

THE CROSSING

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FADE IN:

EXT. BORDER CHECKPOINT - DAY

A wide, open border crossing.

Metal barriers.
Barbed wire.

A line of **MIGRANTS** waiting.

Some with bags.
Some with children.
Some with nothing.

SOLDIERS stand in front of them.
Rifles lowered.

A military truck idles nearby.

One soldier steps forward.

SOLDIER
The border is closed.

Murmurs ripple through the line.

MIGRANT MAN
Closed for how long?

The soldier hesitates.

SOLDIER
Until further notice.

A woman holding a child steps forward.

WOMAN
We're not staying.
We're passing through.

The soldier shakes his head.

SOLDIER
No one is passing through.

EXT. BORDER CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

Another soldier unhooks a sign and flips it.

BORDER CLOSED

Someone in the crowd lets out a short, nervous laugh.

MIGRANT

It was open yesterday.

The first soldier looks at him.

SOLDIER

Yesterday was different.

No one moves.

A child begins to cry.
The mother hushes him immediately.

People slowly step back.

Not running.
Not arguing.

Just leaving.

EXT. BORDER - LATER

The crowd has thinned.

Some migrants sit on their bags.
Others walk away down the road.

A soldier speaks quietly into a radio.

SOLDIER (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)

Political instability across the
border. Orders are
clear.

He lowers the radio.

Looks across the empty crossing.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - DAY

A small, cramped room.

ADAM (late 25s) sits on the edge of the bed.

A **small television** sits on a shelf.

On screen - the SAME BORDER.

A news reporter speaks calmly.

REPORTER (V.O.)
Due to escalating political unrest
in the neighboring country,
all border crossings have been
suspended
until further notice.

Adam watches.

On the TV:
Soldiers.
Barriers.
People turning away.

INT. ADAM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adam reaches for his phone.

Opens a video call.

SARAH'S FACE appears.

SARAH
That's where you are?

Adam nods.

ADAM
Yeah.
It's nothing.

He glances at the TV.

REPORTER (V.O.)
Authorities urge citizens to remain
calm-

Adam mutes the TV.

Silence.

SARAH
So... what does that mean?

Adam smiles. Holds it a beat too long.

ADAM
It means we wait.
That's all.

Sarah nods.

Adam keeps holding the phone after the screen goes black.

Only then does he lower it.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT - MORNING

A smartphone vibrates on a wooden surface.

Adam opens his eyes. He doesn't stretch.

His gaze goes straight to the phone.

The room is clean. Sparse. Temporary.

A single mug on the desk.

On the phone – a video message.

SARAH (20) smiles into the camera.

Adam smiles back. Subtle. Grateful.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Adam sits on the bed, wearing headphones.

Sarah is on screen.

Behind her – dark curtains. Indistinct noise.

SARAH

Did you wake up early today?

ADAM (SMILES)

Your message woke me up.

Sarah laughs – then stops.

Her eyes drift off-screen.

SARAH

Things are getting harder here,
Adam.

ADAM

You always say that.
It'll pass.

SARAH

This time it's different.
There are new people on the
streets.

A pause.

Distance fills the frame.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

The call continues.

Neither speaks.

They just look at each other through pixels.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I can't stay much longer.
I feel myself closing in.

ADAM
Then I'll come.

Sarah freezes.

SARAH
Adam... there's a war here.
A coup.

ADAM
I know.
I'm coming.

Adam's face hardens.

INT. CAFE / COWORKING SPACE - DAY

Adam sits at a laptop.

His coffee is cold.

ON SCREEN:
- FLIGHT TICKETS: CANCELLED
- VISA STATUS: SUSPENDED
- BORDER: CLOSED

Adam taps his fingers against the table.

Stops.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Video call.

Sarah looks exhausted. Her eyes flick toward the door.

SARAH
Here, you either adapt
or you disappear.

ADAM
Disappear how?

SARAH (EVASIVELY)
Just... disappear.
Like the streetlights.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Laptop glow on Adam's face.

DARK FORUMS SCROLL PAST.
- "Everyone crosses this way..."
- "If you truly love..."

Adam stops at the last line.

Mouths the words silently.

INT. SMALL CAFE - DAY

ALEX (40s) sits neatly dressed.

Adam sits opposite him.

ALEX
I don't force anyone.
People come knowing the risk.

ADAM
How dangerous is it?

Alex shrugs.

ALEX
Life's dangerous.
Depends what you're willing to die
for.
If you're scared - leave now.

ADAM
I'm not scared.

Alex meets his gaze.

ALEX
Then we're fine.
Tomorrow morning.
Alone.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam packs a small bag.

Mechanical.

HE TYPES A MESSAGE:
I'm coming.

Reply arrives instantly: (**Be careful.**)

Adam places the phone down.

EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

Adam boards a bus.

Looks out at the city.

No nostalgia.

The bus pulls away.

EXT. NEAR THE BORDER - EVENING

A bleak place.

Adam stands with Alex and two unknown men.

A jeep door opens.

Adam gets in.

The door slams shut.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The car speeds along a broken road.

Adam checks his phone.

EXT. ABANDONED AREA - EVENING

The car stops.

Rusting buildings. Mud.

Doors open.

ALEX
Get out.

Adam steps out.

ADAM
Is this the border?

Alex smiles. Tired.

ALEX

Almost.

EXT. FOREST LINE - EVENING

Light fades.

The forest thickens.

ADAM

Where are we?

Alex stops.

ALEX

Somewhere no one looks.

Two men move behind Adam.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

A hand grabs Adam.

He freezes.

His bag is taken.

His passport drops into the mud.

A boot steps on it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You said you weren't scared.

ADAM

I did this for love...

ALEX

It always starts that way.

Adam's phone lights up.

SARAH CALLING.

The screen goes dark.

EXT. OLD BUILDING - NIGHT

Ruins.

Adam is pushed inside.

Other men sit in shadow.

INT. OLD BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Adam is forced into a chair.

A MAN sits opposite.

MAN

Family?
They pay - you live.
They don't - you don't.

INT. OLD BUILDING - NIGHT

Adam sits bound.

The door opens.

A thin man is dragged in.

JACK (40s). Two fingers missing.

ADAM

What happened?

Jack looks at his hand.

JACK

I paid.
Then they needed more.

ADAM

Then why are you still here?

Jack meets his eyes.

JACK

Because this is where it starts.

INT. OLD BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

A man enters with a bottle of water.

Gives it to Jack.

Not Adam.

ADAM

How long?

JACK

As long as you're lucky.

The man leaves.

INT. OLD BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jack drinks.

Leaves a little in the bottle.

Places it just out of Adam's reach.

JACK (CONT'D)
Rule is simple.
The sooner you know you're dead,
the longer you live.

Adam presses himself against the wall.

Eyes on the bottle.

On the door.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A small apartment.

Bare walls.

Heavy curtains blocking daylight.

SARAH (mid-20s) sits on the edge of the bed.

A phone in her hand.

She looks at the screen.

NO SIGNAL.
She tries again.

Nothing.

From outside - distant city noise.

Not loud. Uneven.

Sarah stands, pulls the curtain aside slightly.

Looks out.

The street below is active - but hurried.

She lets the curtain fall back.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A kettle boils.

Sarah pours hot water into a mug.

A **RADIO** crackles on the counter.

RADIO (V.O.)
...emergency announcement...
...effective immediately...

Sarah turns the volume up.

The signal cuts.

Static.

Then silence.

The kettle keeps boiling.

Sarah turns it off.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sarah steps outside.

People move fast.

No one lingers.

A **MILITARY TRUCK** passes at the far end of the street.

Doesn't stop.

Sarah takes out her phone.

Attempts a call.

NO CONNECTION.
She lowers the phone.

Keeps walking.

EXT. CORNER STORE - CONTINUOUS

The store is CLOSED.

A handwritten sign taped to the glass:

CLOSED - UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Sarah knocks lightly.

No answer.

A WOMAN (50s) passes behind her.

SARAH

Do you know what's happening?

The woman doesn't stop.

WOMAN

Go home.

Today isn't safe.

She disappears down the street.

Sarah stays where she is for a moment.

Then turns away.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sarah sits on the floor.

An open bag in front of her.

She packs carefully:

– passport

– folded cash

– a small photograph

Her phone lies beside her.

Dead.

Outside, noise rises.

A sharp **GUNSHOT** echoes in the distance.

Sarah freezes.

Listens.

Nothing follows.

She resumes packing.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Sarah exits the building.

Smoke hangs low in the air.

People move quickly past her.

Someone runs.

 MAN (O.S.)
 The border's closed!

Sarah stops.

Looks in the direction the voice came from.

Her grip tightens on her bag.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Sarah walks with a small crowd.

No destination.

Just movement.

Ahead - silhouettes of **ARMED MEN**.

Rifles visible.

People slow.

Then scatter.

Sarah turns sharply into a side street.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Sarah presses herself against the wall.

Footsteps approach.

Voices.

Unfamiliar accents.

She holds her breath.

The footsteps pass.

She exhales.

Steps forward.

Out of the alley.

EXT. STREET END - NIGHT

Sarah walks fast.

A MAN (30s) appears behind her.

Unarmed.

He gestures ahead.

MAN

Not that way.
It's safer over there.

Sarah hesitates.

Behind him — two more figures, watching.

SARAH

Are you from here?

The man nods.

MAN

Right now?
Everyone is.

Sarah looks past them.

Then back at the man.

She steps toward him.

CUT TO: