SERVANT.

RABBI

Perhaps you could enlighten me as to its purpose.

KARL

You're older than I imagined. A great deal older.

RABBI

These are aging times. The purpose of my visit?

The servant places a chair bearing the Hapsburg double-eagle insignia. Karl settles comfortably into it.

KARL

As a matter of fact, the order issued forth from our emperor, whose every belch must be obeyed, to send for you. Perhaps you know that he is quite insatiable for wisdom, when he's not insane. He's quite good to the Jews, though I'm unsure whether that's evidence of intellect or insanity. Ha, a little joke for your pleasure. I am, of course, Karl, the emperor's principal adviser. You have, perhaps, heard of me?

RABBI

Born in Germany, educated in Prussia, confederate of the anti-Semite Horak, spreader of the blood lie, ambitious beyond all imagining.

KARL

Gratifying. Perhaps you will hear more. The emperor is waiting -- and sane, for the moment. Shall we?

Karl and the rabbi walk down a richly decorated, portrait-heavy hallway.

Up ahead, a lion, roaming the castle ROARS as three men pull it back with a strong net. A leopard passes close by. The rabbi doesn't flinch. In fact, despite the animal's roars, he pets him and the roars subside.

KARL

Amused, rabbi?

RABBI

Very much so.

KARL

I am surprised. (Sarcastically) It's a lion this week, it may be an elephant next week. All these little diversions the emperor employs to escape his black mood. When you and I both know the only thing that matters, don't we?

RABBI

God.

KARL

No, rabbi, power. God without the middleman. For whatever purpose you choose, good, evil or merely pleasurable. Ah, we have reached our emperor's laboratory. What shall we see today?

(mockingly)

Lead into gold, fountain of youth, a flying machine?

Without knocking, Karl uses his key to open a heavy double door.

(Act II - Scene 31)

INT. EMPEROR RUDOLPH'S LAB

ALCHEMISTS hurry about a cutting-edge Medieval lab. Bubbling flasks, steaming beakers, charts of mystical symbols, tables of elements. Fumes, flames, smoke, cauldrons, mystery. There's a remarkable furnace with a pot dangling above, pouring molten lead into a cistern, out of which a pipe discharges not gold ... but the same untransformed lead.

EMPEROR RUDOLPH, a squat man with a jutting chin and jerky gestures, eagerly hops from experiment to experiment. He stops at the furnace. All around it on the floor is steaming black sludge.

EMPEROR

Transforming lead into gold, how hard can it be, you'd think.

Karl deferentially approaches, utterly obsequious in the presence of the emperor.

KARL

Noble emperor, I have brought the esteemed Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezazel, to see your excellent Excellency.

RUDOLF

Ah! They say you are the wisest man in the empire.

RABBI

For me to agree would not be wise.

RUDOLF

But it would be the truth. They call the Jews God's Chosen People.

RABBI

We often answer, chosen for what?

RUDOLPH

Teach me about God.

RABBI

There are many others, younger, with the latest explications of text...

RUDOLF

I want you. This is the most complete scientific laboratory in the world. Here I study everything from the heartbeats of mice to the deaths of stars. But why does the heart beat, why does the star die? What is behind it all, dangling us like marionettes? And why?

RABBI

Words are not adequate to explain.

RUDOLPH

I am the emperor. I demand an answer.

RABBI

Then the answer must be, why not?

A pause and the emperor ROARS with laughter.

RUDOLPH

Very good, rabbi! A joke!

An alchemist rushes over, carrying a beaker spewing colored smoke.

ALCHEMIST

Your Excellency, we have a development with the Philosopher's Stone.

The emperor avidly follows the alchemist.

EMPEROR

(to himself leaving)

"Why not?" And yet, there's something to it.

(Act II - Scene 32)

SCENE CONTINUES IN THE LAB

KARL

A brilliant performance.

RABBI

There was no performance.

KARL

Please, be honest here among friends. You Jews are smart. Every word you say is a lie. That's a compliment.

RABBI

I'd like to return to the ghetto.

KARL

Like our beloved emperor, I respect Jewish wisdom. If only all your people's other characteristics weren't so repellant -- money lending, murdering Christian children, having horns and a tail. How is your Golem feeling? If such a thing can feel.

RABBI

Even a stone may feel. Even a heart of stone.

KARL

Interesting, your Golem. Nothing quite like it in history. It can't be denied it has "power." He obeys you, so that gives you enormous power. Remarkable, your Kabbalah.

RABBI

What do you know of Kabbalah?

KARL

Surprised? That I, a Goy, know of the Kabbalah? My grandfather was a Kabbalist. You've heard of Rabbi Ezra of Vodnany?

RABBI

You are his grandchild?

KARL

My father converted. Very wisely, I would add. But I have a tender spot for my beloved former people. As a boy, I learned much from my zayde. Even Kabbalah.

RABBI

Then you know that Kabbalah practiced by the impure can bring untold wrong into the world.

KARL

I will take that as a compliment. I'll be watching the progress of your Golem with great interest.

The rabbi steps inside the coach and it drives off. Karl watches it until it disappears.

(Act II - Scene 33)

LIGHTS UP ON JACOB

JACOB

The rabbi became a regular visitor to the castle as he instructed the emperor on Judaism and God. Silent, taking notes, Karl sat in on every lesson. Winter came, as always hard to the ghetto. Once, while he and I were watching over Golem, I began shivering violently from the rain and cold. And he immediately wrapped his cloak around me. It was a thin cape but suddenly I felt as warm as the bed in the morning. I tried to give it back to the rabbi -- he was dressed very lightly -- but he refused. A sort of orange flame seemed to surround the rabbi and he seemed comfortable -- except sometimes for a moment or two, the energy would fail and the wind would drive through him like knives.

Jacob takes an old cape from its peg.

JACOB

That winter the rabbi saved many lives. Those of the poor who had homes and fires stayed close by them. The rest the rabbi took in.

(Act II - Scene 34)

INT. SYNAGOGUE

The destitutes are everywhere, bundled up, stretched out along the floor like an infantry of the poor, sick and old of the ghetto. The rabbi moves from person to person. Beside him, young Jacob with a lantern.

JACOB

He worked day and night helping the sick among them, sometimes with a few words, a touch of the hand or simply his silent presence -- because Karl was right about one thing: the rabbi had great power, as would anyone who knew Kabbalah.

(Act II - Scene 35)

EXT. GHETTO GATE - DAY

Golem on patrol, shielding two schoolchildren from the icy rain with his body, the girls smiling up. Karl watches in the background.

JACOB

Karl visited more often now, watching Golem's progress.

Karl advances on Golem. The wind is so strong that he has to lean into it to move forward.

KARL

Golem!

Golem whirls around, hands out in fighting pose. He growls but Karl continues toward him.

KARL

(haltingly, mispronouncing some words)

Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echud.

Golem emits a confused noise. Golem then perceives a hypnotic tempting SIREN SONG in the background of Karl's next line. With each word, the SIREN SONG pulses --

KARL

"The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the earth and he blew into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being." Remember, Golem?

A confused sound and Golem shakes his head. On his SCREEN, what he's feeling, as if he's being attacked by a sudden swarm of biting flies.

KARL

On your brow are the letters "Adam" and "Emet." First man. Are you a man, Golem? Do you want to be a man?

Taking each step carefully, like a cat stalking a bird, Karl nears, a desperate SOUND from Golem. Karl, very close now, traces the aleph on Golem's forehead with his finger.

KARL

Then come with me, Golem.

Golem grabs his head, makes horrible SHRIEKS.

KARL

(more forceful)

Come with me, Golem!

Karl outstretches his hand, an evil replication of God's finger in the Sistine Chapel. But at the last moment --

A VOICE/YOUNG JACOB

Golem! Don't!

It's young Jacob, out of breath, running. His call breaks Karl's spell and Golem manages to whirl



around and run away. Karl watches as he disappears. His eye lights on Jacob, who has seen the whole thing.

KARL

Tell your rabbi I admire his craftsmanship.

(Act II - Scene 36)

LIGHTS UP ON JACOB

JACOB

Karl's visit worried me very much. "Why don't you see into the future, rabbi?" I asked. "Then perhaps you can change it." Some things are denied my vision," he said. "Some matters must be played out, matters personal to me." And I knew the matter personal to him was Golem.

LIGHTS DOWN ON JACOB

(Act II - Scene 37)

INT. SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi Loew is at the bema conducting Shabbat service. His voice under Jacob's narration.

JACOB

It was as Passover approached that the rabbi began letting Golem accompany him to the synagogue and, really, everywhere else.

RABBI

She-ma Yis-ra-eil: A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu A-do-nai E-chad!

From a hidden alcove Golem watches, eyes burning. When the rabbi says the Sh'ma, Golem's slit mouth opens and shuts in imitation.

GOLEM

(tries to make sound ... it's not clear enough, yet)

She-ma Yis-ra-eil

(Act II - Scenes 38 and 39 omitted)

(Act II - Scene 40)

## INT. RABBI'S STOREROOM

A sheet of parchment with the Hebrew alphabet in large letters. The rabbi's finger as he teaches each letter.

RABBI

Yad, tet, chet, zayin...

Golem's clumsy fingers follow, letter by letter.

RABBI

Yes, that's it, yad. Now, the next letter is tet. Yes! Very good, mein kind. Now chet, that's it, you are learning so fast, my child. Now, yazin...

There's a KNOCK on the door.

RABBI

Enter ...

As the rabbi answers it, Golem again traces the letters, making a little NOISE at each. It's Jacob at the door.

YOUNG JACOB

Perla asked me to check on you. She said it's late and you need at least to pretend to sleep.

RABBI

I was just coming.

Jacob sees the parchment with the alphabet.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi, may I talk with you?

RABBI

Of course, Jacob. Is something troubling you?

Jacob looks at Golem, who watches.

YOUNG JACOB

In private.

The rabbi laughs.

RABBI

Of course.  
 (to Golem)  
 Goodnight, Golem and happy dreams,

Rabbi Loew removes the shem and Golem slumps, lifeless.

RABBI

So Perla worries about her old husband.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi, forgive me, I lied to you. Perla didn't send me, I just said that.

RABBI

Why would you want to do that, Jacob?

It's very difficult for Jacob to talk about this.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi, remember when you were trying to decide about if it was right to create Golem, and you said that only those with the purest of heart and strongest of wills should --

RABBI

And you fear that I am no longer in that company.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi, Golem is not a person, it is a thing of mud -- and you are teaching it to read!

RABBI

(a little sadly)

I know he has no soul.

YOUNG JACOB

Then why --

RABBI

-- do I teach him to read? How could I deny him? After all, I'm Jewish ... and, loosely speaking perhaps, so is he.

He's only half-joking.

(Act II - Scenes 41 - 42)

PERLA'S KITCHEN

Golem watches through the kitchen window as some children play. They see him and begin to taunt him.

CHILD

There he is, the monster!

CHILDREN

Monster, goyishe monster...ugly animal... clumsy, stupid thing! ...

Golem makes a stricken CRY at turns away. Perla yells at the children through the window.

PERLA

Gay avec, kinderlach! Go away! Leave my Golem alone!

Golem hangs his head. Perla comforts him.

PERLA

I'm sorry. I know just how it feels.  
(to herself)  
Am I meshugah, talking to a mudman?

Nonetheless she gives him a piece of bread thick with jam.

PERLA

This is the sweet bread my son Bezazel used to love. He'd sit right there and I'd say, it couldn't be so bad that a nosh won't cure it. Ess, eat, mein kind.

He rams it in his mouth and he tries to chew but it falls out onto the table.

PERLA

See? Better?

He makes a contented SOUND. When Perla leaves the room, he tries to eat the pots, knives and water bucket. They fall mangled to the floor.

(Scene 42 omitted.)

(Act II - Scene 43)

IN THE STOREROOM -- NIGHT

Rabbi Loew teaches Golem to read with a children's story. We see them as shadows on a wall.

RABBI

And ... that ... is ... the ... story ... of ... the ... frog ... and ... the ... beautiful ... princess.  
So, goodnight, Golem. You're learning, and why not?

He lightly touches Golem's head with his finger.

RABBI

With a Yiddische kopf, a good Jewish head on your shoulders.

The rabbi removes the shem and Golem slumps lifeless, his coal eyes dead, a universe away from being human. The rabbi exits. It's gloomy and dark in there when the rabbi blows out the lantern.

(Act II - Scene 44)  
EXT. GHETTO GATE

The rabbi's house, as seen from outside the ghetto gate, as the rabbi's storeroom light goes out. Karl sits in his coach, watching, waiting, appraising.

(Act II - Scene 45)  
EXT. PASSOVER CELEBRATIONS THROUGHOUT THE GHETTO

JACOB

With spring came Passover, the celebration of the escape of the Hebrews from Egypt where they, like the Jews in the ghetto, lived under a harsh and hostile rule.

(Act II - Scene 46)  
INT. RABBI'S DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Rabbi, his family, Jacob and poor people at a Seder table.

JACOB

At the rabbi's house were all the poor of the ghetto, those who had no other place to go.

Seder participants sing "Ma nishtanah."

SEDER CELEBRANTS

Shebechol ha'leylot anu ochlin,  
Hametz u matzah, hametz u matzah  
Ha'layla haze, ha'layla haze, kulo matzah  
Ha'layla haze, ha'layla haze, kulo matzah

(Act II - Scene 47)  
RABBI'S STOREROOM

The rabbi puts in the shem. "Ma Nishtanah" continues under.

RABBI

Good yom tov, Golem. I wanted you to hear the singing.

A low contented sound from Golem as the rabbi gives him a Haggadah. The rabbi hesitates, then puts a yarmulke on Golem's head.

(Act II - Scene 48)

## DINING ROOM - LATER

The family sings "Eliahu Hanavi," all basking in the warm glow of fire and fellowship.

## SEDER CELEBRANTS

(singing)

Eliahu hanavi  
 Eliahu hatishbi  
 Eliahu, Eliahu  
 Eliahu hagiladi

(Act II - Scene 49)

## AROUND A CORNER

Hidden in dark shadows, Golem peers around the corner at the gaiety, as yearning and isolated as Kafka's roach in *The Metamorphosis*. Golem holds the Haggadah to his heart. His eyes glow.

Probably need only 3-4 lines of the following song to go with this scene.

## SEDER PARTICIPANTS (V/O)

(singing)

Bimherah v'yamenu yavo elenu  
 Im mashiach ben David,  
 Im mashiach ben David

Eliahu hanavi  
 Eliahu hatishbi  
 Eliahu, Eliahu  
 Eliahu hagiladi

(Act II - Scene 50)

## STOREROOM – LATE THAT NIGHT

As Rabbi Loew enters, Golem is facing the old table that serves as the rabbi's desk, making muttering sounds and still holding the Haggadah.

RABBI

Golem?

Golem's mouth begins to move in strange MUTTERINGS.

RABBI

What are you doing?

Golem takes a step forward. His noises are more like words, and the rabbi can almost make out what he's saying --

Sh'ma Yisroel ... Sh'ma Yisroel ...

GOLEM

Are you praying?

RABBI

Golem begins to daven toward the rabbi.

Are you praying to me?

RABBI

Now Golem directs one word to the rabbi, over and over, as his eyes burn bright --

G--, G--, G--...

GOLEM

The rabbi covers his ears.

RABBI  
(angry now)

Stop this blasphemy, stop this! The Lord is one -- one!

Golem falls prostrate to his knees and stretches out his hands in supplication. Now he utters one sound and it's almost a word.

God ... God ... God ...

GOLEM

Lord of Israel, forgive me, I have committed the sin of idolatry, and the false God I set up was me.

RABBI

The rabbi stumbles toward the door.

I should never have made you, Golem! Left you as mud!

RABBI

Rabbi slams the door.

GOLEM  
(Golem's high-pitched CRY of hurt follows the rabbi out the door.)

(Act II - Scenes 51 - 56)

## RABBI'S STUDY – LATE NIGHT

Perla enters as the rabbi paces.

RABBI

I should never have said that, Perla, his cry was like a baby's, it was the sight of him davening, and praying to me, Perla. He thinks I'm God.

PERLA

(softly)

Yes. Father, mother and God.

Suddenly, POUNDING on the storeroom door.

RABBI

Perla, I forgot to take out the shem!

Golem's POUNDING on the door makes it shake almost free from his hinges. Golem yells through the heavy door.

RABBI

Stop, Golem, I command you to stop.

In answer, we hear the SMASHING of furniture in the storeroom. Golem's heavy FOOTSTEPS shake the whole house. He ROARS his anguish. He's gone berserk.

RABBI

(angry)

Cursed creature!

Another CRASH followed by another. Perla appears at the rabbi's side.

PERLA

Tell him you're sorry.

RABBI

What?

PERLA

That's all he wants.

A beat.

RABBI



(his tone softer)

Golem?

Another CRASH.

RABBI

I'm sorry. Do you understand? I'm sorry.

Another pause and we hear Golem's heavy FOOTSTEPS and the bench GROANS as he sits. All quiet now.

RABBI

Dear God, what have I created?

(Act II - Scene 57)

EXT. GHETTO STREETS – GLOOMY DAY

Young vandals scratch graffiti on ghetto walls, break synagogue windows.

JACOB

After that, the rabbi feared that Golem was unstable. He didn't let him out of the storeroom or even put his shem in. The Jew-haters sensed our helplessness.

The young vandals break one more window then hear a THUNDERING sound nearing. They drop their rocks and run away like hyenas to avoid being trampled by Horak on horseback. He leads a mob.

HORAK

Quick, my fine boys, the thing is gone and this Jew's a prize. Avenge the child and his weeping mother.

It's Maisl the mayor, running. His four bodyguards mount a rear-guard defense but are overrun and slain.

JACOB

It was Maisl they were after, the richest man in the ghetto. Under the law, the Emperor would receive one half of Maisl's wealth, Horak the other.

Maisl, desperate, turns into the synagogue for shelter.

JACOB

Maisl sought sanctuary in the synagogue.

HORAK

Ho! We've run the Christ-killer to his filthy hole.

(Act II - Scenes 58-59 omitted.)

(Act II - Scene 60)  
INT. STOREROOM

Rabbi Loew stands over Golem, who sits slumped and lifeless of the bench.

On his SCREEN we watch as the mob desecrates the temple walls, trample the Torah and on his screen the rabbi hears the MOB. SFX of heartbeat.

JACOB

Golem was the only way the rabbi could save Maisl.

On his screen the rabbi hears Horak.

HORAK (off stage)

There he is, my boys!

JACOB

The rabbi started to insert the shem into Golem's mouth--but he was afraid he could no longer trust his creation.

Maisl's SCREAM is heard.

(Act II - Scene 61)  
INT. SYNAGOGUE

JACOB

The mob dragged Maisl from the upstairs women's section and presented their prize to Horak, who was swigging Kiddush wine on the bema.

HORAK

Only thing I hate more than a Jew is a rich Jew. And all of them are rich.

MAISL

Yes, I have money, I'll pay you...

Horak throws a noose over the rafter.

HORAK

Your money's already mine. Besides --

Horak swigs from the Kiddush wine

HORAK

Justice has no price.

Horak slips the noose over Maisl's head -- and then a huge shadow covers Horak. He looks to see -- Golem backlit, filling the wide double-doorway. The mob flees through other exits -- but Horak is trapped. He scurries right and left, his shadow resembling a rat's, as Golem nears, emitting a horrid rattling ROAR. The rabbi rushes in.

(Act II - Scene 62)

RABBI

Golem! Never kill! Never kill!

Golem's eyes are a red tidal wave of rage ...

Golem grabs Horak by the throat, lifts him off the ground. Horak slashes at Golem with a stiletto, slicing across one burning eye and through a clay cheek but Golem is unfazed..

RABBI

Golem, stop!

But Golem's strong hands tighten on Horak's neck.

On the RABBI'S SCREEN, Hebrew letters—an incantation—and suddenly the rabbi is surrounded in light. He holds his cane up and it becomes a glowing Biblical staff, which he raises, like an Old Testament prophet.

RABBI

I who made you command you no!

Golem's hesitates.

On the RABBI'S SCREEN: another Hebrew incantation -- and suddenly the rabbi-- still in his Biblical guise -- shoots up to be ten feet tall, towering over Golem.

RABBI

Free the miserable piece of excrement, for thou shalt not kill.

Golem reluctantly drops Horak, who scurries away. At that moment we hear MARCHING SOLDIERS nearing.

(Scene 63 continues as part of scene 62.)

KARL (off stage)

Very disappointing, Rabbi Loew.

It's Karl with a squad of soldiers.

KARL

I'm afraid I must confiscate your Golem and punish him for attacking a Christian. You appear to have lost control of him.

RABBI

Why have you watched Golem all these months? What do you want of him?

KARL

Official state secrets, I'm afraid. Now, these soldiers are merely for show. Since they wouldn't stand a chance against your Golem. No, I'll be taking your Golem because you will instruct him to come with me to the castle where he'll be well-taken care of.

RABBI

Why would I order him to go with you?

After all the genteel banter, Karl's voice turns ugly.

KARL

Because if you don't I will destroy the ghetto.

(genteel again)

See, isn't that an easy decision?

(to Golem)

Come along, Golem.

Karl gestures as if to a dog.

RABBI

(reluctantly)

Go with him, Golem.

Golem makes a distressed CRY.

RABBI

(trying for a stern voice)

You must go, Golem.

Golem starts davening -- pleading -- to his god, Rabbi Loew. He does a MUTTERED version of the sh'ma. His voice is pleading. He's afraid.

KARL

Isn't this entertaining? A touching relationship. Never been away from home, has he, esteemed rabbi? But my patience is as small as your Golem's brain.

(voice ugly again)

Tell the thing to come with me.

The rabbi approaches the davening Golem.

RABBI

(softly)

It is true. It is my wish. This is how you can best serve the Jews of Prague. Do you understand?

A pause, then Golem nods.

(Act II - Scene 64)

IN THE STREET

JACOB

Rabbi Loew could do nothing but watch as his creation, his child, his monster march away. Golem looked back at the rabbi, why is this happening? He was like a baby and didn't understand. Now began the rabbi's ordeal.

(Act II - Scene 65)

EXT. EMPEROR'S CASTLE - NIGHT

JACOB

It was a cloudy night, not unlike Golem's first. The clouds moved fast, blotting out the moon.

(Act II - Scenes 66 - 67)

KARL'S INNER LAB

Painted on one full wall, the maze-like symbol of the Kabbalah and a forest of Hebrew symbols. On shelves, many of the same books as in the rabbi's study. Golem slumps inert on a stool, heavily chained to the wall.

Karl enters, flanked by a BOY OF 14. The boy has the same jutting jaw and spindly limbs as the emperor and with good reason: he's the emperor's weakling son, JULIUS CAESAR. Karl is abrupt in his dialogue with Julius Caesar: he barely tolerates him.

JULIUS CAESAR

(excited but scared)

Is the thing dangerous?

KARL

It will be.

JULIUS

Tonight?

KARL

Yes. (Turns to Golem) My sleeping beauty. Let's see if my kiss can rouse you. (Laughter)

Karl goes to a stand-up desk -- not unlike that in the rabbi's storeroom -- and opens a fragile copy of the Zohar. Julius settles down to watch something that, from behind, looks like a crude television.

JULIUS

Can I watch the perpetual motion machine?

KARL

You are Emperor's son, watch what you like.

Julius pivots the contraption to the audience can see t the box is not a TV but instead houses an elaborate Rube Goldberg device that moves a metal ball perpetually through a series of levers, gears, cogs.

KARL

(searching the table)

Where's my quill, where's my damned quill?

JULIUS

(upset)

It stopped! Karl, the perpetual motion machine stopped!

Karl pays no attention to Julius as he jabs the quill into his own arm. Dipping the quill point in blood, Karl writes YHWH on a scrap of paper -- unlike the rabbi's, it doesn't glow -- and inserts in into Golem's mouth. No movement. Karl begins to call out incantations with combinations of Hebrew letters, not fluidly like the rabbi but as halting and imperfect as Golem's attempt at human speech.

KARL

(harsh accent)

Daled aleph?

No movement from Golem.

KARL

Daled asher tav?

Golem shifts.

KARL  
(more confident)

Daled asher tav.

Golem jerks as if jolted, then slumps again.

KARL  
Daled asher tav aleph.

Flames from the ground start lighting up Golem and with "aleph," the fourth word, a bolt of sickly-yellow lightning strikes Golem from the green sky.

Golem jerks as if jolted by electricity. But then he slumps again.

KARL  
Move, damn you, move! Asher! Tav! Daled!

Fire grows on the screen and starts consuming

Golem jerks - the brute grace with which he moved under the rabbi's care is gone. He's graceless, like Frankenstein. He jerks again.

(Act II - Scene 68)  
RABBI'S STUDY

Candle flames burn unnaturally high, flickering though there is no wind. As he did the day he was summoned by Karl to the castle, the rabbi CHANTS a combination of numbers and symbols, breathes deeply three times ...

... and his spirit leaves his body, connected only by a silver cord, and --  
ACROSS THE STARLESS BLACK OF ANOTHER REALM --flies --  
flies -- flies the ethereal essence of the rabbi, trailing its cord, into ...

(Act II - Scene 69)  
KARL'S LAB

Karl's lab where the rabbi spirit hovers glimmering but near-invisible in a corner near the ceiling, where he sees and hears all -- Golem is still slumped but now seems stuck making horrid little jerks. Karl with little patience leafs through the Zohar. As Karl progresses, Golem is backlit by fire that

grows and eventually consumes the whole screen.

KARL  
(muttering)

Vav? Yud? Yud vav?

JULIUS

Karl?

KARL  
(abrupt)

What?

JULIUS

When I'm emperor will I have slaves?

KARL  
(distractedly as he flips through the holy scroll)

Of course.

JULIUS

Can I whip them if they're bad?

KARL

Or good, for all I care.

After a moment -

JULIUS

Karl? You won't let Golem hurt my father, will you?

KARL

Of course not.

JULIUS

And my father can come back when his melancholy is better?

KARL

That's what I said.

From his spot on the ceiling, the rabbi tries to intervene. On the RABBI'S SCREEN we see Golem, under Karl's control, killing the emperor. On MAIN SCREEN we hear the rabbi's voice, fading in and out, like a bad connection --



RABBI

Child! He's going to kill your father! And blame it on the Jews!

But the words fade away like vapors a few inches away, never reaching their intended audience. In his spirit body, the rabbi can't contact the physical realm.

KARL

Adonai ... Adonai ...

JULIUS

After Golem conquers Europe, can I have a pony, a small one the color of honey?

No response from Karl who pages intently through the book.

JULIUS

I played with Maisl's son when he came to the castle. Do we have to kill all the Jews?

Without responding to Julius, Karl whirls to face the Hebrew letters painted across one wall.

KARL

Adonai ... Adonai bet.

The words begin to glow, not a clear blue like the rabbi's but an impure yellow. Karl turns to face Golem.

KARL

Adonai! Gimmel kaf havayah!

Fire rages on the screen ...

KARL

Now rise, my one-man army. Rise!

(Act II - Scene 70)

RABBI

(bad connection, as before)

Sh'ma havaya! Sh'ma havayah! Sit, my Golem! Sit!

But the commands and Hebrew letters he creates on his SCREEN remain ethereal and powerless, dissolving into mist. By contrast, Karl -- who is physically present -- has taken control of Golem.

(Act II - Scene 71)

JACOB

But the rabbi was in his spirit body, with little control over the physical world.

KARL

Step!

He does.

KARL

Step!

He does.

KARL

Step!

Golem starts to take another step but his heavy chains pull taut. Without effort, he rips the chains from the wall and takes the commanded step.

(Act II - Scene 72)

RABBI'S STUDY

The rabbi re-inhabits his slumped body -- which is lying in the same position Golem falls into when his shem is removed. Rabbi Loew races out the door.

(Act II - Scenes 73 - 74)

Lights up on Jacob

JACOB

The rabbi returned to his physical body - the only way he might save Golem - and perhaps all of Europe - from Karl, and raced toward the castle, fearing that he might - once again - be too late. As he passed, the people of the ghetto wildly conjectured about what was so important. Nobody knew, everybody guessed-"the emperor is dying," "the emperor is converting," and from many of them came the heartfelt hope, "our Golem is returning!"

Once inside the castle, Rabbi desperately searched everywhere for Golem... and he saw an image...the emperor, tossing I Ching sticks to predict the future.

(Scene 75)

INT. EMPEROR'S THRONE ROOM

Emperor Rudolph tosses several I Ching sticks to the ground.

RUDOLPH

Ah, I should expect visitors.

Rabbi Loew bursts in. The emperor's bodyguards rush to halt him but Rudolph waves them away.

RUDOLPH

My friend, the wisest man in the empire.

RABBI

Your Highness, pardon my intrusion. You are in grave danger ...

Golem bursts into the room. His eyes burning a sickly yellow, he staggers, as if demonically possessed, toward the emperor. Karl is just behind him, controlling and guiding Golem to the emperor with INCANTATIONS.

KARL

Adonai gimmel, Adonai haf, Adonai havayah!

As Karl speaks, chains of sickly yellow Hebrew letters wrap miasmically around Golem, moving his limbs.

The emperor's PALACE GUARDS rush forward but GOLEM flicks them away with his fingers. OTHER SOLDIERS loyal to the emperor rush in but Golem grows a foot taller and sweeps them away with his arm. Golem's fingers are twitching, his nails, we now see, grown much longer, casting clawlike shadows over Rudolph

KARL

(commanding)

Kill the emperor!

Karl sends forth a flying squadron of his sickly, twisted Zoharic symbols that fall over Golem like a haze of gnats and Golem advances on the emperor.

The rabbi sends forth his own blitzkrieg of INCANTATIONS.

RABBI

(commanding)

Thou shalt not kill!

Golem takes one step forward toward the emperor, one step back, it's a push-and-pull mystical battle for Golem's soul. Yellow eyes and he's under Karl's command, red and it's the rabbi.

When Karl wrests control the Hebrew letters "Y H W H" (Yod Heh Vav Heh) burn an evil black, bright blue when the rabbi momentarily regains command.

KARL

Murder most holy, murder most holy!

With all the conflicting commands, Golem seems to be short-circuiting out, his eyes shifting from yellow to red and beginning to smoke, ...

KARL

(to the rabbi)

Yield or I'll destroy the thing.

The rabbi's INCANTATIONS falter for a few moments, and Karl presses the advantage with stronger CHANTS and the rabbi can't regain control.

KARL

Murder most divine.

Golem's claw-hands reach for the emperor like knives...

JACOB

The rabbi was losing. Only one word had the power to help him - the secret name of God. But to speak it aloud was to risk his own soul.

RABBI

(looking upward)

Forgive me, dear Lord...if ever you can.

(clear and loud)

YAHWEH!

It's like a SONIC BOOM inside the throne room. A spasm courses through the rabbi and he CRIES IN PAIN and his dark hair turns white in an instant.

-- but Golem stops, his eyes red again. He shakes his head to clear it. He turns to face the rabbi, making a confused little NOISE. He reaches toward the rabbi, a plea ...

KARL

Golem, kill!

And with an apologetic little SOUND to the rabbi, Golem really does overload. It's a total burn-out of all the circuits ... and Golem's eyes are neither red nor yellow but glow an unholy green ... as he turns from the emperor and toward Karl.

JACOB

Karl conjured desperately ...

Golem lifts Karl ...

RABBI

Golem, no!

... but Golem picked Karl upside down, like a spider with its laced-up hopeless prey.

(Act II - Scene 76)

VIEW UPWARD OF CASTLE TURRET

Rabbi watches helplessly, as high and tiny in the distance, Golem stands on the uppermost spire -- and flings Karl into the air ...

A LONG CRY from Karl -- he crashes and DEMONS spirit his soul away.

(Depending on the rhythm, I would probably cut the next line of dialogue.)

RABBI

(to himself, in horror)

Golem, no.

From above, Golem's long shadow stretches down farther and farther until it covers the rabbi like a dark wave.

ACT III  
(Scene 1)

Lights up on Jacob.

JACOB

In gratitude to the rabbi, the emperor proclaimed that we didn't, after all, murder Christian babies. He revoked many anti-Jewish laws. For as long as he reigned, we -- the Jews -- were to be honored citizens. Rabbi Loew and his Golem had saved the Jews of Prague and, perhaps, all of Europe.

(Act III - Scene 2)  
GHETTO STREETS

A joyous parade, the rabbi borne aloft in a chair carried by several townspeople. Golem's on his own throne, his weight is carried by ten men groaning under the load.

JACOB

The people tried to crown the rabbi as their king, king of the Jews. He refused.

It takes three of four people to lift Golem's outsized crown and place it on Golem's head.

JACOB

But Golem did not refuse.

A great ROAR from the crowd. Women hold out their babies for Golem to bless.

JACOB

Rabbi Loew watched. He wanted to believe that they could go back to the way it had been.

(Act III - Scene 3)  
GHETTO STREETS – NIGHT

JACOB

We lived in peace, slept in peace, thanks to Golem. Everyone forgot that Karl had ordered him to kill. In our joy, we even forgot that he had killed. We didn't want to remember. But Rabbi Loew remembered.

Golem was his creation, his responsibility, and the rabbi watched him day and night. But now there were no pogroms, no desecrations, no threat from Christians. And one day Golem turned to the Jews.

(Act III - Scene 4)

JACOB

The new Golem fancied himself a great jokester and he delighted in frightening the people of the ghetto. He broke windows, plucked people from their homes, pretended to eat them.

(Act III - Scene 5)

STREET

The rabbi escorts Golem home. As they walk Golem makes little feints and movements to scare people.

JACOB

Not only was Golem drunk with power -- and perhaps polluted by Karl -- but the battle to save Golem had cost the rabbi, more than he would admit. Some days he could barely walk -- his price for speaking the holy name of God. There was no denying that the rabbi was getting feebler - and Golem was stronger.

(Act III - Scene 6)

OUTSIDE RABBI'S STOREROOM

Door opens into the empty room. Golem balks at entering the storeroom door.

RABBI  
(off stage)

Go inside, Golem.

RABBI  
(stern)

Inside.

Golem reluctantly enters followed by Rabbi.

Sit, Golem. RABBI

He does.

Your shem. RABBI

Golem emits an ugly growl, like a dog with a bone.

Golem, I command you. RABBI

An uglier growl and Golem raises his fist to the rabbi, a warning.

You would hit me? RABBI

A pause, and Golem drops his hand.

In the morning, Golem, we will have a talk, a long talk. RABBI

The rabbi exits. In the dark, Golem's bright red eyes start to flicker green ... the green when he threw Karl to his death. We hear the door BOLT click ominously.

(Act III - Scene 7 is omitted.)

(Act III - Scene 8)  
RABBI'S STUDY

Music transition. The rabbi whispers, as if Golem might somehow hear, to Perla.

For the first time, the rabbi was afraid. JACOB

I should have foreseen it. He thinks he's king. And I thought I was God. And it's true, I confess it, Perla, sometimes I did feel like God. RABBI

No one could be more humble before his God. PERLA



RABBI

No, it's a weakness in me, God forgive me. Sometimes, when Golem walked the streets and the Jew-haters were too frightened to even enter the ghetto, I thought ... is it possible that I might be the one...the Messiah? What arrogance, what sacrilege, what chutzpah. I should never have created Golem.

PERLA

And what if you hadn't? Would that be better? Pogroms? More like poor Yachym hanging from a meat hook? What about all the millions in France, Germany, England, everywhere, who hate us? And here in Prague, who knows when we will have a new ruler? And what if this one changes his mind? Remember our dear murdered son. Do you want that again?

RABBI

Perla, I can't control him. It's the last thing I want, but it's time to think about --

PERLA

No! Don't say it! The Jews need Golem. I need him. And we need you to guide him. Come to bed. You need to rest.

(The next speech will need to be adjusted so it's not illustrative, depending on how much you can show any of this. Simple montage of slides.)

JACOB

Perla was right, Rabbi thought - how could he destroy his creation? And it was true, the Jews needed Golem. And the rabbi began to think of the glory that might be his, Golem marching, growing larger with every step... the rabbi leading a mighty army of Jewish Crusaders, carrying banners of the Star of David.. Asleep, the rabbi dreamed of himself carrying a sword. Christians terrified of Golem, Golem tearing down ghetto walls throughout Europe, the army of the Chosen People marching, their numbers swelling ... onward toward Jerusalem! And there, on the holy Temple Mount, Golem single-handedly constructing the Third Temple in the space of a day! The Messiah has come, the day of salvation is at hand!

...

RABBI

(in his sleep)

No!

... and he awakens as he hears a CRASH.

(Act III - Scene 9)  
GHETTO STREET

Golem breaks through the heavy front door of the house and out onto the moonlit midnight streets. His eyes glowing greener and brighter, his aura shines green, as if he's radioactive with evil and

animal rage.

The rabbi, limping, hurries after Golem through the streets. It is apparent that he's an old man now.

Golem sees the rabbi approach and ROARS his hurt.

RABBI  
(weakly)

Stop! I command you, Golem! Stop!

The rabbi tries to stop Golem, weaving rope-like spirals of flaming Hebrew letters and hurling them to bind Golem. But, breaking through the rabbi's flaming cords--

--Golem ROARS and strikes the rabbi with a backhand blow -- the rabbi's Hebrew letters fade -- and he topples to the ground. The rabbi grips his heart in pain. He sinks to the ground.

(Act III - Scene 9A)

Golem reaches into a window and pinches a terrified child between his fingers and removes him from his home.

(Act III - Scene 10)  
CITY SQUARE

This scene is between Golem with child as shadow puppets, while Rabbi is a 3-D puppet. Also some bystanders are 3-D. Golem thunders forward, carrying the SCREAMING child.

Child's parents SCREAM "no!" ... as the rabbi emerges from the cloud of dust. He's approaches slowly, each step painful.

RABBI

Golem.

His voice is so low and weak that he's barely audible. But Golem hears.

RABBI

Hear me.

A confused SOUND from Golem. He's disarmed by the figure of a thin helpless old man approaching. He ROARS a warning but the rabbi continues toward him. Jacob, Perla and Yitzhak enter.

RABBI

Put the child down.

Golem ROARS his defiance.

RABBI

Take me in his place.

Among the bystanders,

PERLA

( gasps and whispers "no" to herself)

Golem slowly nods. He lowers the child but doesn't release him.

RABBI

Me for the child, that is our bargain.

Golem opens his hand and the boy escapes to his waiting mother. The crowd's CHEER ends abruptly when Golem takes the rabbi in his grip and raises him to eye level.

Golem's eyes glow greener. The rabbi, preparing to die, says his final prayer.

RABBI

Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai elehenu, Adonai ehud."

Golem's hands stop. He looks at the rabbi, the Hebrew letters of the sh'ma on the screen overlapping the shadow puppets ... and then a dim memory ... the storeroom, the rabbi teaching him to read.

GOLEM

(trying)

Sh'ma Yisroel Adonai ... Adonai ... Adonai ...

It's almost speech ... and with each "Adonai," Golem's eyes begin to clear, his green auric glow fades, and he returns to normal.

For the first time, Golem on his SCREEN realizes there's a crowd. He sees the crying child. Golem makes a noise -- I'm sorry -- and looks at the rabbi as if wondering why he was holding him. He puts the rabbi down, then does his clumsy little kick dance, the one the rabbi always liked.

The rabbi's has aged ten years in the past ten minutes and he resembles even more a Biblical patriarch. He touches Golem on the hand.

RABBI

Let us walk, Golem.

(Act III - Scene 11)

OUTSKIRTS OF CITY ON WAY TO RIVER

They walk to the riverbank, rabbi and Golem. The rabbi leans heavily on his staff for support. Young Jacob and Yitzhak swing into place behind them.

JACOB

Golem begged his father not to kill him.

GOLEM

(pleading)

Sh'ma...Yisroel...

JACOB

So now, the rabbi must play the part of Abraham, and Golem of Isaac. And now the Golem's prayer was the Kaddish, the Jewish funeral prayer.

GOLEM

Yis'ga'dal v'yis'kadash shmay ra'bbo ...

(Act III - Scene 12)  
RIVERBANK

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi, there must be another way.

RABBI

Ah, my faithful student, I wish, I wish ...

The moon lights the scenery. Golem and the rabbi stand by the river.

RABBI

Lie down, Golem.

Golem makes a CRY from his mouth and falls to his knees before the rabbi.

RABBI

(gently)

Lie down, my Golem, in the same clay earth from which you first arose.

(a beat, it's difficult for him to say the next)

It is my wish.

Golem lies down, his burning eyes staring upward.

RABBI

Jacob, you know what it is that we must do. Go, Jacob ...

Young Jacob circles Golem, just as at Golem's birth but this time counter-clockwise, uttering backwards the creation incantation from Genesis.

YOUNG JACOB

Being living a became man the life of breath the nostrils his into blew he and earth the of dust the from man a formed God Lord the.

RABBI

Yitzhak, your turn ...

Then Yitzhak marches, also PRAYING.

YITZHAK

Being living a became man the life of breath the nostrils his into blew he and earth the of dust the from man a formed God Lord thee.

The screen refocuses as, circle by circle, Golem's arms and legs lose their distinct shape and subside into lumps of clay.

JACOB

(narrator voice over Yitzhak's line)

One circle, two, three, and Golem's joints and neck begin to crack with a rending sound. Four circles, five, more cracking ... six and with seven, and Golem's head and limbs separate from his torso. Golem's eyes still burn with life.

All that's left is the head and the glowing eyes.

YOUNG JACOB

Rabbi?

RABBI

Yes, Jacob?

## YOUNG JACOB

Are you all right?

The screen cross-fades back to riverbank. He doesn't answer the question. The rabbi limps through his seven turns. Golem's eyes follow him. The rabbi's rendition of the prayer is mostly muffled --

## RABBI

Being living a became man the life of breath the nostrils his into blew he and earth the of dust the from man a formed God Lord the.

-- because this time we are on Golem as his face then head slowly begin to melt away into the clay around him, but still the eyes burn, fixed on the rabbi.

The rabbi kneels. On Golem's forehead are the Hebrew letters "aleph mem tav" that he traced there when Golem was created. The rabbi erases them.

## RABBI

Now I am become God, destroyer of worlds.

Golem turns his head toward Rabbi Loew, utters a little cry like "Goodbye," then helpfully, obediently, he opens his mouth. The rabbi removes the shem and casts it SLO-MO to the heavens, as ...

... Golem's eyes die. The rabbi hides his face. Is he crying? All that remain of Golem is a mound of clay.

Above, Golem's shem floats higher and higher into the heavens -- like a child's lost balloon -- until finally it disappears into the darkness above.

Slowly fade to black.

(Act III - Scenes 13 through 15 are omitted)

(Act III - Scene 12 continues)

## JACOB

Time passed. The rabbi lived for many years after that, good years for the ghetto. Great dangers had been averted. But at a cost to the rabbi. As with the memories of his son, Bezazel, so Golem was in his thoughts.

On SCREEN, while still at the grave, the rabbi kneels down and picks up a small stone. He places it on the final resting place of Golem.

## RABBI

Alev-Ha-Shalom.

A BEAT. SCREENS FADE OUT AS LIGHTS FADE UP ON JACOB ON-STAGE.

(Act III - Scene 16)

Jacob tidies up, closing a book here and there, the pile of shems on the rabbi's old table. Everything is just as the rabbi left it.

JACOB

All of that was long ago. Judaism teaches that after we die we live on, in the hearts of those who remember us. I recall Rabbi Loew as if those ancient days were yesterday. But I too belong to those times. So I tell this story to you, that he will live on, and so too Golem, protector of the Jews. And some say that to this day, Golem watches over his people, sometimes able to protect us, sometimes failing, and when he fails he grieves, as if he had a heart as human as yours or mine.

Jacob snuffs the candle and lights fade out as he exits rear.

THE END