ISTANBUL CROSSING

by

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FADE IN:

INT. HAMMAM - DAY

AHDAF, 24, a Syrian refugee, medium build with a stubble beard, drops a coin into the tip box and leaves.

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - CONTINUOUS

He dodges vendors and pushcarts on the busy street and enters LEYLA'S CAFE.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS

He skirts tables crowded with mostly young Turkish men and aims for a short bar tucked into an alcove. Behind it, LEYLA, 40s, tosses back her black hair as she stubs out a cigarette. Pictures of Hollywood cowboys are tacked to the walls and cowboy hats are nailed to the curve of an overhead arch. Ahdaf slips onto a barstool, takes his phone out of his daypack and plugs it into an electric strip snaking across the counter.

LEYLA
You must be coming from the hammam.

AHDAF
Why?

LEYLA
You smell like soap.

AHDAF
Is that good?

LEYLA
It's better than you smelled yesterday. You're not wearing your usual blue shirt, either.

AHDAF
I washed it. This is my backup.

SELIM, 30, stocky with a dark complexion, joins him.

SELIM
Sounds like you need a third shirt.

AHDAF
(not wanting to engage)
I only have two hangers.

SELIM
(to Leyla)
Do you have a cold beer?

She takes one from the refrigerator.

LEYLA
Only one.

SELIM
I only want one.

AHDAF
It’s mine. I ordered it. Cold.

SELIM
Then it’s yours. I’m Selim Wilson.
Sam if you prefer.

AHDAF
Why would I prefer Sam?

SELIM
That’s what I was called growing
up.

Leyla uncaps the bottle, plants it between them, and sets up two glasses.

LEYLA
Share it. While you’re deciding on
his name, I’ve got customers
waiting for orders.

She slips around the end of the bar carrying a tray with tea glasses and beer bottles. Selim pours the beer.

AHDAF
Are you American?

SELIM
Is my accent that obvious?

AHDAF
(referring to cowboy pics)
You must know who these guys are.

SELIM
Yeah, I know most. You look like him. Hud. That was his movie name.

AHDAF
I've never seen you in here before and it's my office.

SELIM
Obviously we work different hours.

AHDAF
I've also never seen another American in here.

SELIM
I wanted to meet you. I hear you're reliable at moving people.

AHDAF
Who told you?

SELIM
He. She. It. I don't remember. I need a reliable guide for people trying to escape.

AHDAF
Escape what?

SELIM
Turkey. Political fugitives and journalists trying to avoid arrest.

AHDAF
Are you CIA?

SELIM
I can't answer that until we have an agreement.

AHDAF
Then I guess I'll never know.

SELIM
Just remember, Ahdaf Jalil—

AHDAF
How do you know my name?

SELIM
Your 'moving people' is trafficking to the rest of the world.
(MORE)

SELIM (CONT'D)
Turkey could deport you back to Raqqa where, my guess is, a high rooftop is waiting for you.

FLASHBACK: A man falling from a tall building.

BACK TO SCENE

AHDAF
How do you know about that?

Selim presses a business card into his palm.

SELIM
Take this. Sometime you might need help.

AHDAF
I don't want it.

SELIM
Not everyone's a nice guy like you.

AHDAF
Do I ask for Sam or Selim?

SELIM
Neither. You leave a message. Tell me where you are and if it's urgent.

As Selim walks off, Ahdaf's phone rings.

EXT. CENTRAL BUS STATION - EVENING

Ahdaf paces in front of a bus as the DRIVER toots his horn and holds up his open hand to signal five minutes. He sees a family and motions for them to hurry up. YUSUF, his pregnant wife, MERYEM, carrying an infant in her arms, and teenage son, ISSA, rush to him. Issa hands Yusuf a slip of paper.

AHDAF
Call this number as soon as you get to Assos. Enter it on your telephone now. It's the contact for your raft.

YUSUF
There's no name.

AHDAF
You don't need it. If there's a problem, call me and I'll fix it. Here, take these.

He hands them bright pink caps with sun visors.

ISSA
I'm supposed to wear a pink cap?

AHDAF
It's the only color they had. Besides, you won't care when you land in Lesvos and have to walk seventy kilometers in the hot sun.

MERYEM
Seventy kilometers? I'm pregnant!

YUSUF
I'll carry you if I have to.

Issa struggles to fit the cap over his thick hair. Finally, he pulls some through the band in the back.

ISSA
Cool or uncool?

AHDAF
Very cool and it'll never fall off. Now get on the bus. Three front seats are yours.

MERYEM
You are such a kind man. Thank you, Ahdaf.

She gives him a peck on his cheek and boards the bus. Yusuf embraces him.

YUSUF
You helped save my family.

AHDAF
It's you who escaped the war. May Allah continue to protect you.

They touch their hearts and Yusuf boards. Before following his parents, Issa points to his cap, still doubtful.

ISSA
Pink?

AHDAF
Pink is cool for guys in the West.

The boy boards. The bus drives off. Ahdaf waves goodbye though he can barely the family through the tinted windows.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - MORNING

The call to prayer sounds in the background. Ahdaf finds a spot on the ablutions bench, washes his feet and crosses the courtyard to enter the mosque. He leaves his sandals outside.

INT. MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf kneels at the end of a line of worshippers. He cups his hands murmuring prayers.

EXT. MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf, retrieving his sandals, hears someone say his name and turns to see MALIK, the headmaster of the mosque's madrasa (religious school). He's scrawny with a prophet's beard.

MALIK
It's good to see you so often at prayers. Obviously, you are a man of faith.

AHDAF
A habit can be mistaken for faith. My father insisted that I pray once a day.

MALIK
It's not habit in your case. Your father isn't here to scold you.

AHDAF
He also said the mosque was a place of fellowship. I'm alone in Istanbul, so I look for that.

MALIK
Does the fellowship you seek include drinking beer?

Ahdaf pales.

AHDAF
It's rare that I drink a beer.

MALIK
Even one beer is *haram*. What did Selim Wilson want from you?

AHDAF
Selim Wilson?

MALIK
He gave you his card. Why?

AHDAF
He wants me to help smuggle people to Greece. He didn't say who.

MALIK
He's an American spy. We want you to help him.

AHDAF
Help him? Why? Who are you?

MALIK
Soldiers for Allah.

AHDAF
I'm not part of your war.

MALIK
Your faith makes you part of it. We want to know what Selim is planning and what he knows about. Sometimes we will also have people for you to move.

AHDAF
A lot of guys do what I do. You don't need me. I told him that too.

MALIK
Selim Wilson didn't buy anyone else a beer. Contact him. Tell him you've changed your mind. We have a sensitive operation coming up. We need to know what he knows and we might need your help.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - EVENING

The cafe is crowded with men and some women, mostly sitting apart but some with husbands. Mounted in a corner, a muted TV streams CNN Turk. Ahdaf plops onto a barstool. Leyla is ready with a cold beer.

AHDAF
May I have a glass this time?

LEYLA
It’s you who always claims that beer stays colder in the bottle.

AHDAF
If I’m going to sin, I might as well do it drinking from a proper glass.

LEYLA
Since when is it sinning for you?

AHDAF
Since some guy at the mosque reminded me.

LEYLA
(glancing at door)
Omar’s arrived.

OMAR, 30s, makes his way to the bar. In his wake, the crowd becomes less boisterous and falls silent. He turns to them.

OMAR
Sounds like I ruined your party.

The crowd responds with shouts and whistles.

OMAR (CONT’D)
Wow, I wish my night last night had been as much fun. Since you didn’t ask, I’ll tell you: I met a beautiful woman, an American. My only thought was—and no groans guys—what a perfect chance to practice my English! I wouldn’t have minded conjugating a few verbs, getting past the conditional to superlatives with a few commas along the way. So, I asked a very simple question. ‘Would you like to have dinner?’ She said, ‘It’s complicated.’ Complicated? Dinner? ‘I’m a vegan,’ she declared, which, it turns out is the atomic bomb of diets. Once veganated, everything is off the menu. Maybe salt’s allowed.
(MORE)

OMAR (CONT'D)
When she finished listing what she couldn't eat, I said it would surprise a lot of refugees to know that they're de facto vegans. She didn't even smile. She didn't—

An image on TV catches Omar's eye. Everyone watches as bodies are lifted from fishing boats while the survivors of an apparent capsizing at sea stumble around on the dock.

OMAR (CONT'D)
Turn up the volume.

Leyla does as the camera focuses on a reporter. A ticker identifies her as CNN Special Correspondent, DERYA THOMAS.

DERYA (ON TV)
All we know is that a raft of refugees capsized. Two dozen known drowned and dozens missing. I've seen bodies of several children.

MAN (O.S.)
This is why they drowned!

CNN's camera focuses on a MAN pulling handfuls of soggy shredded newspaper out of a lifejacket.

MAN (CONT'D)
Their lifejackets were filled with newspaper! They sank as soon as they hit the water!

CNN's camera focuses on Meryem, seated on a wooden crate, cradling a body on her knees. It's her son, Issa, still wearing the pink cap Ahdaf gave him.

AHDAF (V.O.)
Allah forgive me.

Leyla touches his arm.

LEYLA
What is it?

AHDAF
I put them on that raft. I bought their lifejackets!

LEYLA
You can't control what other people do. Or sell you.

AHDAF
(slipping off barstool)
I can control what I do.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He enters, drops his daypack on the only table, turns off the light and lies dressed on his bed. Streetlights illuminate his face. He’s anguished and silently cries.

INT. AHDAF’S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ahdaf is asleep in bed. FOUR MEN break through his door, grab him and hood him.

INT. AHDAF’S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The four men drag him up his building’s stairs.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

They emerge on the roof, perch Ahdaf on its edge and whip off his hood. A crowd is on the street. A mullah nonstop repeats:

MULLAH
(in Arabic; subtitled)
When a man mounts another man as he would mount a woman, it shakes the throne of Allah!

A hand pushes Ahdaf. He falls, the ground racing toward him.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf bolts awake.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Drinking tea, Ahdaf fingers Selim’s card. He calls the number on it. It’s answered by an electric tone then silence.

AHDAF
It’s Ahdaf. I want to help.

He hangs up. Immediately his phone pings. He has a message.

SELIM (TEXT)
One hour. Eminonu docks. Newsstand.

EXT. EMINONU DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf gets off the tram, checks his watch, and ducks into a narrow passage lined with cafes. He sits where he can watch CNN Turk on a TV inside. Derya Thomas reports from Assos. A REPORTER in CNN's studio interviews her while a blow-up of Meryem cradling Issa's body is projected on the wall behind her.

DERYA (ON TV)
Some survivors claim the raft was rammed.

REPORTER (ON TV)
Are you suggesting it wasn't an accident?

DERYA (ON TV)
The refugees usually don't use running lights so maybe a fisherman accidentally hit them. It's happened before. But where was the Coast Guard to help them?

EXT. EMINONU DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf, at the newsstand, peruses the newspapers clipped to wires. Most report on the capsized raft. Selim, reaching around Ahdaf, snatches the top paper in a stack.

SELIM
Excuse me. I'm trying to catch the next ferry to Uksudar.

Selim pushes through the ferry's turnstile. Ahdaf follows him across the ferry's gangplank and up steps to an open deck. They lean against opposite rails. Selim reads his paper until the ferry gets underway and then joins Ahdaf.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Why'd you change your mind about helping me?

Ahdaf points to the front page photo of Meryem.

AHDAF
I put her whole family on that raft. Only she survived. I know America hates ISIS. I want to help you fight it.

SELIM
ISIS hasn't claimed responsibility for the raft incident.

AHDAF
Because of ISIS, her family was on that raft. Because of ISIS, I'm a refugee. ISIS executed my cousin. We were closer than brothers.

SELIM
Why did they execute him?

AHDAF
They claimed he was a homosexual.

SELIM
Was he?

AHDAF
Does it matter?

SELIM
I'm trying to understand what you mean by closer than brothers.

AHDAF
We weren't obligated to love each other. We chose to love each other.
(pause)
I've been approached by someone at the mosque to help ISIS.

SELIM
Is it Malik Kaya?

AHDAF
How did you know?

SELIM
Madrasas are ISIS's recruitment centers. What did he want?

AHDAF
For me to spy on you.
(pause)
You fucking set me up, didn't you? You knew I'd be seen with you at Leyla's café and Malik's spies of course would tell him.

SELIM
I want to know Malik's plans.

AHDAF
He wants to know yours.

SELIM
Mine aren't as evil. Go to prayers like you always do and tell him you've had a change of heart.

AHDAF
Who told you that I go to prayers?

SELIM
(ignoring his question)
Blame your change of heart on his threat to throw you off a building like ISIS did your cousin.

AHDAF
I never said how Sadiq was killed.

SELIM
It's ISIS's preferred way to execute homosexuals. Sometimes they're raped first to teach them a lesson. Though I suspect it's more for the killers' pleasure.

The ferry blows its horn signaling its arrival.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Everybody has to disembark. I'm going to stay here a couple of hours. I have some other business.
(offering newspaper)
Do you want this?

SERIES OF SCENES

- Ahdaf stuffs the newspaper into his daypack while Selim hails a taxi.

- Ahdaf boards the return ferry and leans pensively against the rail.

- Ahdaf disembarks at Eminonu docks and boards the tram.

INT. ISTANBUL TRAM - AFTERNOON

Ahdaf, seated, puts in earbuds and streams CNN on his mobile.

DERYA (ON MOBILE SCREEN)
The Coast Guard was repositioned away from where most rafts launch.
(MORE)

DERYA (ON MOBILE SCREEN) (CONT'D)
Why? It was choppy. Even small whitecaps can swamp a raft. It begs the question: What was the government's involvement? Benign neglect, or something more sinister? It certainly didn't play the role most needed: rescuer.

Someone touches Ahdaf's shoulder. It startles him. He looks up to see his friend, MUNIR, 30, overweight with big ears.

MUNIR
Aksaray is next. Are you getting off?

AHDAF
Yeah, I am. Thanks.

EXT. AKSARAY TRAM PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

They exit the tram car.

AHDAF
I haven't seen you for a few days. How's the new baby?

MUNIR
Do you know any tricks for a woman to make more milk?

AHDAF
That's not my specialization.

MUNIR
The baby won't use a bottle and Yasemin has no milk. We need a solution or she's going to die.
(pause)
I'm thinking of going ahead.

AHDAF
To Europe? Without them?

MUNIR
It's the easiest way for families to get visas if the father goes first and establishes a beachhead.

AHDAF
Is it really so bad here?

MUNIR
In Damascus, I was an economist. Here, I can only be a smuggler because I'm not allowed to work. What I earn isn't enough. You don't have a family so it's enough for you but not for us. We're all starving. We can't stop Samir from eating cockroaches.

AHDAF
Can't you spray or something?

MUNIR
Then he'd be eating the poison.

AHDAF
(touching Munir's shoulder)
If you go, I'll miss you. And when the time comes, don't worry, I'll help your family make the crossing.

Munir, holding back grateful tears, nods and walks off.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

Ahdaf enters the gate. The call to prayer is broadcast from the minaret. He sits on the ablutions bench to wash his feet.

MALIK (O.S.)
So again you prove me correct.

Ahdaf looks up at Malik.

AHDAF
How is that?

MALIK
You are faithful.

AHDAF
Observant isn't necessarily faithful.

MALIK
There are many mosques where you could pray.

AHDAF
This has become my mosque.

MALIK
For the fellowship?

AHDAF
I've decided I want to help you.

Ahdaf takes the newspaper from his daypack to show Malik.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Hers was the last family I helped. Helped! She's holding her dead son.

MALIK
And you want revenge?

AHDAF
I just heard on the news that the Coast Guard was ordered not to help. Why? They could have saved her family. Why'd they let those people die? Now I hate them both. ISIS and the government. I'll do whatever I can against either of them.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - AFTERNOON

Ahdaf enters and heads for the cowboy bar. Leyla says something to a stranger who glances around to see Ahdaf. KALAM, mid-20s, is fair and handsome. Taking a seat, Ahdaf notices the beer bottle in front of him.

AHDAF
I hope that's not my cold beer.

KALAM
It's not very cold.

AHDAF
Then it's not mine. Right, Leyla?

She pulls a frosty bottle from the freezer.

LEYLA
Is this cold enough for you?

AHDAF
(rolling bottle on forehead)
Almost.

She sets a glass on the bar in front of him.

LEYLA
I'm going to let you boys talk.

She squeezes around the end of the bar with a tray of drinks.

KALAM
You're Ahdaf Jalil?

AHDAF
That's me.

KALAM
I'm Kalam. I'm from Raqqa, too.

She squeezes around the bar with a tray loaded with drinks. Ahdaf pours some beer into his glass.

AHDAF
I assume you want to cross to Europe.

KALAM
That's why I came looking for you. You have a good reputation.

AHDAF
It can take a few days to organize. Do you have a room?

KALAM
No, and I need a shower. I haven't had a real one in a month.

AHDAF
Why don't you go piss while I make some calls?

KALAM
I don't need to piss. Oh, you want privacy. Don't forget the shower.

AHDAF
(sniffing vigorously)
Me forget the shower? Not likely.

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - LATER

Ahdaf and Kalam walk down the sidewalk.

KALAM
What happens next?

AHDAF
I need to arrange a bus, a place on a raft and a lifejacket.

KALAM
I don't need a lifejacket. I can swim.

AHDAF
Not in the channel if it's rough.

KALAM
How much does one cost?

AHDAF
When you need one and don't have one? Your life. Here's where you're staying.

He rings the doorbell while Kalam reads the sign overhead.

KALAM
The *Tropicana* Hotel.In Istanbul?

INT. TROPICANA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

They enter. At the end of a long hall, FAZAR, 60s, sits behind a bamboo reception counter flanked by fake palm trees. Under one, two pink flamingos; under the other, a beach umbrella. Men's swimming trunks hang on facing lines of hooks on both sides of the hall to the counter.

KALAM
This is so weird! Is it okay if I photograph it?

AHDAF
Fazar! Another one wants a picture.

FAZAR
If he promises to make me famous!

Kalam, using his phone's camera, approaches the counter.

KALAM
It's a video not a picture. I'm making a movie of my journey.

AHDAF
Salaam malekum, Fazar. This is Kalam, my new client.

All three men mumble *salaam malekum* and touch their hearts.

KALAM
Why the tropical decorations?

FAZAR
People coming here expect a detention center. I like to make them smile. That's fifteen euros, or twenty euros in lira if you only have lira.

KALAM
I have euros.

Fazar takes his money and hands him a key.

FAZAR
Fifth floor on the left.

KALAM
It has a shower that works, right?

FAZAR
The last time someone took a shower it did.

AHDAF
I'll go up with you. We need to discuss some details.

INT. TROPICANA HOTEL'S STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf and Kalam, both in good shape, easily climb the stairs.

KALAM
You've been here seven months?

AHDAF
Yeah, seven months, and like you it took three months to walk here.

KALAM
You're not going on to Europe?

AHDAF
I'm surviving okay here.

KALAM
Surviving isn't living your dreams.

AHDAF
For me it is. I never thought I'd survive the war or the journey to Istanbul.

KALAM
My dream is to make movies.

AHDAF
In Hollywood? With Leyla's cowboys?

KALAM
Anywhere that I can make movies about different kinds of people, not movies where everybody has to be religious and act the same way.

AHDAF
That's a big dream alright. This is your floor.

INT. ROOM AT HOTEL TROPICANA - CONTINUOUS

The door swings open. Kalam enters with his phone pressed to his eye. Ahdaf switches on the light.

SEEN THROUGH VIDEO LENS: Dozens of cockroaches flee.

KALAM (V.O.)
My first night in Istanbul. My hotel is not a palace but in theory my room has a shower. Let's see!

He crosses to the bathroom door. Ahdaf turns on the light for him. Cockroaches flee into a drain next to the bathtub.

KALAM (V.O.)
Well, no shortage of protein if I get hungry tonight!
(stops video)
So far it's only a philosophical question, though I've been tempted to eat them. But a shower first!

Through the open doorway, Ahdaf watches Kalam strip naked. He steps into the tub and turns on the shower, causing the cockroaches to flee the open drain.

KALAM
It's cold but feels so good. You want to join me? I scrub your back, you scrub mine?

AHDAF
I'm okay. I went to a hammam yesterday.

KALAM
Be careful at hammams. That's where Sadiq was caught.

Ahdaf, at the mention of his cousin, looks shocked.

AHDAF
You knew my cousin?

KALAM
We were secret buddies, too, like you and him.

AHDAF
You mean, you and he—

KALAM
Yes, that's what I mean.

AHDAF
He never mentioned you.

KALAM
He talked about you. He worried your families would think he had corrupted you if they found out.

AHDAF
How'd you meet him?

KALAM
Along the river. There's a place where men like us go. Sometimes to have sex, sometimes to make plans to meet somewhere else. I told Sadiq to tell you about it, but he was afraid you might be led into a trap. You sure you don't want your back washed? There's even a piece of soap.

AHDAF
I said no already.

He turns to leave.

KALAM
Are you leaving? I hope what I told you about Sadiq and me didn't hurt your feelings.

AHDAF
I don’t know what I’m feeling.
Let’s meet again at the cafe later.
I might have some news for you.

KALAM
When later?

AHDAF
When you smell better.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - NIGHT

Ahdaf enters. Leyla is busy with customers. He sits at the cowboy bar, pulls out his phone and dials a number.

INT. NAUTICAL SUPPLIES SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A MAN answers his mobile. Around him are lifejackets, paddles, etc.

MAN
Hello, Ahdaf. *Salaam malekum*.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

AHDAF
What the fuck happened last night?
I put a family on that raft. The
woman they keep showing on the news
is the only one who survived and
you supplied their lifejackets.
They were *death* jackets!

MAN
I don’t make them, I only buy them.

AHDAF
They didn’t feel different?

MAN
I’m nowhere near the rafts when
they launch. I only organize having
the lifejackets delivered.

AHDAF
Maybe you should be there for
quality control.

MAN
It’s chaotic. You want to try it?

AHDAF
I need a space for one person and I don't want to see him drowned on tomorrow night's news.

MAN
Trust me, it won't be tomorrow night. All the rafts are full.

Ahdaf hangs up. Leyla returns to the bar.

LEYLA
That's a serious face.

AHDAF
I'll look real serious if you haven't saved a cold beer for me.

LEYLA
And risk losing your big tip? In fact I have two cold beers for you, so it better be a very big tip.

AHDAF
I never drink more than one.

LEYLA
What about your handsome new client?

AHDAF
You noticed?

LEYLA
I'm not blind. He just walked in.

They watch Kalam approach and take a barstool.

KALAM
I've never been in such a place. People drinking beer and women unescorted by a men.

LEYLA
Beer for both of you?

KALAM
It's really allowed?

LEYLA
Of course it's allowed. I sell it.

She sets a bottle and two glasses in front of them.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
I want a cigarette. You two talk your business.

She joins a table of women. They decline cigarettes but she lights up. Kalam pours beer into their glasses.

KALAM
Sadiq taught me to like beer.

AHDAF
Me too.

KALAM
To Sadiq.

They clink glasses and sip.

KALAM (CONT'D)
I don't think I've ever seen a woman smoke in public.

AHDAF
Leyla is the only one who does. And tourists, of course.

Kalam pulls out his mobile on a cord around his neck.

KALAM
I want to take a video.

He starts to pan the room.

KALAM (V.O.)
This is my first cafe in Istanbul, and while this part looks like any cafe in Turkey, this part looks like the bar in a cowboy movie. Beer included! And here is my new friend.

He points camera at Ahdaf who puts up a hand to stop him.

KALAM
Sorry.

He slips his camera back under his shirt.

AHDAF
What kind of case is that?

KALAM
Waterproof.

AHDAF
I hope you don't need it.

KALAM
Me too. All my videos are on it. Is it safe?

AHDAF
The crossing? This time of year, it's iffy depending on weather.

KALAM
So what happens now?

AHDAF
We wait for a place on a raft. At least a couple of days.

KALAM
Good.

AHDAF
I thought you were in a hurry.

KALAM
I'm enjoying the company in Istanbul.

Leyla returns to the bar.

LEYLA
Don't believe him if he says the crossing is safe. It's his business to say that.

KALAM
He told me it depends on the weather.

LEYLA
Then he must like you.

CUSTOMER
Hey! Turn up the television! Something's happening!

On the TV, people flee a burning building. Others jump from two upper floors. Many people are wounded. A ticker identifies it as the Spartacus Bar in Athens, Greece.

CNN REPORTER (ON TV)
What you are watching is the immediate aftermath of a terrorist attack in Athens at the Spartacus Bar, a popular nightclub for gays—

CUSTOMER/BURAK
For fucking queers!

CNN REPORTER (ON TV)
We're getting this live feed from someone who was outside the bar when apparently a bomb went off.

CUSTOMER/BURAK
Another faggot!

He throws a bottle at the TV. It crashes on the wall.

LEYLA
That's enough, Burak! You leave or I'm closing the cafe.

When no one comes to Burak's defense, he starts for the door.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
You forgot to leave a tip.

He stops. The room tenses — how will he respond? — until someone laughs. Then everybody laughs and Burak storms out. Leyla mutes the television and conversations start again.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
You boys ready for another beer?

AHDAF
I'm not in the mood. Are you?

Kalam isn't either. Ahdaf leaves money on the bar. They mumble goodbye and start for the door.

LEYLA
You forgot to leave a tip, too.

Ahdaf turns around and digs into his pocket for a coin.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
Get out of here.

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - NIGHT

Ahdaf and Kalam, walking up an easy hill, come to a corner.

AHDAF
Your hotel is four blocks that way.

KALAM
Do you want to come to my room?

AHDAF
I do but I'm too scared. After what happened to Sadiq, and what just happened at Leyla's... I'm nervous. I don't know what the hotel guy might do if he thinks we're doing something.

KALAM
What if I come to your place?

AHDAF
I'm sorry. I can't tonight. After what's happened in Athens, I'm even more nervous.

Kalam touches his shoulder.

KALAM
I understand. I also have a couple of days to change your mind. Before we say goodnight, I have something to give you.

Kalam pulls an envelope from his daypack. Ahdaf's name is written on it. He recognizes the handwriting.

AHDAF
It's from my mother?

KALAM
Sadiq told me that you and your father often prayed together, so I went to the mosque to ask him how to find you in Istanbul. He said to come to your house for the information. Your mother also gave me this letter.

AHDAF
How are my parents?

KALAM
They're frightened for you. After they executed Sadiq, ISIS fighters came looking for you.

AHDAF
What did they say to my parents?
(breaks into tears)
They must be so ashamed of me! So ashamed...

Ahdaf's tears fall onto the envelope, blurring his mother's handwriting.

KALAM
They wrote that letter but never mailed it because it was too important to get lost. They asked me to deliver it.

AHDAF
Thank you. I'll call you tomorrow if I have news about the raft.

KALAM
Call me anyway. I like you. I'd like to kiss you.

AHDAF
You're my first client to say that.

KALAM
Who was the first guy you kissed?

AHDAF
Sadiq.

KALAM
We were both lucky that way.

They touch their hearts and part ways.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ahdaf takes his parents' letter out of his daypack and places it on his table. He pulls food from the refrigerator, and while eating, stares at the envelope. He takes it to bed with him, climbing in gently so as not to knock over the bookstacks lifting the mattress off the floor. He opens the letter and reads:

AHDAF'S MOTHER (V.O.)
To our beloved son, Your father and I are writing this together. A child has no secrets from his parents, though we sometimes ignore the truth when it is inconvenient.
(MORE)

AHDAF'S MOTHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Your father and I both knew your secret but we never spoke about it to each other. The most important conversation we should have had, we never did until you were gone. We are ashamed of ourselves because we were ashamed of you. We no longer feel that shame. We long to embrace you as you are, our son whom we have always loved and always will. Your loving parents.

Ahdaf, weeping, presses the letter to his chest.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ahdaf's asleep when his phone beeps and wakes him. He checks his message.

SELIM (TEXT)
Eminonu 1 hour

EXT. TRAM STATION - LATER

Ahdaf squeezes into a packed tram car.

EXT. EMINONU DOCKS - LATER

Ahdaf gets off the tram and walks to the newsstand. He browses the headlines about the previous night's terrorist attack in Athens. Selim reaches around him for a newspaper.

SELIM
Sorry, but I'm in a hurry to catch the next ferry to Uksudar.

He walks off. Ahdaf follows him aboard and climbs to the main deck where Selim is already reading the newspaper. Ahdaf joins him at the rail.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Let's talk after we disembark. I know a private place without eavesdroppers.

EXT. USKUDAR DOCKS - LATER

They disembark and Selim flags a taxi. They get in.

SELIM
The Cinili Mosque, please.

EXT. CINILI MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

The taxi pulls to the curb and they get out. There's a small garden with benches in front of the mosque. The call to noon prayer has started and it's crowded with men.

SELIM
I forgot about noon prayers. If it's crowded here, the hammam next door is probably empty. Do you like hammams?

EXT. HAMMAM - CONTINUOUS

They enter an arched gate and approach the ochre building.

INT. HAMMAM - CONTINUOUS

They enter a room surrounded by narrow wooden changing rooms with half-glass doors. Attendants, slouched against the walls, stand up straighter. ADEM, the desk man, smiles.

ADEM
Welcome, Mister Wilson, and your friend.

SELIM
Hello, Adem. How are you?

ADEM
Alive, *alhumdulilla*. Berat! Deniz!

The attendants scurry over to take keys and lead them to changing rooms across from each other. As he undresses, Ahdaf watches Selim strip down. Selim catches his eye and he glances away. They tuck thin cotton towels around their waists and meet at the door leading into the hammam proper.

DENIZ
Will you want a scrub, Mister Wilson?

SELIM
I think we'll scrub each other.
(to Ahdaf)
Is that okay with you?

The attendants hand them soap and loofahs. They enter a steamy labyrinth that brings them to a domed room with a raised marble platform and semi-enclosed washrooms in the corners. They take the only empty one and sit on either side of a deep basin. Using shallow metal bowls, they douse themselves with water, soap up and rinse off.

AHDAF
Everybody seems to know you here.

SELIM
I tip them. They remember that. Can you hear what they're saying in the other corners?

AHDAF
I hear voices but not the words.

SELIM
The splashing water muffles them. The Ottomans knew that trick. That's why they held their top secret meetings in harems where there were always fountains.

AHDAF
How do you know that?

SELIM
Spy school.

AHDAF
Really? Spies go to school?

SELIM
(chuckling)
Yes, we go to school, though actually a guide at Topkapi Palace taught me that trick.

Selim stands and faces the basin. Loosening his towel, he clutches it in one hand while soaping up under it. Ahdaf can't help sneaking a look when he rinses off.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Do you want me to wash your back?

AHDAF
My back?

SELIM
You can't wash your own.

Selim reties his towel and steps in front of Ahdaf.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Bend forward.

Selim pulls Ahdaf's head down until his forehead is pressed against the knot in his towel. As Selim runs a block of soap down his back, he brings his mouth close to his ear.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Have you ever smuggled anybody trying to escape from Turkey?

AHDAF
Turks aren't refugees. They can travel.

SELIM
Not if they're wanted for arrest.

AHDAF
I've never smuggled a Turk.

When Selim reaches for a loofah, Ahdaf sees his erection under his thin towel. When Selim runs the loofah down his back, Ahdaf intentionally butts his head against it.

SELIM
If you organized the crossing for someone like that, what would be the biggest risk?

AHDAF
The roadblocks.

SELIM
So the person needs a fake ID?

AHDAF
And a burka. Only women in burkas are truly untouchable. It's a costume for men, too, if they have a woman's ID and don't speak.

SELIM
What if he's asked a question?

AHDAF
A male relative always accompanies a woman in a burka. He speaks for her.

SELIM
Can you arrange for a private boat?

AHDAF
It’s possible but I’ve never organized it. I’d have to ask around. When?

SELIM
Probably in a day or two.

He rinses Ahdaf’s back a final time.

SELIM (CONT’D)
Finished.

AHDAF
Your turn next.

SELIM
Another time.

Ahdaf, perplexed, watches Selim adjust his towel to better conceal his erection.

SELIM (CONT’D)
I have a passenger who wants to go to Greece as soon as you can arrange it, so go arrange it.

Ahdaf, puzzled by his dismissal, leaves the washroom. He passes Deniz lurking nearby who starts in Selim’s direction.

EXT. MOSQUE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ahdaf pulls back the heavy curtain that serves as the mosque’s door just as Malik comes out. They almost bump into each other and flash tense smiles. Minutes later, they’re walking in the mosque’s garden.

MALIK
What did Selim Wilson want this morning?

AHDAF
How do you know I met with him?

MALIK
You can have no secrets from me. What did he want?

AHDAF
He wanted specifics on smuggling someone secretly. Alternatives to public buses and things like that.
(MORE)

AHDAF (CONT'D)
He still hasn't said who, but it'll happen in a few days.

MALIK
Tomorrow, I want you to move some people coming from Greece.

AHDAF
I have no contacts to organize anything in Greece.

MALIK
You don't have to organize it. A Greek fisherman will bring them to Assos. You meet them and bring them to Istanbul.

AHDAF
How many?

MALIK
Three men. One's been injured in a fire. Apparently very seriously.

AHDAF
Very seriously? He might die?

MALIK
Allah will decide.

AHDAF
How can I put them on a bus?

MALIK
You'll take our school bus.

AHDAF
The madrasa's van? I've never driven such a vehicle.

MALIK
Have you driven a car?

AHDAF
Not much.

MALIK
Allah will instruct you.

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - MINUTES LATER

With the mosque behind him, Ahdaf dials his phone and speaks into it when he hears a beep.

AHDAF
I'm not in danger but it's urgent.
I'm headed to Eminonu now.

EXT. EMINONU DOCKS - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf exits the tram and heads for the newsstand where Selim is waiting for him.

AHDAF
How'd you get here before me?

SELIM
I had an appointment nearby.

AHDAF
I'm not your only spy, am I?

SELIM
It's an industry in Istanbul.
What's urgent?

AHDAF
Can your person be ready to go tomorrow?

SELIM
My person is ready to go now.
What's your plan?

DISSOLVE TO:

SELIM (CONT'D)
Why would the Greek fisherman take my person back with him?

AHDAF
For enough money.

SELIM
What time do you pick up the van?

AHDAF
Ten.

SELIM
So you'll be at the consulate at eleven. Pull up with the passenger door facing the consulate. It'll be more discreet that way.

EXT. LEYLA'S CAFE - EVENING

As Ahdaf is about to enter, Munir walks out. They *salaam malekum* each other and touch their hearts.

AHDAF
How are things? Better I hope.

MUNIR
Yasemin still has almost no milk for the baby.

Ahdaf pulls out his wallet and hands Munir some money.

MUNIR (CONT'D)
I wasn't asking for money. I'm not a beggar.

AHDAF
Munir, we're friends. Let me buy some formula for the baby and a steak for your wife and son.

MUNIR
How can I thank you?

AHDAF
Do you still want to leave for Europe?

MUNIR
We can't think of another solution.

AHDAF
There's a chance to cross tomorrow.

MUNIR
Tomorrow?

AHDAF
It's a possibility. A Greek fisherman is bringing three men to Assos. I can try to talk him into taking you back with him. It's safer than a raft and the fisherman is a real captain, not a refugee with only five minutes training on how to steer a boat.

MUNIR
I need to discuss it with Yasemin.

AHDAF
I might need help tomorrow whether you make the crossing or not. I'll bring you back if you're not ready.

MUNIR
What kind of help?

AHDAF
I don't know. I want to be prepared for anything.

MUNIR
I'll help you.

AHDAF
Good. Be outside my apartment at ten in the morning. Bring what you need if you decide to cross. That way, you keep your options open.

MUNIR
What will it cost?

AHDAF
Maybe nothing.

Munir, thoughtful, shuffles off.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Leyla passes between tables delivering orders. Kalam is at the cowboy bar videotaping the room. Ahdaf joins him.

AHDAF
I see you found your way back.

KALAM
(teasing)
No thanks to you. Fazar said you'd dropped bread crumbs but I didn't see them.

AHDAF
The birds or refugees must have eaten them. Do you want to share a beer?

KALAM
Sure.

They look for Leyla. She's enthralling a table of men.

AHDAF
I've made some progress. I'm trying to arrange for you to cross tomorrow.

KALAM
You found a raft so fast?

AHDAF
Better. A Greek fisherman is making a reverse crossing bringing back some Turks. I'm supposed to pick them up and drive them to Istanbul. The Greek will be going back to Greece. Maybe he can be convinced to take you with him.

KALAM
I have some money but not enough to hire a whole boat.

AHDAF
It's still more than the nothing he's going to get otherwise.

CUSTOMER
HEY! TURN UP THE TV!

Everyone whirls around to see CNN's Breaking News logo. Ahdaf reaches across the bar for the remote and turns it up.

CNN REPORTER (ON TV)
We are waiting to hear from special correspondent, Derya Thomas, who's been covering the recent tragic incident in Assos.

Derya appears on the screen in front of a blank wall.

CNN REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There she is. Derya, can you hear me?

DERYA (ON TV)
Yes, I can hear you, and I think people will be shocked when they hear my report. Two nights ago, a raft with sixty-four refugees capsized not because of the weather but because they were rammed. By the Turkish Coast Guard! I'll let this fisherman who witnessed the incident tell his story.

The screen switches to a video of a man, his face blurred, on a dock with fishing boats behind him.

FISHERMAN (ON TV)
It was dark. Cloudy with no moon. I was headed for the harbor when I almost ran into the Coast Guard's boat. It had no lights on. Fortunately I managed to only sideswipe it. Suddenly its engine start and lights came on. I thought because of me, but instead it shot forward and in about fifty meters plowed into the refugees. I heard screams and saw people fall into the water. Children too. I'll never forget.

DERYA (O.S.)
Are you sure it was the Coast Guard's boat?

FISHERMAN (ON TV)
It was written on its side. Besides, who else has radar equipment like that?

The TV screen reverts to Derya against a blank wall.

DERYA
For two days we've been asking, where was the Coast Guard the night of the incident? Now we know. The Coast Guard *caused* the incident. An incident staged by the government that it quickly blamed on ISIS. Why? My hunch is that the president hopes he'll gain support for an expanded war against the Islamic State in Syria. This is Derya Thomas reporting from a secret location.

Ahdaf mutes the TV. Upset, he can barely choke out:

AHDAF
I put a family on that raft. Only the mother survived.

KALAM
Do you want to leave?

EXT. ISTANBUL STREET - NIGHT

Ahdaf and Kalam walk up the hill in silence. They reach the corner where they parted the night before.

AHDAF
I hate the idea of your sleeping at the Tropicana with its bugs. If you want, stay with me tonight. Your choice, bed or floor.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Coming up stairs, they arrive at a landing.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They enter and Ahdaf turns on a light.

KALAM
It's nice. And so clean!

AHDAF
It was filthy when I moved in. Painting it made a big difference.

KALAM
I should take a video for the documentary of my journey.

AHDAF
A beer?

KALAM
Why not?

While he takes a bottle from the fridge and pours two glasses, Kalam examines the bookstacks under his mattress.

KALAM (CONT'D)
Are they to keep the roaches off?

AHDAF
How'd you guess?

KALAM
I hate them too.

Ahdaf hands him a glass. They clink and sip.

AHDAF
I always wanted to know how Sadiq got beer when ISIS was in control.

KALAM
Your cousin had many secrets. Including not telling me how handsome you are. How could he resist you? How could he not want you in every way?

Kalam pulls him into a kiss. When it becomes long, they set down their beers and tug at each other's clothes. Soon naked, they ease onto the mattress and move gently. Even so, their twists and turns cause the bookstacks to crash. They laugh, restart the sex, and end with Ahdaf's head on Kalam's shoulder running his hand through his chest hair.

AHDAF
I used to think I'd never do some of those things.

KALAM
You still haven't done everything.

AHDAF
Did you? With Sadiq? Do everything?

KALAM
No. He always set limits. We should put the mattress on the floor so we can sleep.

AHDAF
We need to move the books first.

They start to stack the books against the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

The books are stacked and they are repositioning the mattress.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Now we have a bed.

KALAM
Are you ready to sleep?

AHDAF
We should. Tomorrow's a long day. You can shower if you want. I have a clean towel.

KALAM
Let’s save that for the morning.

They kiss again before Kalam goes into the bathroom. Ahdaf goes to close the curtain and startles a man who’s staring at his window. The man quickly walks away.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - MORNING

In the BATHROOM, Ahdaf scrubs Kalam’s back in the shower. He slips his hands below Kalam’s waist and fondles him.

KALAM
That’s not my back.

AHDAF
I know where your back is.

He presses against Kalam, who gasps when he enters him.

AHDAF (CONT’D)
Is that okay?

KALAM
Go slow. But don’t stop!

LATER

Ahdaf makes Turkish coffee while streaming CNN Turk on his mobile phone.

REPORTER (ON SCREEN)
...the government’s raid on a suspected ISIS cell backfired when an exchange of gunfire caused a butane cooking bottle to explode and engulf three buildings in flames. At least a dozen persons perished. In another developing story, an arrest warrant has been issued for one of our special correspondents, Derya Thomas, who yesterday accused the Coast Guard of deliberately sinking a raft carrying refugees. She’s charged with sedition for undermining confidence in the government.

He switches off his phone. The newspaper Selim gave him with Meryem’s photo on the front page is still on his small table. He tears out her photo, folds it and sticks it into his daypack. Kalam comes out of the bathroom and Ahdaf hands him a coffee.

KALAM
What's in the news? My Turkish isn't good enough to follow it.

AHDAF
How's your Greek?

KALAM
Non-existent.

AHDAF
And your English?

KALAM
'Hi. My name is Kalam. I am no hurt you. Can you please help me?' I can say that and a few other things.

AHDAF
If you don't speak English, how will you know what's happening on your route to Hollywood? Where it's safe and where it's not? Things like that.

KALAM
I'll meet people like you. Or better, you come with me!

AHDAF
I'm not ready, though last night was really special.

KALAM
So was this morning. It was my first time for that. I'm glad it was you who did it.

AHDAF
Stay a week. We'll do it again. It'll be my turn.

KALAM
After a week with you, I'd never leave and I'm not ready to stop. I'm only at the beginning of my journey.

EXT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf and Kalam exit Ahdaf's building.

AHDAF
His name is Munir. A nice guy with big ears. Introduce yourselves. Then go get your stuff at the Tropicana and come back here.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf exits the mosque and is tying his sneakers when someone casts a shadow. He glances up. It's Malik.

MALIK
I thought you might come for dawn prayers.

AHDAF
I wanted the extra sleep to be rested for the trip to Assos.

MALIK
How much did you sleep?

AHDAF
How much did I sleep?

MALIK
You had a man in your room.

AHDAF
Sometimes I rent space on my floor to clients. To sleep. Men only.

MALIK
You came to the window naked and shut the curtain.

AHDAF
I'm never naked except in the shower.

Malik holds up his cell for Ahdaf to watch a video.

INSERT VIDEO: Shadows on the walls of Ahdaf's apartment show Kalam and him caressing each other and kissing. A second clip shows Ahdaf, bare-chested, closing the curtain.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Why are you spying on me?

MALIK
Because of rumors about you and your cousin. Now I have proof.

AHDAF
Proof of what? That I closed a curtain while not wearing a shirt?

MALIK
Be careful, Ahdaf. For now, only I know the truth. If you are useful to me, I'll protect you.

AHDAF
Then let me be useful and take the van.

Malik hands him keys and a wad of bills.

MALIK
For gas and tolls.

AHDAF
And for me? How much are you paying me to go to Assos?

MALIK
What's your life worth?

AHDAF
So that's my payment: you won't throw me off a rooftop?

MALIK
You will have atoned for your sins.

AHDAF
What if I sin again?

MALIK
Then you must answer to Allah again. Shall we go to the van?

EXT. MOSQUE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

They exit through a gate in a tall hedge into an ALLEY where the madrasa's van (painted school bus yellow) is parked.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf hoists himself into the driver seat, rolls down his window and starts the engine. He looks at the gear box. They aren't marked.

AHDAF
Where's reverse?

MALIK
Hard right and down. Do you know how to drive a stick shift?

AHDAF
I do now that I can find reverse!

He tests it, lurching backwards until he stalls the motor.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I'm just testing it!

He grinds the gears finding first and lurches down the alley to the street. Turning onto it, he's greeted by car horns.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

He pulls up to his apartment building where Kalam and Munir are waiting on the sidewalk.

AHDAF
Both of you get in back. We have another passenger to pick up at the consulate.

MUNIR
Whatever you say, boss!

KALAM
I thought you were picking up someone in Assos, not taking someone there.

AHDAF
It's someone else who wants to get to Greece and not on a raft.

MUNIR
He works for the Americans?

AHDAF
Who he is, or why he's at the consulate, I don't know.

MUNIR
Are you sure you can trust him?

AHDAF
You're a smuggler. You know the answer to that!

MUNIR
(displaying a gun)
That's why I brought this.

AHDAF
What the fuck! Keep that out of sight.

LATER

He turns up a hill.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
We're at the consulate.

Selim, waiting on the curb, waives Ahdaf over. The guards lift their weapons.

GUARD
You said only one driver! There are two passengers, too!

Selim motions for calm and approaches the van.

SELIM
Who are they?

AHDAF
Friends who want to go to Greece. Maybe the Greek will take them too.

SELIM
(eyeballing all of them)
No one gets out of the vehicle. No one even moves.

Selim goes into the consulate and reappears escorting a person in a burka. Ahdaf looks quizzical: a woman, or a man in disguise? Selim helps her into the passenger seat and hands Ahdaf a bank card.

SELIM (CONT'D)
It's prepaid with no code. Use it for gas, tolls and food.

AHDAF
What's the arrangement for her?

SELIM
She has money.

Selim steps back and Ahdaf drives to the top of the hill where he pulls over to turn on his phone's GPS.

WOMAN IN BURKA
Turn that off and save your battery. You won't have many chances to recharge it. I know the way to Assos. Get on the national road to Ankara.

SELIM
I've never driven in Turkey before.

WOMAN IN BURKA
Head down the hill and take the first right back to the main road.

MUNIR
Hey boss! The windows don't open and I want to smoke. Can you open yours?

AHDAF
(to woman)
Will you be too cold?

WOMAN IN BURKA
Cold? Do you have any idea how hot a burka is? They're synthetic and don't breathe. Eventually even your hands sweat but the cloth is too slick to dry them. It's almost noon. Can we listen to the news?

AHDAF
If the radio works.

The woman tunes into Radio Turk.

RADIO TURK ANNOUNCER
...coordinated roadside bombs set the kilometer-long convoy on fire. The Turkish soldiers were gunned down as they fled the burning vehicles. ISIS has claimed responsibility for today's attack but continues to deny causing a raft to capsize in Assos three days ago. That's the news at noon.

WOMAN IN BURKA
(turning off radio)
ISIS hasn't claimed credit for the raft incident because it wasn't involved in it.

Ahdaf glances in mirror. The other guys are chatting.

AHDAF
You're Derya Thomas, aren't you?

She nods yes.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I've seen your reports. You take a lot of risks.

DERYA
You must in your business, too.

AHDAF
I try not to. Mostly I arrange for things to happen by telephone.

DERYA
You're taking a big risk driving me to Assos. Why are you doing it?

Ahdaf reaches into his daypack and hands her a newspaper clipping. She unfolds it. It's the photo of Meryem cradling her dead son.

DERYA (CONT'D)
Meryem? Were you her smuggler?

AHDAF
Yes.

DERYA
So you provided their lifejackets?

AHDAF
I bought them. I trusted my supplier. Something like that never happened before.

DERYA
That you know of or want to admit?

AHDAF
I just admitted it, didn't I?

DERYA
That doesn't answer my question. Why take the risk with me?

AHDAF
To try to find her. To help her.

DERYA
How?

AHDAF
(braking for a toll booth)
I don’t know yet.

SERIES OF SCENES

- They pull away from the toll booth and soon turn off the national road.

- Kalam videos their crossing the Osmangazi Bridge.

- They turn off the national road onto a country road for Assos. Cresting a hill, the sea stretches to the horizon and Ahdaf pulls over.

DERYA
Is there a problem?

AHDAF
I’ve never seen the Mediterranean Sea before.

MUNIR
Hey boss! Aren’t we two or three hours early?

AHDAF
I wanted plenty of time in case we had a problem.

KALAM
Like shifting gears?

AHDAF
Sorry about my driving.

MUNIR
Don’t be sorry! Now we have time for a swim! In my whole life, I swam only in the Bosporus which is never blue and never clean!

KALAM
(mimicking Munir)
Hey boss! Let’s all take a swim in the clean blue sea!

Ahdaf starts down the hill.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

They arrive at the coastal road. Assos village is in sight to the left. Ahdaf turns right.

Coves dot the shoreline with azure water and smooth pebble beaches ringed by rough black shale. He approaches an especially beautiful one.

AHDAF
Is this clean and blue enough?

MUNIR
Perfect!

He leaps out and runs to the water unbuttoning his shirt.

KALAM
I'm coming too! How about you?

AHDAF
I have to do something in the village.

KALAM
Don't forget to come back!

AHDAF
And not say goodbye to you?

Kalam runs and joins Munir on the beach. They strip to their underwear and glance back at the van.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
You might want to avert your eyes. They'll probably to keep their underwear dry.

DERYA
Avert my eyes? How often do I have a chance to see naked men?

AHDAF
I suppose not often in a burka.

DERYA
Not often enough in anything!

Kalam and Munir pull off their briefs and run naked into the water. Ahdaf backs onto the road. As he pulls away, in the mirror he watches them splash each other.

AHDAF
Are you sure you know where Meryem is?

DERYA
I made sure she was safe before I returned to Istanbul.

AHDAF
How'd you find a place so fast?

DERYA
I'm not sharing my contacts.

AHDAF
I'm not a spy.

DERYA
If you work for Selim, you are.

They arrive at the village. Ahdaf keeps straight on the road a block in from the harbor. They get glimpses of its colorful fishing boats.

AHDAF
It's an accident that I'm working for Selim. I always have three tasks: bus, lifejacket, raft. Sometimes I find replacements for lost crutches, medicines, or whatever.

DERYA
At least you try to help. Most people try not to see what's happening. That's why I became a news reporter. To make them notice things.

AHDAF
You definitely succeeded with your last story.

DERYA
I hope it's not my last story. Pull over here. Meryem's staying there. I'll go explain why you're here.

AHDAF
What if she refuses to see me?

DERYA
Don't you think she should decide?

Derya gets out of the van and walks up to the house. She knocks, a WOMAN answers, then Meryem appears. Derya and Meryem speak before she returns to the van.

DERYA (CONT'D)
She'll talk to you.

Ahdaf approaches the front door. When Meryem sees him, she starts beating on him with her fists. He lets her. When close to collapsing, the woman comes out to help her inside. Ahdaf gets back in the van. Derya hands him a tissue.

DERYA (CONT'D)
You have a bloody nose.

He dabs his nose and sees blood on the tissue.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD BEACH - LATER

Ahdaf makes a left into the cove's turnout. Kalam and Munir are facedown on the pebbly beach enjoying the day's last sunlight. Kalam lifts his arm, taps his wrist and shouts:

KALAM
How much more time?

AHDAF
I don't know.
(telephone rings)
Wait!
(into telephone)
Merhabah. Hello.

INT. CABIN OF GREEK FISHING BOAT - CONTINUOUS

GREEK FISHERMAN (ON MOBILE)
No Turkish. Greek.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

AHDAF
No Greek. English?

GREEK FISHERMAN
Sometimes good enough. The weather is difficult. It's pushing me north. Do you know Big Rocks Beach?

DERYA (O.S.)
It's five kilometers north of here.

AHDAF
Yes, I know Big Rocks Beach.

GREEK FISHERMAN
I am there after one hour. Flash your lights. Maybe I won't see you with the rain.

AHDAF
It’s clear here.

GREEK FISHERMAN
I bring it, don’t worry. One man is injured. I wasn’t told. He needs a hospital. Okay. One hour.

AHDAF
Wait! I have three return passengers for you.

GREEK FISHERMAN
That’s not the plan.

AHDAF
They will pay, it’s not a problem.

GREEK FISHERMAN
Everybody’s a problem and I don’t like surprises. The injured man is enough surprise.

The Greek hangs up.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

AHDAF
Fuck.

KALAM
(from beach)
Ahdaf! Come swimming! It’s incredible!

AHDAF
Do you mind?

DERYA
I’m not averting my eyes.

Ahdaf runs to the beach, strips, and the three young men dive into the water. Ahdaf dares to open his eyes and realizes they are surrounded by thousands of small fish sparkling in the sunlight.

AHDAF
(surfacing)
It’s so clear! And so many fish!

KALAM
Didn’t I say incredible?

They dive back under the water. Kalam swims farther out into the cove. Ahdaf follows him. They manage some horseplay as a cover for discreet touches before returning to the beach and dressing. Ahdaf sits on the pebbles to tie his shoes.

KALAM (CONT'D)
Do you think she's watching us?

AHDAF
Of course she is, wouldn't you?
(beat)
The Greek captain doesn't like the idea of taking anyone back with him.

KALAM
How do you know?

AHDAF
Just now, on the telephone, he said he doesn't like surprises.

KALAM
He'll do it for enough money and I'm sure the Americans gave her enough.

INT. VAN - DUSK

Ahdaf waits for three speeding police cars to pass before backing onto the road and following them north. Minutes later, the fast-moving storm the Greek captain predicted arrives with lashing rain and gusting winds.

MUNIR
We're supposed to cross in this weather?

AHDAF
I wouldn't in a raft but a fishing boat can handle it.

KALAM
I just realize, I don't have a lifejacket.

AHDAF
I thought you could swim?

DERYA
This is Big Rocks Beach. Park there.

Ahdaf parks facing the sea. On the craggy shore, there's a pile of boulders with a thicket of pines next to it. Ahdaf flashes his lights. No response. The storm pounds them. He flashes his lights again and sees a faint flicker. He flashes again and his phone rings.

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
You're straight out from me.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

GREEK FISHERMAN (ON MOBILE)
I can't glide onto the beach in this weather and my passengers are going to need help.

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
And my passengers?

GREEK FISHERMAN (ON MOBILE)
How much they pay?

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
A lot more than nothing.

The Greek flashes a light which he interprets as agreement. They disconnect.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
(to Derya)
You have money for him, right?

MUNIR
What? You don't even know if she's got the money to pay the guy?

AHDAF
I was only double checking.

MUNIR
What else don't you know? What if she didn't have money? Were we going to steal his boat and sail ourselves to Greece?

KALAM
Calm down. Ahdaf's been straight with us.

MUNIR
It feels iffy to me. I'll help you tonight but I'm going back to Istanbul with you.

KALAM
Come with me, Ahdaf. Munir can drive them or they can drive themselves. Let’s go together.

MUNIR
(displaying gun)
I’m taking this but leaving the rest of my gear.

AHDAF
You don’t need a gun.

Munir rocks the van as he gets out. He taps his wedding ring.

MUNIR
Besides, this means something. I have to be with my family now. I can’t run away.

He crosses the shale perimeter of the pebbly beach.

KALAM
He wants an excuse not to go.

DERYA
A family is a good excuse.

Munir, soaked by the rain, reaches the waterline.

AHDAF
I see the boat. Let’s go!

EXT. BIG ROCKS BEACH - CONTINUOUS

They take whatever they need and get out of the van. They join Munir on the beach, who is sobbing. Ahdaf touches his shoulder and they embrace.

MUNIR
I wish I were braver.

AHDAF
Staying is the braver decision.

DERYA
The Greek is in the cove.

AHDAF
I need the money.

She hands him a pouch. He opens it to see wads of euros.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
How much?

DERYA
Ten thousand.

Kalam is videotaping the boat's arrival. It's not a typical putt-putter but upscale with a high, pointy bow. The Greek cuts his motor to glide to a stop when a swell threatens to push him too hard into the pebbles. Kalam and Munir run out to hold the boat back. The captain tosses them bow lines.

AHDAF
Where are your passengers?

GREEK FISHERMAN
Staying out of the rain.

AHDAF
What's the injured guy's status?

GREEK FISHERMAN
You'll see.

The Greek scans the shore as if looking for something before he drops a rope ladder off the bow, climbs down and sloshes his way to shore. The rain has already passed.

GREEK FISHERMAN (CONT'D)
Who are your passengers?

AHDAF
The blondish guy and her.

GREEK FISHERMAN
Greeks don't like to see burkas.

AHDAF
It's a disguise. She'll take it off. She's a journalist.
(handing him the pouch)
Here's your money.

GREEK FISHERMAN
How much?

AHDAF
Ten thousand euros.

GREEK FISHERMAN
For <u>two</u> people?

AHDAF
I'm only the driver. But the deal is, you take them both, or you can go back dragging your net and catching what? Three red snappers?

GREEK FISHERMAN
I'll take them both.
(shouting)
Sirhan, let's go!

SIRHAN, husky, and OZAN, skinny and small, appear at the stern carrying SANDAR by his arms and legs. Sirhan has an assault rifle slung over a shoulder. Ahdaf follows the Greek captain back into the water to the boat.

GREEK FISHERMAN (CONT'D)
Let him down feet first!

As the body descends, they grab it and carry him to shore. His flesh is melted. Ahdaf turns aside and gags.

AHDAF
He's already rotting!

Sirhan, husky and lethal, and Ozan, skittish, follow them ashore.

SIRHAN
Where's the closest hospital?

AHDAF
I'll check my GPS.

Sirhan bends close to Sandar's ear.

SIRHAN
Hang on, brother. You're going to a hospital now. Come on, Ozan, let's get him to the van.

They make it halfway to the parked van when headlights from three cars hidden in the pines suddenly illuminate them. FIVE POLICEMEN rush out to the beach.

POLICEMAN
Police! Stop!

Munir fumbles in his daypack and pulls out a gun. It flashes in the headlights and the police shoot him in a spurt of gunfire. Derya bolts for the van.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
Police! Stop!

Sirhan unshoulders his rifle and unleashes a fierce barrage that blows away the policemen, headlights and windshields.

The Greek lunges for his boat, scrambles up the rope ladder, runs to the stern and throws the engine into reverse. Kalam drops his daypack and charges into the water. Swimming hard, he catches a retreating bow line, pulls himself to the boat, and perches on the rope ladder's first rung. He exchanges a forlorn look with Ahdaf as they drift apart. Then Kalam remembers the phone around his neck and lifts it to his eye to video his departure.

Ahdaf grabs Kalam's discarded daypack and runs to Munir who's wounded beyond recognition. He starts to take his gun but leaves it. He pockets Munir's wallet, and twists off his wedding ring and slips it onto his own ring finger. He sprints for the van.

Sirhan and Ozan are about to heave Sandar into the van when Ahdaf arrives and slides the door shut. He vomits.

AHDAF
He's not going.

SIRHAN
He's my twin. I'm not going to abandon him. He needs a hospital.

AHDAF
He smells dead.

SIRHAN
He makes noises.

AHDAF
When dead bodies get bloated, they fart. Besides, in five minutes this place will be swarming with cops and ambulances. If he's alive, they'll help him. Now get in.

Sirhan kisses his fingers and presses them to Sandar's forehead. When he swings open the passenger door, Derya, crouched on the floor, startles him.

SIRHAN
Who is she?

Ahdaf, unprepared for the question, finally points to Munir.

AHDAF
She's his wife.

SIRHAN
He’s dead. So she’s his widow?

AHDAF
Isn’t it too soon to call her that?

SIRHAN
She’s not coming. Widows bring death. She’s not coming.

AHDAF
Of course she’s coming.

Sirhan brandishes his rifle.

SIRHAN
Not if I shoot her first.

AHDAF
Please don’t do that.

DERYA
I’m getting out.

Derya gets out.

AHDAF
(to Sirhan and Ozan)
Get in. We have to go before the cops come.

When Sirhan starts for the passenger seat, Ahdaf stops him.

AHDAF (CONT’D)
You both have to ride in the back. The far back. You reek and I can’t be vomiting every two minutes.
(to Derya)
I’m sorry.

DERYA
Don’t give him a reason to hurt you. Don’t argue with him. Please contact Selim in case I can’t.

AHDAF
What are you going to do?

She looks frightened but doesn’t answer. Instead, she starts running and soon blends into the night.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf gets into the van.

SIRHAN
How do you open the fucking windows back here?

AHDAF
It’s a school bus. They don’t open.

SIRHAN
Fuck if they don’t. Shut your eyes!

A burst of gunfire and crashing glass.

SIRHAN (CONT’D)
Now two of them don’t close!

SERIES OF SCENES:

- Ahdaf turns onto the coastal road.

- An oncoming convoy of police cars and ambulances passes him.

- He takes ticket at toll booth for the national road.

- He brakes for a service station and says in the mirror:

AHDAF
Gas and toilet stop.

EXT. SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Parked at a gas pump, Ahdaf opens the van’s side door for Sirhan and Ozan to get out. He hands them spare clothes that he pulls from Munir and Kalam’s daypacks.

AHDAF
Change into these and throw away what you’re wearing. They stink. And don’t do anything that makes anyone notice you.

He pumps gas as they go inside.

INT. VAN - LATER

Ahdaf pulls away from gas pump and parks in front of the store. When Sirhan and Ozan reappear, he flags them down. Again Sirhan tries to take the passenger seat.

AHDAF
You smell better but sit in back. You're more out of sight. My turn.

As Ahdaf gets out of the van, TWO POLICEMEN park on the other side of it.

INT. SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

Ahdaf enters the MEN'S ROOM and shuts himself in a stall. While he's seated on the toilet, the room's door opens with a bang. Through cracks around his stall's door, he sees the two policemen enter and stand at urinals.

POLICEMAN
Can you believe this overtime shit? What are we supposed to do, a random check of everybody's ID?

POLICEMAN #2
The situation's a big deal.

POLICEMAN
So's my date tonight.

POLICEMAN #2
I thought you were married.

POLICEMAN
That's why it's a big deal! Do you know how hard it is to cheat on your wife?

Laughing, they zip up and go to the sinks.

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
We don't have a clue who we're looking for, but if it's the guys who did the Athens job, maybe they did us a favor.

POLICEMAN #2
What do you mean?

POLICEMAN
We both got teenage sons. You want some faggot seducing yours?

They leave the men's room. Ahdaf, still in the stall, starts to write a message.

DISSOLVE TO:

He finishes his message and reads it back to himself.

AHDAF (V.O.)
Ambushed on beach. Returning to Istanbul with two of Malik's passengers. The third was dead. They forced me to leave your passenger behind. On national road driving to Malik's mosque if you want to rescue me.

He sends it and leaves the stall.

He walks into the store shaking his hands dry. He watches the two policemen exit with coffees and orders one for himself. The overhead TV is reporting news from Assos.

REPORTER (ON TV)
That's the last ambulance tonight, taking away the body of a man who'd been severely burned. Who is he? Why was his body here? That's one of many mysteries surrounding today's strange events at Big Rocks Beach.

EXT. SERVICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf returns to van just as the policemen pull away.

SIRHAN
Where the fuck have you been?

AHDAF
Waiting for the cops to leave. I heard them talking about random ID checks. What if they saw you in the van? I don't even know your names.

SIRHAN
(tapping his rifle)
They would see this, too.

AHDAF
I wanted to avoid that. Six dead policemen are already trouble enough for all of us.

Ahdaf pulls onto the national road.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I assume you're Turkish because you speak Turkish with each other. I'm Syrian. From Raqqa.

OZAN
Raqqa? We went to Raqqa three months ago!

SIRHAN
Shut up, Ozan.

OZAN
His brother wanted to fight for ISIS to prove he wasn't a faggot.

SIRHAN
I SAID SHUT UP!

OZAN
He proved it, Sirhan, by killing them! You should be proud of him.

AHDAF
Hey guys, it's been a tense night. Let's not make it tenser. It's five hours to Istanbul. Why don't you try to sleep? I've got GPS. I'll wake you when we get there.

SERIES OF SCENES

- Ahdaf watches them contort themselves on the bench seats, eventually bracing their knees against the bench across the aisle and using their lumpy daypacks as pillows.

- When both are snoring, Ahdaf sends a message.

AHDAF (TEXT) (CONT'D)
It's them.

He's writing a second message when he feels Sirhan's rifle pressed to the back of his head.

SIRHAN
Who are you sending a message to?

AHDAF
I'm letting Malik know where we are. Do you want to read it?

Sirhan glances at it.

SIRHAN
Now you know, I'm a light sleeper. No messages to anyone except to Malik.

INT. VAN - MORNING

Ahdaf turns into the mosque's alley and bounces to the gate in the hedge where Malik is waiting.

AHDAF
You two stay in the van where no one can see you.

He shoulders his, Kalam's and Munir's daypacks, and gets out.

EXT. MOSQUE ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf and Malik come together in front of the van.

MALIK
Who survived?

AHDAF
Sirhan and Ozan.

MALIK
So Sandar is dead?

AHDAF
You know them?

MALIK
Sandar was a troubled man. Why were the police on the beach?

AHDAF
I don't know.

MALIK
I assume Sirhan shot them. Why?

AHDAF
At the last minute, I asked a friend to come with me in case I needed help. When the police showed up, he pulled out a gun. The police shot him and Sirhan shot the police.

MALIK
The police shot first? So Sirhan shot them in self-defense.

AHDAF
It wasn't self-defense. It was a massacre.

MALIK
He's still a hero.

AHDAF
For what? Killing people dancing in a nightclub? Is dancing *haram*, too?

MALIK
It's a special sin for men to dance with men who act like women. It's why they were killed.

AHDAF
The five policemen and their families, what was their special sin?

MALIK
Whatever happens is Allah's will.

AHDAF
Obviously we pray to different Allahs. The key is in the ignition. Your heroes are waiting to be let out.

MALIK
You can't walk away from this. People in the countryside remember seeing things like a madrasa's school bus from Istanbul.

AHDAF
What's your point?

MALIK
Your fingerprints are all over the bus along with theirs.

AHDAF
So are yours.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf buys hummus and pitas and puts them into his daypack.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf enters his apartment. Closing the door, he leans against it from weariness and relief. He finally stirs himself to offload the three daypacks. He unwraps the pitas and hummus, eats while streaming CNN on his mobile.

CNN REPORTER (ON TV)
Officials report that a sixth body was found at the site. Male. No ID, possibly Turkish, thirty years old.

AHDAF
He was Syrian and thirty-two.

CNN REPORTER (ON TV)
He died of multiple gunshot wounds.

He turns off the news and goes into the bathroom. He perches his phone in easy reach of the shower.

Setting aside shoes, belt and wallet, he steps into the tub and undresses under the shower. As he does, he kneads his clothes with his feet, sudsing them up with the soap running off him. Cockroaches fling themselves at the upside down plastic bowl he’s used to seal the tub’s open drain. Now a hose drains the tub through the plastic bowl.

His telephone pings and he looks at his message.

SELIM (TEXT)
My passenger is safe. Your passengers are under surveillance. Get some sleep. 21h at Leyla’s.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf takes Munir’s wallet from his dead friend’s daypack, removes his ID and photographs it.

INT. SMALL GROCERY - LATER

Ahdaf adds yogurt, baby formula and sesame bars to a shopping basket. At checkout, he buys a rotisserie chicken.

EXT. MUNIR’S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Ahdaf approaches Munir’s building. He rings the doorbell. YASEMIN, his wife, answers the intercom.

YASEMIN (ON INTERCOM)
Who is it?

AHDAF
Ahdaf Jalil. Munir’s friend.

INT. MUNIR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

She buzzes him in. He climbs the stairs. A door opens on the second landing. Yasemin peers out.

YASEMIN
Munir? He’s not with you?

Her whole body shakes, ready to collapse. He catches her before she does. She weeps into his shoulder.

YASEMIN (CONT’D)
It’s Munir, isn’t it? The one they can’t identify. Why do they blur his face? I recognized his ears.

AHDAF
It’s him.

SAMIR (O.S.)
Mama?

YASEMIN
I’m out here, Samir.

SAMIR (O.S.)
Is Baba home?

YASEMIN
I’m talking to a friend, sweetheart.
(to Ahdaf)
How do I explain to a three-year-old that his *baba* is dead?

AHDAF
I brought some food. I have other things for you, too. May I come in?

He follows her into MUNIR’S APARTMENT. SAMIR, 3, on the bed, watches cartoons on a mobile phone.

SAMIR
Mama, I’m hungry.

AHDAF
Start with this.

Ahdaf gives the boy a sesame bar who instantly bites into it. He opens a cupboard and takes out two plates.

YASEMIN
What are you doing?

AHDAF
Fixing you and Samir some lunch.

YASEMIN
I should do that.

AHDAF
No, you shouldn't. I can do it.

A BABY's irritated squeal distracts him. On the floor there's an INFANT GIRL swaddled in a kaftan in a cardboard box. He bends down, tickles her belly, but she pushes his hand away.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Is she any stronger?

YASEMIN
I have more milk but she doesn't want to nurse. I think her body's decided not to waste the energy trying when she has none to waste.

AHDAF
She'll try again.

He carves up the chicken, sharing it between two plates and adding spoonfuls of yogurt. He serves Yasemin and Samir.

YASEMIN
And for you?

AHDAF
I have food at home. You'll have milk now.

YASEMIN
I hope she tries.

AHDAF
I brought baby formula if she doesn't.

YASEMIN
We tried it.

AHDAF
Try it again. I also have Munir's things for you.

He picks up Munir’s daypack.

YASEMIN
He carried that from Damascus. I carried Samir. We walked four months.

AHDAF
Here’s his wallet. Inside is his ID and some money. He didn’t leave you any money, did he?

YASEMIN
What money? I’m already begging on the street.

AHDAF
Munir never said.

YASEMIN
He was too ashamed.

AHDAF
There’s something else important.

He twists off Munir’s wedding ring and gives it to her.

AHDAF (CONT’D)
He changed his mind. He wasn’t going to Greece. He pointed to his ring and said ‘this means something.’ It was the last thing he said to anyone. He was coming home.

Yasemin closes her hand on the ring. Ahdaf squeezes her fist with both his hands and walks out.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - MID-AFTERNOON

Ahdaf unbuttons his shirt, rolls onto his mattress and checks the time on his telephone.

AHDAF
Good. Six hours.

He sets his alarm and ties a bandana around his eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

His alarm goes off. He groans and turns it off.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - NIGHT

Ahdaf joins Selim at the cowboy bar. There’s already a full glass of beer on the counter. He hesitates before sitting.

AHDAF
Is someone sitting here?

SELIM
You are. Leyla said you’d be on time and the beer would stay cold. She’s having a smoke. Cheers!

They clink glasses and sip from them.

SELIM (CONT’D)
Is it cold enough?

AHDAF
Only by her standards. Did you know what was going to happen in Assos?

SELIM
On the beach? I had no idea.

AHDAF
Or who I was picking up?

SELIM
I had some guesses.

AHDAF
Did you ever think to share your guesses with me?

SELIM
You wouldn’t have done the job.

AHDAF
You’re right. And my friend wouldn’t be dead either. It’s the second time you set me up.

SELIM
Malik wanted you to make a pickup in Assos. I wanted you to make a drop-off. You decided to coordinate the two operations. How is that my setting you up?

AHDAF
I can’t trust you.

SELIM
If the police hadn't shown up, no one would be dead, and Sirhan and Ozan probably would have slept the whole way to Istanbul.

AHDAF
Why were they there?

SELIM
Who, the police? They must've had a tipoff, but from whom I don't know.

AHDAF
You never sent a word after my message hoping you'd rescue me.

SELIM
Rescue you how? Sirhan was ready to kill anyone. If I'd sent you a message he'd've been suspicious.

AHDAF
I've been back in Istanbul twelve hours and only now we're meeting.

SELIM
You needed sleep and I was working on contingency plans for Derya and the woman, Meryem. Also, how to capture Malik, Sirhan and Ozan.

AHDAF
They haven't been arrested yet?

SELIM
The government doesn't want to launch a strike at the mosque. People will interpret it as an attack on fundamentalists. We need to lure them out. That's why we still need your help.

AHDAF
Forget it.

SELIM
Malik has to move them somewhere. Go to prayers in the morning. He'll have a plan by then.

AHDAF
I said forget it.

SELIM
What about justice for Meryem?

Ahdaf stands to leave.

AHDAF
Fuck you. She’s not a pawn in your game.

Leyla, with a questioning expression, watches him walk out.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ahdaf enters, turns on the light and locks the door. He pulls a bottle of beer from the fridge. He swigs it. His eyes land on his daypack and he pulls out Meryem’s front page photo. He rummages in a drawer, finds pushpins and tacks it to the wall. He lifts his bottle to her.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - MORNING

Ahdaf enters the mosque’s courtyard. Speakers on the minaret blare the call to prayer. He slips off his sandals on the mosque’s steps just as Malik steps out.

MALIK
We’ll talk while we walk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOSQUE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

MALIK
You are certainly a man of habit. I could set my watch by you.

AHDAF
It’s Allah who sets my watch. Even if I don’t pray, I’m reminded what time it is.

MALIK
You met with Selim Wilson last night.

AHDAF
He thinks his journalist will be ready to leave in a couple of days.

MALIK
Why is he important to the Americans?

AHDAF
All Selim has said is that he's in danger for criticizing the government.

MALIK
Did he say anything about the events in Assos?

AHDAF
Why would he?

MALIK
It's all over the news.

AHDAF
He doesn't know that I was there.

MALIK
Who was the woman?

AHDAF
What woman?

MALIK
Sirhan said she was someone's widow.

AHDAF
Oh, Yasemin. I said I'd asked a friend to come along to help. She is — was — his wife.

MALIK
Where is she now?

AHDAF
I don't know. I assume she survived because the news hasn't reported finding a woman's body.

They reach the door built into the hedge. Malik opens it to reveal the yellow van. Ahdaf follows him around to the passenger side. He hands Ahdaf its keys.

MALIK
You'll need these.

AHDAF
Why?

Malik slides open side door. Inside, Sirhan grabs his rifle and sets it back down when he sees who it is.

SIRHAN
Knock first the next time.

AHDAF
You're taking them to your apartment. I can't keep them here.

Sirhan jumps out of the van.

SIRHAN
I need a toilet.

OZAN
Me too.

He follows Sirhan through the door in the hedge.

AHDAF
What am I supposed to do with them?

MALIK
Hide them.

AHDAF
Hide them? I have neighbors. Nosey neighbors!

MALIK
No nosier than our pupils.

AHDAF
I never agreed to this.

MALIK
You'll agree to it now.

AHDAF
Why should I?

MALIK
Because your cousin confessed you had sexual relations.

AHDAF
That's a lie!

MALIK
Allah's soldiers went to find you but you'd already run away. If you're not guilty, why run?

AHDAF
What was your original plan for Sirhan and Ozan?

MALIK
It doesn't matter. What happened on the beach changed everything.

Sirhan reappears.

SIRHAN
So what's the plan?

MALIK
You're staying at Ahdaf's apartment until you go back to Raqqa.

SIRHAN
How do we get to Raqqa?

MALIK
(staring at Ahdaf)
I'm trying to find a driver.

Ozan reappears working to free his shirttail caught in his pants zipper.

OZAN
I hope you're finding some food too.

EXT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf parks the madrasa's van in front of his apartment building. He looks at Sirhan and Ozan in the mirror.

AHDAF
If anybody talks to you, be polite, and hide your rifle.

SIRHAN
Hide it where?

AHDAF
Wrap your shirt around it.

Sirhan does, then points it at him.

SIRHAN
Should I hold it like this?

AHDAF
Don’t kid around. The whole country’s looking for you.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

They enter. Ozan instantly opens a cupboard.

OZAN
Do you have any food?
(opening refrigerator)
Halva!

AHDAF
I’ll go to the market after I return the van. Is there anything special you’d like?

SIRHAN
Yeah, two women. Find a short one for Ozan!

INT. VAN - MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf turns into the alley behind the mosque, pulls up to the door in the hedge, leaves keys in the ignition and gets out.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND MOSQUE - CONTINUOUS

At the end of the alley, he glances back. Malik, watching him, shakes his head disapprovingly. Ahdaf turns onto the sidewalk. His phone pings. He reads his message.

SELIM (TEXT)
I know Malik’s passengers are at your apartment. Meet me at Eminonu in one hour.

EXT. EMINONU DOCKS - AN HOUR LATER

Ahdaf approaches newsstand. No Selim. He skims newspapers. One has photo of the burning Spartacus Club in Athen with headline ISIS CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATHENS ATTACK. He leans closer to read: “The American consulate in Istanbul has confirmed-” The sentence continues under the fold. He glances at the vendor, who rubs his thumb and forefinger together, reminding Ahdaf he needs to buy the paper to read more.

SELIM (O.S.)
'The American consulate in Istanbul has confirmed that ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack on the gay club in Athens.'

Ahdaf looks at Selim over his shoulder.

AHDAF
Do you always memorize the news?

SELIM
I wrote the press release. We have a lot to talk about. I know a quiet place off the square.

EXT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Selim leads them to the same cafe where Ahdaf watched Derya's report from Assos the morning after Meryem's raft capsized.

SELIM
Is this okay?

AHDAF
It's where I watched Derya first report on the capsized raft. Now she's a real person to me.

SELIM
She's a real person to me, too. Tea?

Ahdaf nods. Selim signals 'two' to the WAITER. They sit silently until the teas arrive and the waiter leaves.

SELIM (CONT'D)
What's Malik's plan?

AHDAF
If you know they're at my apartment, why not arrest them?

SELIM
A couple of days ago, the OKK botched a raid on an ISIS house.

AHDAF
The OKK?

SELIM
Special Forces Command. It's an elite unit for tactical strikes.
(MORE)

SELIM (CONT'D)
Ultimately three buildings burned down killing a dozen people. The government won't risk that again.

AHDAF
What am I supposed to do?

SELIM
I can't say until I know Malik's plans.

AHDAF
He's arranging for them to return to Raqqa.

SELIM
How?

AHDAF
He wants me to drive them.

SELIM
Then that's what you'll do.

AHDAF
Are you crazy? I'm not going to Raqqa. ISIS is looking for me.

SELIM
It seems they've already found you.

AHDAF
I'm not going to Raqqa.

SELIM
You won't have to. You'll drive them into a trap.

AHDAF
What trap?

SELIM
I don't know yet.

He pulls out his wallet and hands Ahdaf a wad of money.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Buy enough food to keep them happy for another day.

AHDAF
Another day? What am I supposed to do? And I need some sleep!

SELIM
You've got enough money for a hotel, too. Tell them you have another operation and you might be gone all night. Then leave before they have time to think about it. Otherwise Sirhan might try to hold you hostage.

AHDAF
Hostage? Why?

SELIM
That's their mentality.

AHDAF
And I'm not supposed to be afraid?

EXT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Ahdaf, carrying bulging plastic bags of food, looks up at his apartment's window.

INT. AHDAF'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He enters the building and hears blaring music that grows louder as he climbs the stairs. It's coming from his apartment. He rings the bell. When there's no answer, he lets himself in. Sirhan has his rifle aimed at him.

SIRHAN
You're lucky you're alive. Next time knock.

AHDAF
I rang the bell.

He drops his bags on the table and turns down the volume on the cell phone that's blasting music.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
You're in hiding. That means not drawing attention to yourselves.

Ozan, pouncing on the groceries, stacks things on the table.

OZAN
Olives! Humus! Bread! Halva! Chips! MEATBALLS!

SIRHAN
Where the fuck have you been?

AHDAF
Taking the van back. Shopping for you. I confess, I had a tea.

OZAN
Tea, mint and sugar!

AHDAF
Don’t eat everything all at once. It might have to last another day.

SIRHAN
Why? What’s happening?

AHDAF
I’m waiting for instructions from Malik.

SIRHAN
Call him.

AHDAF
Don’t you know that every call to a mosque is intercepted by the CIA, the Turkish government, and who knows who else?

The music on the cell phone is interrupted by a chime indicating breaking news. Ahdaf turns it up.

RADIO TURK ANNOUNCER
We have breaking news about the recent events in Assos. Forensic experts confirm that the bullet casings retrieved from last week’s terrorist attack in Athens match bullet casings found at Big Rocks Beach.

SIRHAN
Fuck!

RADIO TURK ANNOUNCER
The terrorists are assumed to be in Turkey. Officials expect to be able to confirm their identities soon.

SIRHAN
Fuck! They already know who we are! We need a plan.

AHDAF
I’ll go talk to Malik.

He shoulders his daypack but Sirhan blocks the door.

SIRHAN
How do we know you're coming back?

AHDAF
I'll probably sleep at the mosque tonight. How can we all sleep here? I have your cell number. I'll let you know what's happening.

Sirhan relents and Ahdaf slips out.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Ahdaf, seated on the ablutions bench, rinses his feet. His phone pings. He checks his message.

KALAM (TEXT)
If you're reading this, thanks to Allah you survived the firefight on the beach! Captain G needs a mechanic. Guess who he hired for a week! Come join me. We'll make a holiday in Greece before heading north together. I miss our special friendship.

Ahdaf, tearing up, rereads the message. He sees Malik approaching and splashes his face to hide his tears.

MALIK
What's the situation in your apartment?

AHDAF
What do you think? They both stink and Sirhan is a lunatic.

MALIK
That's why he was chosen for the Athens operation.

AHDAF
You planned the attack in Athens?

MALIK
If they survived the attack, one escape route was to come to Turkey. I had a driver to take them to Raqqa, but after what happened in Assos, now he refuses. You heard the news?

AHDAF
About the bullets matching?

MALIK
Now everybody assumes they're in Turkey. You have to drive them to Raqqa, leaving tonight before they have time to put up roadblocks around Istanbul.

AHDAF
I've hardly slept in two days. I couldn't drive three hours let alone three days. Besides, you'll need a second driver from the border. I can't enter Syria.

MALIK
Can you arrange that?

AHDAF
I don't have the contacts, I can ask around, but that will raise suspicions.

MALIK
What do you suggest?

Ahdaf thinks about it and has an idea.

AHDAF
Send them back to Greece. Nobody's looking for them there because the bullets prove they're here.

MALIK
You can arrange that? Sending them back to Greece.

AHDAF
I have one option. I'll try for tomorrow night. I'll need money.

MALIK
I'll go to the bank now.

AHDAF
It's already closed and you'll need more than you can withdraw from a money machine.

MALIK
How much?

AHDAF
Ten thousand euros each man. That's the current rate for a private crossing. Plus a thousand for me. Is that going to be a problem?

MALIK
No.

AHDAF
Good. I'll call Sirhan to let him know. I'll call you, too, when I know it's arranged. Please make sure the van has gas and it's parked facing the main road.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf leaves the mosque typing a message as he walks.

AHDAF (TEXT)
Is Captain G interested in private transfer from Assos to Greece? 2 passengers. No guns like last time. Good payment. Tomorrow sunset?

Whoosh! He sends it. Next he calls Sirhan on telephone.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN AHDAF AND SIRHAN IN AHDAF'S APARTMENT

AHDAF (CONT'D)
It's Ahdaf.

SIRHAN
What's the plan?

AHDAF
You're going back to Greece. Malik decided. It's the last place they're looking for you.

SIRHAN
Fuck that. We're going to Raqqa.

AHDAF
With roadblocks and border controls, you'll be caught and probably shot on the spot.

SIRHAN
How do we survive in Greece?

AHDAF
Sympathizers will hide you. In the meantime, ISIS will announce you're back in Raqqa so the manhunt will be called off. When it's safe, Malik will arrange your way back to Raqqa.

SIRHAN
I still don't like it.

AHDAF
Think of it as a holiday where women wear bikinis not burkas. Be ready to leave at noon tomorrow.

Ahdaf hangs up and enters the Tropicana Hotel.

INT. TROPICANA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf approaches Fazar, behind the bamboo counter, at the end of the long hall lined with men's swimming trunks. He takes a pair of silky black ones.

AHDAF
I need a room for me tonight. My cousins are using my apartment.

FAZAR
Shouldn't they be the ones renting a room?

AHDAF
Family obligations. How much?

FAZAR
It's free for you.

AHDAF
Why?

FAZAR
You bring me customers.
(handing him a key)
3L. Now go take a shower. You need one. Take these, too.

Fazar offers a toothbrush with a tiny tube of toothpaste.

FAZAR (CONT'D)
A gift. I usually sell them.

AHDAF
Thanks but I always carry one. My father's a dentist. What can I say?

INT. TROPICANA HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf switches on the light. Cockroaches run and hide. He plops his daypack and new black trunks on a small table. He makes a call and hears the message tone.

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
It's urgent but I'm not in danger.

As soon as he pockets his phone it rings. He answers it.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Merhaba.

INT. SELIM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

SELIM (ON MOBILE)
What's urgent?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN AHDAF AND SELIM

AHDAF
Malik wants me to drive them to Raqqa.

SELIM
That's crazy.

AHDAF
I convinced him to send them back to Greece.

SELIM
What? That's even crazier.

AHDAF
The bullets prove they're in Turkey. Who's looking for them in Greece?

SELIM
How will they make the crossing?

AHDAF
Maybe I can get the Greek fisherman to come back. I already sent a message to Kalam, my client who escaped with him.
(MORE)

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Or, you mentioned a trap, so maybe we don't really need a boat.

SELIM
Or it could be part of a trap. Let me talk it around. Can you meet later?

AHDAF
Is eleven too late for you?

INT. ROOM AT TROPICANA HOTEL - NIGHT

Ahdaf is asleep with the lights on and a bandana around his eyes. An alarm goes off. He groans, gets up and strips, and goes into the BATHROOM. He steps under the shower.

Drying off, he returns to the MAIN ROOM. He tosses his old underwear in the trash and slips on the black swimming trunks. He leaves the room taking all his stuff with him.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - NIGHT

Ahdaf enters. Off to the side, Leyla delivers drink orders. Selim sits alone at the cowboy bar. As Ahdaf heads for him, his phone beeps. He checks his message.

KALAM (TEXT)
Captain G is good for journey on day after tomorrow at dawn. 10K each passenger. Bring a toothbrush in case you change your mind!

He slips onto the barstool next to Selim.

AHDAF
Isn't it kind of crazy that we meet in public?

SELIM
Meeting with informants is an open secret in this town.

Leyla squeezes back around the end of the bar.

LEYLA
What's also not a secret is that I'm old and fat!

SELIM
Nobody but a pretzel can get behind your bar. Why don't you widen it ten centimeters?

LEYLA
Because the day I get stuck is the day I retire and I don't want to be ten centimeters thicker when I do!

AHDAF
You're not fat and you're not old.

LEYLA
(pinching his chin)
Somebody wants his beer.

She sets him up with a beer. The men drink watching her fill a tray with drinks to be served.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
You two can tell your secrets now.

AHDAF
I just received a message. Captain G says okay but wants to make the crossing--the pick-up--at dawn day after tomorrow.

SELIM
Captain G?

AHDAF
It's what Kalam calls him. He wants ten thousand euros each passenger.

SELIM
That can be managed.

AHDAF
What's the trap?

SELIM
You've made it easier because it's easier to set a trap in the dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

AHDAF
What if Sirhan puts his gun to my head and orders me to go to Raqqa?

SELIM
He wouldn't do that until after the toll station when the road splits, Ankara east or Assos south.

AHDAF
Why wait until the last toll station before the split? Why not at the first one?

SELIM
Sirhan will be edgy when you start. We want him to get complacent about you and the toll stops. It might give everybody on our side a small edge. One more thing. You need to wear a white polo shirt. Everyone will know don't shoot the guy in white.

AHDAF
That's reassuring.

SELIM
You'll be fine. It's a good plan.

AHDAF
I don't have a white polo shirt.

SELIM
I brought you one.

AHDAF
You bought me a shirt?

SELIM
The first time we met, didn't you say you needed a third shirt?

AHDAF
You said I needed a third shirt. How'd you know my size?

SELIM
If I'm a large, you're a medium. Try it on.

AHDAF
Right here?

SELIM
Probably better to go in the back.

Ahdaf goes down a service hall. At the end is a sink with a large yellowy mirror. To each side are WC doors. He takes off his shirt, balls it up, and is looking for a place to put it when Leyla comes out of the women's WC.

LEYLA
I'll hold it.

She takes it, and runs her other hand through his chest hair.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
I like men with hairy chests but not hairy backs.

AHDAF
I don't have a hairy back.

LEYLA
I noticed.

She pushes past him to reach the sink. With his shirt tucked under an arm, she washes her hands while watching him don the polo in the mirror.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
It looks good on you.

He blushes, unsure how to respond. She pulls out a paper towel and faces him.

LEYLA (CONT'D)
You've never been with a woman, have you?

AHDAF
Maybe.

LEYLA
Maybe? You don't remember?

AHDAF
Not with a woman like you. I'm trying to say that.

LEYLA
Of course not. You'd remember a woman like me!

She hands back his shirt and returns to the cafe. At the cowboy bar, Selim is scrunched in a corner while THREE GUYS, plugged into Leyla's power strips, watch a football match on their individual phones.

SELIM
The shirt fits. White's a good color for you.

AHDAF
Technically white's not a color. I learned that at school.

SELIM
It's still a good color for you.

The three guys shout and high five each other.

SELIM (CONT'D)
I need an hour to put some things into motion now that we have a day and time for the crossing. Can we meet at Galata Tower? I'll be in that area.

EXT. GALATA TOWER SQUARE - AN HOUR LATER

Ahdaf enters the square. In its middle is a circular tower illuminated by lights that make the surrounding night watery.

SELIM (O.S.)
It's beautiful, isn't it?

Ahdaf turns to see him.

AHDAF
Very.

SELIM
Have you been to the top?

AHDAF
Once. I took a map up to try to sort out how all the neighborhoods fit together. My clients stay all over the city.

SELIM
Did you fit them all together?

AHDAF
Only some. Istanbul has a thousand neighborhoods! Did you do what you needed to do in your one hour?

SELIM
Everything is set in motion. To say more than that, I'd rather talk someplace privately. I live nearby if you're okay with a steep climb.

INT. SELIM'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Selim unlocks his front door and they enter a large living room decorated with colorful art and photographs. The far wall is all glass overlooking the city.

SELIM
Let me show you the view.

He slides open a door out to the terrace. The vast city's lights slip over the horizon in a haze.

AHDAF
It's amazing! And a little frightening to think that I live somewhere out there.

SELIM
I know you like beer but I also have wine.

AHDAF
I've never drunk wine.

SELIM
Do you want to try it?

AHDAF
Why not? *Haram* is *haram*, right? Forbidden is forbidden, like too many things.

SELIM
I agree. I'll be right back.

Ahdaf follows him inside and lingers in the living room. Selim returns with two glasses of wine. He hands him a glass.

AHDAF
I think this is the most beautiful apartment I've ever seen.

SELIM
Uncle Sam treats me well.

AHDAF
Your uncle owns this?

SELIM
When Americans say Uncle Sam, they mean the government.

AHDAF
I'll try to remember that if I have a chance to teach English again.

SELIM
You'll teach English again.
(indicating wine)
Sauvignon blanc from New Zealand. You should start with the best.

Ahdaf examines his glass skeptically.

SELIM (CONT'D)
You're supposed to sniff it before sipping it.

AHDAF
It smells like a sponge.

They clink glasses and sip their wine. Ahdaf frowns.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
It tastes like a sponge, too!

SELIM
You'll get used to it.

AHDAF
Why would I want to?

He takes a second sip, then a third.

SELIM
You asked how I spent my hour. It's the OKK's operation now.

AHDAF
In their plan, what happens to me?

SELIM
If all goes well, you'll be a hero.

AHDAF
And if all doesn't go well?

SELIM
You're still be a hero. You tried.

AHDAF
Hero or not, I'd rather not be in the story.

SELIM
You're already in it. A refill?

AHDAF
Yes, please. It's good!

SELIM
I warned you.

AHDAF
May I use your toilet?

SELIM
It's down that hall on the left.

Ahdaf goes down the HALL which is decorated with fine art photos. He pauses at a couple before going into the bathroom.

MINUTES LATER

When he comes out, Selim is there with refilled wine glasses.

AHDAF
Did you take these photographs?

SELIM
If I did, I'd be famous. I'm a collector but I also take photos. Mine are in the bedroom. Do you want to see them?

He follows Selim into the bedroom. A chain attached to the crossbeam in a high cathedral ceiling holds aloft a platform bed by ropes attached to its four corners. Black-and-white photos of people from all over the world, indigenous and contemporary, have been copied onto sheets of wallpaper pasted unevenly on the walls. Ahdaf examines the bed.

AHDAF
Did you design it?

SELIM
I saw it on the internet.

AHDAF
No bugs, is that why?

SELIM
Right.

AHDAF
It’s incredible. Does it swing a lot when you’re in it?

SELIM
You won’t get seasick. Do you want to try it?

AHDAF
You mean get on the bed?

SELIM
If you want.

Selim pulls him into a kiss.

AHDAF
I was ready at the hammam.

SELIM
I was too. It was also the third time I set you up.

AHDAF
How’s that?

SELIM
I hadn’t forgotten about noon prayers. I knew the hammam would be almost empty. I wanted to seduce you.

AHDAF
Why’d you stop?

SELIM
I wanted more than a hand job. A lot more.

Selim pulls Ahdaf into another kiss that deepens. Trying to keep their lips together, they unbutton each other’s shirts and tug at belts. When naked, they roll onto the bed, hands and lips exploring everywhere until Selim stops them.

SELIM (CONT’D)
Wait. Don’t come yet. I want you this way.

He straddles Ahdaf and guides his cock into him, his expression changes from pinched pain to extraordinary pleasure as he sits heavier on him. He tugs on the bed’s suspension ropes to create a swinging motion and both come.

INT. SELIM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ahdaf, sleeping, is alone in the suspended bed. Selim, returns from the bathroom and gets in bed.

AHDAF
What time is it?

SELIM
Almost noon.

AHDAF
Noon!

SELIM
Don’t worry. You don’t launch until twenty-two hours.

AHDAF
You make it sound like a military exercise.

SELIM
It’s not an exercise. Come here.

Ahdaf nuzzles Selim’s chest hair.

AHDAF
I think this was my pillow when I fell asleep last night. I have no idea what time it was.

SELIM
It was a night without time.

AHDAF
I sure wasn’t thinking about it.
(about photo wallpaper)
You really took all these pictures?

SELIM
You should see what I have in storage.

AHDAF
Why only black-and-white?

SELIM
With color, I see a photo’s bright objects first. With black-and-white, I see its mood.

From the living room, Ahdaf’s phone pings.

AHDAF
I better check that. Friends don't text me.

SELIM
I'll make coffee.

Selim gets out of bed, puts on clean fresh boxers and tosses a pair to Ahdaf. He takes his mobile and goes onto the terrace to read his message.

KALAM (TEXT)
Don't forget your toothbrush! Or mine!

Ahdaf chuckles just as Selim appears with coffee.

SELIM
The news must not be too serious.

AHDAF
A friend making a joke.

SELIM
I thought no friends texted you.

AHDAF
He was a client before we became friends. He was the other guy with me when I picked up Derya at the consulate.

SELIM
The guy who escaped with the Greek?

AHDAF
Yeah, him. He'll probably be helping the Greek tomorrow.

EXT. MOSQUE COURTYARD - AN HOUR LATER

Ahdaf enters the mosque's administration building.

INT. MOSQUE'S ADMIN BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He finds Malik in an office along a short hallway.

MALIK
Come in. Please sit and take a tea. You can update me on the plans.

AHDAF
The reverse crossing has been delayed to dawn.

MALIK
Which means you have time for tea. Please sit.

Ahdaf sits as Malik pours tea into two glasses.

MALIK (CONT'D)
Your reputation for resourcefulness appears to be true. We could use your skills. Join us.

AHDAF
Join who, exactly? ISIS?

MALIK
And other soldiers of Allah.

AHDAF
Did you plan the Athens attack?

MALIK
Turkey was always a possible route of escape.

AHDAF
So you're resourceful too. You don't need me.

MALIK
We need everyone. We're in a war.

AHDAF
I don't know how to shoot a gun.

MALIK
You won't have to. You plan operations for others to carry out.

AHDAF
Until I'm killed and don't tell me I'll be a *shahid*. I don't want to be a martyr for Allah or anyone. I'll take my chances with Allah's judgment on how I live this life.

MALIK
How you live this life? Timur confessed.

AHDAF
Timur? From the hammam?

MALIK
He told us the names of men who liked to be touched.

AHDAF
That’s why the men are there. To be scrubbed and massaged.

MALIK
Some men want more.

AHDAF
I’m not one of them.

MALIK
Why would Timur lie?

AHDAF
People lie to save themselves.

MALIK
Then he lied for nothing.

Malik takes four thick money pouches from a drawer and hands them to Ahdaf.

MALIK (CONT’D)
Five thousand euros in each. If the crossing is aborted, you bring back the money.

AHDAF
I always thought that mosques survive on centimes.

MALIK
We have benefactors for special operations.

AHDAF
I’ll take the key for the van now if you don’t need it.

MALIK
You’ll be hours early.

AHDAF
Where else should I spend them? At home with Sirhan and Ozan? Instead, I can be by the sea.

Malik hands him the key. He turns to leave.

MALIK
You could be a real asset to us.

AHDAF
I already said no. I'm a refugee from danger.

MALIK
Then I can't protect you now that there are two accusations against you.

AHDAF
Whose names do you expect people to give when you're torturing them? We only know so many names that you'll believe.

INT. MUNIR'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

A buzzer sounds. Ahdaf enters and climbs the stairs to Munir's apartment. Yasemin opens the door for him. Samir watches cartoons. The baby fusses in her cardboard box.

SAMIR
Is it Baba?

YASEMIN
Maybe tomorrow, sweetheart.

AHDAF
Has the baby eaten?

YASEMIN
I have milk, but she won't...

AHDAF
Not even the formula?
(Yasemin shakes head.)
I have an idea, but first some business.

He reaches inside his daypack and hands her one of Malik's four money pouches.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
It's for you. Open it.

She does, sees the money and looks confused.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Five thousand euros.

YASEMIN
I don't understand. Was Munir supposed to be paid something?

AHDAF
Munir was a hero not a mercenary. It's money I arranged to help you.

YASEMIN
Did you steal it?

AHDAF
I swear, no. Hide it someplace safe. The best is to tie it to your body. The pouch has loops for that. Never carry it in a purse or pack.

The baby makes a squeaky cry.

YASEMIN
Will you hand her to me?

He does, and Yasemin turns away, enveloping the child in her robe, offering her breast. She clucks and coos, coaxing the infant to nurse, but the baby only cries.

Ahdaf takes the powdered baby formula from the cupboard, spoons some in a bowl and adds water to make a milky paste.

AHDAF
What was Munir's name for her when he walked her?

YASEMIN
Habab albi.

AHDAF
Love of my heart. That's sweet.

He cradles the baby, nuzzles her neck and repeatedly murmurs *habab albi*. After a while, the baby stops crying and coos pleasurably. He dabs a finger into the formula, touches it to her lips and whispers *habab albi*. She sucks his finger clean and complains when he pulls away to scoop up more. She sucks at his fingers hungrily. He hands the bowl to Yasemin.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I think she'll nurse now. Use some of this to coax her.

Yasemin turns her back to him, dabs a nipple with the milky paste, and reaches for the baby.

YASEMIN
Are you hungry, *habab albi*? My sweetheart. My *habab albi*...

She presses the child to her breast. A silence ensues. Yasemen starts to sob. Ahdaf is crestfallen until he realizes that they are sobs of relief.

YASEMIN (CONT'D)
Yes, sweetheart, you're going to be all right. Yes, *habib albi*, yes...

Ahdaf, teary-eyed, shoulders his daypack and leaves.

EXT. LEYLA'S CAFE - EVENING

Ahdaf parks the van across from Leyla's Cafe.

INT. LEYLA'S CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Leyla stubs out a cigarette as Ahdaf slips onto a barstool.

AHDAF
You don't have to put your cigarette out for me.

LEYLA
I know you don't like it.

AHDAF
It's given you a sexy voice, there's that to like about it.

LEYLA
I had this voice before I started smoking. I only started smoking because I wanted to meet the Marlboro Man, or a man like him.

AHDAF
Did you meet him?

LEYLA
(indicating hats overhead)
Who do you think gave me these hats? My Marlboro Men.

AHDAF
You mean...?

LEYLA
Wear a cowboy hat sometime if you want an honest answer. Ha! You're blushing. You're so sweet, Ahdaf. Everybody thinks that about you.

AHDAF
I didn't know everybody thought about me.

LEYLA
Why do you have the madrasa's van?

AHDAF
They need a driver for an event tonight and I volunteered.

LEYLA
Is Selim Wilson involved in your event tonight?

AHDAF
Why?

LEYLA
Because he bought you the shirt you're wearing to it.

AHDAF
You heard him say I needed a third shirt.

LEYLA
Saying you need one and buying you one are two different things.

AHDAF
(dawning on him)
You set us up to meet, didn't you?

LEYLA
I tell him which boys he can trust.

AHDAF
Why'd you tell him me?

LEYLA
Why wouldn't I? I want his side to win. It's your side, too. If the fundamentalists win, I'll be asking you for a place on a raft. A beer?

AHDAF
I shouldn't. I'm driving.

She takes one from the refrigerator and uncaps it.

LEYLA
One beer's legal. I didn't know you could drive.

AHDAF
Everybody knows how to drive.

LEYLA
I don't.

AHDAF
Okay, maybe not most women, but I'm surprised you don't. You're so independent.

LEYLA
People get dependent on cars. What kind of independence is that?

AHDAF
You'd never survive in Raqqa. They'd stone you for being a heretic.

LEYLA
My mother was a whipped dog. If she'd had a tail, if would've always been tucked between her legs. I promised myself I wouldn't grow up to be like her.

AHDAF
Not many women can imagine it any other way.

LEYLA
Every woman imagines it another way. It's the men who can't.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Ahdaf, parked across from Leyla's Cafe, is on his mobile.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN AHDAF AND SIRHAN IN AHDAF'S APARTMENT

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
Ten minutes. Be out front and bring whatever food is left.

SIRHAN (ON MOBILE)
What food? Ozan ate it all.

AHDAF (ON MOBILE)
We'll stop at a service station.

Ahdaf hangs up and pulls onto the road. He catches Leyla's eye. She frowns, unhappy with whatever he's up to.

He turns onto his street and sees the light go off in his apartment. Moments later, he pulls up to the sidewalk and they get in the van. Sirhan's rifle is concealed in a towel.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Perfect timing.

SIRHAN
Ozan's all nervous now.

AHDAF
What happened?

OZAN
They told our names on the news!
With our pictures!

SIRHAN
Nobody's going to recognize us from those pictures.

AHDAF
Though people do notice this bus, so sit in back where it's harder to see you.

SIRHAN
You get the last seat.

Ozan climbs in. Sirhan follows, unwraps his rifle and sets it on the floor. Ahdaf pulls into the street and turns the first corner. He looks at them in the rearview mirror.

AHDAF
Let me tell you what to expect so there are no surprises.

DISSOLVE TO:

OZAN
What about food?

SIRHAN
For a scarecrow, all you think about is food!

AHDAF
There’s a service station after we cross the long bridge. It has food.

SIRHAN
Don’t be sure you’re making the turnoff to Assos. Malik’s always changing his mind.

AHDAF
He seemed certain about it.

SIRHAN
He’s been certain about many operations that he’s called off at the last minute. He’s a mouse. To him everything’s a mousetrap.

OZAN
That’s why we went to Raqqa. To do something.

AHDAF
It sounds like someone else should be running operations.

SIRHAN
Yeah, like this operation. Why the fuck are we going to Greece anyway? What’s planned for us there? Malik wants to make us someone else’s problem and forget about us.

AHDAF
I can drive you to Assos to go to Greece, or I can drive you to closest point on the border to Raqqa. You’re running this operation now. You decide.

Sirhan has a thoughtful moment before breaking into a smile.

SIRHAN
Raqqa.

AHDAF
We’re approaching the first toll station.

EXT. TOLL STATION - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf pulls up, struggles to reach the toll machine. The TOLL TAKER helps him swipe his card and hands it back with a wink.

INT. VAN - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf pulls away from the toll station.

AHDAF
You guys should get some sleep. You have to share the driving if we're going to Raqqa.

SIRHAN
Are you going to let Malik know?

AHDAF
Malik will eventually guess what we've done. He won't care—Greece or Raqqa—as long as you're not his problem. Why don't you get some sleep? Later the road gets windy.

SERIES OF SCENES

- Sirhan and Ozan brace themselves on their seats to sleep.

- They approach the second toll station. As Ahdaf brakes, Sirhan touches his rifle. Again Ahdaf exaggerates his reach to pay the toll. As the barrier lifts, Sirhan rolls back onto his bench.

- A sign announces another toll station in 500 meters.

INT. VAN - LATER

Ahdaf slows down and Sirhan bolts upright.

SIRHAN
What is it?

AHDAF
The third toll station. Oh shit!

SIRHAN
(grabbing his rifle)
What's wrong?

AHDAF
There's a road cone in front of the toll machine.

He stops at the cone. A sign on it reads: *Stop and Pay!*

AHDAF (CONT'D)
The barrier's up in the air. It must be broken.

A car pulls up behind them.

SIRHAN
Why pay? Just go through.

AHDAF
I'm sure there are cops waiting for people to do that.
(stretching for toll booth)
It's hard enough reaching these machines without this damn cone in the way.

The DRIVER behind them flashes his lights.

SIRHAN
I'm going to shoot that sonofabitch!

Ahdaf really stretches and can't swipe the card.

The DRIVER leans out his window.

DRIVER
FUCKING MOVE IT! THE GATE'S UP!

SIRHAN
Let's go!

AHDAF
Fuck! I dropped the card!

SIRHAN
I said let's go!

AHDAF
(opening his door)
We can't without the card! How will we pay for anything? Wait! I see it in the headlights!

The driver lays on his horn again.

Ahdaf snatches his daypack, jumps out and runs as fast as he can past the toll booth. Immediately behind him, there are shouts followed by a barrage of bullets and crashing glass.

Ahead of him, he sees a sedan with its flasher on. An arm sticks out the sedan's window waving him over. Ahdaf opens the passenger door, confirms it's Selim and gets in. Selim speeds off. Ahdaf, shaking uncontrollably, puts his elbows on his thighs and holds his head. Selim places a comforting hand on his back.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
You can't imagine how scared I was.

SELIM
I can see how scared you were.

Selim's phone rings. He answers, listens, hangs up.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Sirhan and Ozan are dead. Malik's been arrested. You did a good job. You're safe now.

Ahdaf sobs in relief.

EXT. SEDAN CAR - PRE-DAWN

The car crests a hill and Selim pulls off the road.

INT. SEDAN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ahdaf, asleep, bumps his head on the window and wakes up.

AHDAF
What's wrong?

SELIM
We're almost in Assos and I need to piss.

AHDAF
Me too.

They get out and stand in their open doors, backs to each other while peeing. A telephone pings.

SELIM
That was yours.

They get back into the car and Ahdaf reads his message.

AHDAF
It's from Kalam. 'We just cast off. Captain G says to head for Big Rocks Beach. Did you remember your toothbrush?'

SELIM
(pulling onto road)
Why'd he ask about your toothbrush?

AHDAF
It’s a joke between us. He wants me to join him in Greece so we can travel north together.

SELIM
Are you thinking about it?

AHDAF
Not seriously.

SELIM
Did you bring your toothbrush?

AHDAF
I wasn’t going to leave it at the Tropicana.

SELIM
So you are thinking about it?

AHDAF
What do I have in Istanbul? I’m down to one shirt and a toothbrush!

SELIM
And a new friend.

AHDAF
You?

SELIM
How many new friends do you have?

AHDAF
I admit, I don’t have many friends. Everybody I meet wants to leave.

SELIM
You’re also gay which complicates friendships in Turkey, though it shouldn’t complicate ours.

AHDAF
Are you trying to tempt me to stay?

SELIM
If you stay, I’d like to be friends and let it evolve from there.

AHDAF
You weren’t thinking that when we first met.

SELIM
Because we hadn't met yet.

AHDAF
You used me as bait to get access to Malik.

SELIM
He sent three cell members to Raqqa. To do what? We learned too late.

AHDAF
He didn't send them. They went to Raqqa because they wanted action. Apparently Malik called off every operation.

Selim turns onto a rough track in an olive grove.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Where are we going?

SELIM
To a safe house.

AHDAF
Out here?

SELIM
Out here is out of sight.

He stops in front of a house set back from the road. OTAR, an older man on a ladder, picks PERSIMMONS off a tree and drops the orange fruit into a cloth bag.

SELIM (CONT'D)
That's Otar. He and his wife were journalists. They quit after the attempted coup and now help other journalists who need a place to stay.

AHDAF
If they help, why did you need me?

SELIM
They don't organize transport, only a place to hide for a few days.

AHDAF
How do they manage that?

SELIM
The bribes aren't cheap. I'll go check on the women.

Selim gets out, speaks to Otar, and crosses to the house. He knocks and OTAR'S WIFE lets him in. Otar, fit and gray-whiskered, approaches the car and shows Ahdaf his persimmons.

OTAR
Take some. The rain washed them last night.

Ahdaf takes one and bites into it.

AHDAF
It's delicious!

OTAR
Take all of them. You'd be doing an old man's stomach a favor! How many persimmon pies can I eat? Or persimmon cakes? Or persimmon omelettes? Or persim—

AHDAF
Stop! Stop! I'll take them all.

The front door opens. Selim steps out followed by Meryem and Derya each carrying a shoulder pack. They walk to the car. Ahdaf gets out of the car. He and Otar open the back doors for the women to get in. Meryem pauses before she does.

MERYEM
I know what happened isn't your fault. I shouldn't have hit you.

AHDAF
I haven't stopped hitting myself. I probably never will.

She gets in the car.

SELIM
Thank you, Otar, for another rescue.

Selim and Ahdaf get in front. They drive off.

DERYA
Where's the pick-up spot?

AHDAF
Big Rocks Beach again.

DERYA
I'm glad I'm not superstitious.

Selim reaches the coastal road and turns north. Five minutes later, he parks in the turnout for Big Rocks Beach. The first light of dawn is on the horizon. Selim flashes his lights. No response. He flashes them again. Ahdaf's phone pings.

AHDAF
(reading message aloud)
We see you. Captain G says 15 minutes.

SELIM
Let's get to the water. Take everything and be prepared to get wet. There's no dock.

They get out of the car. Ahdaf notices Selim's watching him when he shoulders his daypack.

AHDAF
(to the women)
You two go ahead. We'll follow. Be sure to help each other down the beach. It's steep.

Arm-in-arm, the women start down the slope to a beach of smooth pebbles.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I keep expecting men to run out from behind the rocks, shooting.

SELIM
You're brave to come back.

AHDAF
It's not bravery. You never told me about this part of the operation.

SELIM
What part?

AHDAF
The women.

SELIM
I knew you wanted to help them.
(pause)
It looks like you've decided to make the crossing today.

AHDAF
Why?

SELIM
You're carrying your pack.

AHDAF
Malik's money is in it.

SELIM
And your toothbrush?

AHDAF
It's in it, too.

They follow the women down to the pebble beach. In a few steps, Ahdaf stops to examine the ground around him.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
This is where Munir died. That's his blood on the pebbles.

SELIM
I'm sorry about your friend. It must have been terrible to watch.

AHDAF
I feel sorrier for his family. Now they have to survive without him.

SELIM
Give his wife some of the money Malik gave you to pay for his guys' passage.

AHDAF
I already did.

Selim drapes an arm over Ahdaf's shoulders.

SELIM
You have a good heart. That's why I'm falling in love with you. I don't want you to cross. I'll understand if you do, but if you want to come back, come back.

They arrive where the two women wait for them. The rising sun silhouettes Captain G's boat some distance offshore.

AHDAF
We'll have to wade out to the boat up to our knees, maybe higher, and use a rope ladder to get onboard.
(MORE)

AHDAF (CONT'D)
Put your shoes in your packs. You're going to need both hands so use both straps on your packs. Someone will try to pull you aboard. I'll help by pushing you from behind unless you'd rather I not touch you.

DERYA
I want help. She needs help, too.

MERYEM
(touching pregnant belly)
Please be careful with my baby. I have no more family.

AHDAF
Can I talk to you privately over there? We have five minutes.

Meryem, looking fretful, follows him a few steps.

MERYEM
I'm already so scared. What is this new mystery?

Ahdaf reaches into his pack and hands her a money pouch.

AHDAF
There's five thousand euros in that.

MERYEM
Five thousand euros? For me? How—

AHDAF
It doesn't matter how. Bury it deep in your pack so no one can easily reach in and take it.

Meryem unshoulders her pack and hides the pouch in it. Zipping it up, she gasps and presses a hand to her belly.

MERYEM
My baby is kicking! Do you want to feel it?

AHDAF
I'd feel awkward touching you.

MERYEM
He'll miss Yusuf's hand. He talked to his son with his hand pressed to my belly. He was sure it was a boy.

AHDAF
I'm so sorry, Meryem, you know.

MERYEM
We made our own choices and you only tried to help us.

They rejoin the others. Selim is taking off his shoes.

AHDAF
Are you coming with us?

SELIM
I thought I'd help get them on board.

Ahdaf protects his phone with a plastic bag that he stuffs into his pack. The boat enters the long cove. Kalam, standing at the tip of the bow, videotapes their arrival. In the dawn's light, he looks every bit the golden boy of Hollywood that he dreams to be.

SELIM (CONT'D)
Is that your friend?

AHDAF
Yes. My client and friend.

SELIM
Now I can see why you're making the crossing.

The captain reverses the engine and glides to a stop ten meters from shore. Kalam drops a rope ladder over the side.

KALAM
COME ON! COME ON!

Everybody runs into the water.

MERYEM
I'm afraid I'll hurt my baby by banging against the side of the boat!

AHDAF
I'll make sure that you don't!

Derya reaches the boat first. Selim holds the rope ladder steady for her to start up it. It's clumsy and sways easily. Kalam reaches down to help but she's hesitant to let go.

DERYA
I need a push!

Selim nudges her high enough that Kalam can pull her aboard.

It's Meryem's turn. She pulls herself onto the ladder's lowest rung and turns sidewise to keep from bumping against the boat. Ahdaf gets beneath her and pushes her up with his shoulder while straining to climb the ladder. Kalam pulls her aboard and points to Selim who's returning to shore.

KALAM
What about him?

AHDAF
He's not coming.

KALAM
(shouting to Captain G)
That's everyone!

The captain immediately puts the boat in a slow reverse.

KALAM (CONT'D)
Shit! I'm missing my shot!

He disappears, leaving Ahdaf hanging on the ladder that's swaying even more now that the boat is moving.

AHDAF
I could use some help too!

He struggles up the ladder and onto the deck. Derya and Meryem, huddled on a bench, comfort each other. Kalam, at the bow, videotapes their retreat from the cove.

KALAM
This is so cool! It's our arrival in reverse. I'm thinking I'll show this on a split screen. The coming and the going at the same time. What do you think?

AHDAF
It's a great idea. Clever.

Selim, climbing back onto the pebble beach, turns to watch their departure. Ahdaf pulls out his mobile and zooms in on him. His face is a study of heartbreak.

KALAM (O.S.)
It's almost more beautiful going backwards. I can't explain it.

Ahdaf sees Selim wiping away tears.

AHDAF
Are you going to say hello to me?

KALAM
Yeah, but let me shoot this first. It might be what makes me famous! I already have a title for it. *The Coming and the Going*!

Ahdaf glances between Selim, a rescuer, and Kalam, a dreamer, and makes his decision. He races to Captain G at the stern.

AHDAF
How much do I owe you?

CAPTAIN G
One woman already paid.

AHDAF
What about the second woman?

CAPTAIN G
Are those men dead yet?

AHDAF
Who? Sirhan and Ozan? Yes, they're dead.

CAPTAIN G
That's payment enough. They killed my son in Athens. He was at that nightclub for queers. He never told me about himself but I'd guessed it. I wasn't proud he was queer, but I wish I had one more chance to tell him that I loved him.

AHDAF
If you loved him, he knew it. It doesn't always have to be said.

CAPTAIN G
When those scum started bragging about how many faggots they killed, I realized they were my son's killers. That's when I radioed the police in Assos. Those poor guys. I didn't expect what happened. All I wanted was justice for my son.

AHDAF
You got it.

Ahdaf scurries to the bow where Kalam still has his mobile pressed to his eye. He drops a money pouch at Kalam's feet.

KALAM
What's that?

AHDAF
Your ticket to Hollywood.

KALAM
I don't understand.

AHDAF
Too late.

Ahdaf steps on a bench, puts a foot on the rail, holds his daypack high over his head and jumps overboard. He kicks furiously to keep from sinking before rolling onto his back trying to keep his pack out of the water.

KALAM
What are you doing?

AHDAF
Going home!

Ahdaf hears Selim splashing behind him.

SELIM
I'm coming! I'll help!

Ahdaf feels Selim's hands lift his shoulders.

SELIM (CONT'D)
It's shallow enough to stand here.

Ahdaf stands and turns in Selim's arms.

SELIM (CONT'D)
I'm glad you came back.

AHDAF
Me too.

They slosh their way to shore.

AHDAF (CONT'D)
I'm not going to be a spy.

SELIM
You might get bored teaching English and want a challenge.

AHDAF
Teaching the subjunctive will be challenging enough.

SELIM
Were that I knew it!

Arms slung around each other, they playfully help each other climb onto the slippery pebble beach.

THE END