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# **BORDERLAND**

**by**

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**BORDERLAND****by Sarah Woods****SCENE ONE**

1. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: Thank you for calling Health Solutions for  
the world.

3. LAYLA: Come on -

4. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you need immediate medical attention  
and an ambulance is the only transport suitable for  
your condition –

5. LAYLA: *(To herself)* Yes.

6. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: Press 1.

*LAYLA presses 1 - beep.*

7. **LAYLA: Not all stories start with Once Upon A Time.**

8. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you are a Citizen with English Citizen  
Status, press 1.

If you are a Resident without English Citizen Status,  
with Visa 601 status or an EU Citizen, please press 2.

9. LAYLA: Two.

10. **LAYLA: Some stories start when you're not looking.**

11. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you are -

*LAYLA presses 2 – beep - and the voice moves on.*

If you are a Resident with private hospital cover, press

1.

If you are a Resident with Ambulance Cover only,  
press 2.

If you are a Resident requiring cover for immediate  
assistance, press 3.

*LAYLA presses 3 - beep.*

Please key in the Resident number for the person  
requiring immediate assistance. This is a 12-digit code  
beginning NMP. This can be found on Resident cards  
or on any communication with Citizen Services.

12. LAYLA: I don't know -

*A moment, then the message repeats.*

13. LAYLA: **When you're doing something else.**

14. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you would prefer to access our service  
online, you can do so through our website:

15. LAYLA: **And by the time you realise, you're right in the  
middle of it.**

**Because this story started a long time ago.**

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**SCENE TWO**

*Inside the back of a van. It halts, brakes screeching and we hear the bang of the driver's door as they get out and voices outside.*

16. HOLLY: Mum?

17. LAYLA: *(Whispers)* Quiet, love –

19. **LAYLA: I was with your dad for eight years. But the bits I can remember would barely make a day.**

*As LAYLA continues in voice over, the back doors of the van are opened from outside, by the TRAFFICKER, who is stressed and worried about being caught.*

20. TRAFFICKER: *(From outside the van)* In – now.

*A woman, RABAA, is pushed into the van.*

21. **LAYLA: Your birth lasted fourteen hours, and I can remember every second.**

22. TRAFFICKER: *(Shouts)* In!

23. RABAA: Okay!

24. TRAFFICKER: Sit down.

25. **LAYLA: Life's like that. Time's like that.**

*The van's rear doors are slammed shut. RABAA steps on a MAN in the dark.*

26. VOICE 1: Mind –

27. RABAA: I'm sorry.

28. LAYA: *(To the TRAFFICKER)* We can't see anything in here!

29.       LAYLA:        **I'm writing this down, not because I won't remember what happened. And why it happened. I will. I'm writing it down because I don't know if I'll ever be able to talk to you about it.**

*The TRAFFICKER gets back into the driver's seat, slamming the front door and starting the engine.*

30.       HOLLY:        Mum I'm squashed –
31.       LAYLA:        I know.
32.       RABAA:         I'm sorry.
34.                   Where shall I go?
35.       TRAFFICKER: *(From the cab)* Sit down and shut up!

*He sets off. As he does so, RABAA falls onto people.*

36.       RABAA:        I'm so sorry –
37.       HOLLY:        Mum –
38.       LAYLA:        It's okay, Holly.
40.       RABAA:        I'm sorry.
41.       LAYLA:        Sit here. We can squeeze up.
42.       RABAA:        Thank you thank you so much.

*As RABAA and LAYLA start to talk, we hear other people talking quietly in the background. Someone sobs as the women talk.*

43.       RABAA:        I've been on the side of the M42 since last night. They said first light this morning.

44. LAYLA: We didn't leave Mansfield 'til midday.
45. RABAA: Are there more to pick up?
46. LAYLA: I don't know. He doesn't speak to us.
47. TRAFFICKER: *(From the front)* Quiet in the back.
48. HOLLY: *(Whispers)* I'm scared.
49. LAYLA: *(Whispers)* We'll be at the border soon.
50. LAYLA: **We're heading down the M5, Birmingham, Redditch. Worcester. The land's going by. But it's dark to us, like it's been taken. We can't see it anymore.**
-

**SCENE THREE**

*Later in the same journey.*

51. LAYLA: I worked in this warehouse ...
52. RABAA: Right ...
53. LAYLA: Yeah. There's this strike system, no chewing gum, no lighters, not allowed to use your 'phone, and I saw this woman – fifties, sixty. She hadn't been well for weeks, they knew that. But if you take time off, they just replace you. She went in the toilet and they were on at her, you know "Out – come on, that's a strike". And she came out and she wasn't right – and she fell to the ground. You don't listen to this, Holly.
54. HOLLY: I know anyway.
55. LAYLA: Cover your ears.
56. RABAA: What did you do?
57. LAYLA: There was a Workers Rights Group came to see me twice, but I didn't want anything to do with it. I couldn't afford to lose my job. Not with Holly to look after.
58. RABAA: So what are you running from?
59. HOLLY: The police came to the house –
60. LAYLA: Not the regular police, you know –
61. RABAA: Community Patrol.
62. HOLLY: Mum wasn't there –

63. LAYLA: They came to take me in –
64. RABAA: You don't have to do much now.
65. LAYLA: Yeah, I'm on a list. They think I'm a trouble-maker.  
Just for talking to people.
66. RABAA: We're all on a list.
67. LAYLA: I've heard what they do.
68. RABAA: Yeah, I know people who've been picked up and  
never come back.
69. HOLLY: Where are we?
70. LAYLA: I don't know.
71. RABAA: Doesn't feel like motorway anymore.
72. LAYLA: We should be over the Welsh border soon.
73. HOLLY: I thought we were going to Ireland?
74. LAYLA: We are.
75. RABAA: You have to go through Wales first.
76. LAYLA: That's the best way.
77. HOLLY: Is Wales in England?
78. LAYLA: No. But it's part of Greater Britain.
79. RABAA: For now.
80. HOLLY: Is Ireland?
81. LAYLA: Northern Ireland used to be. When it was Great  
Britain.
82. RABAA: It became an Independent nation. Like Scotland.



83. HOLLY: So Greater Britain is just England and Wales?
84. LAYLA: Yeah.
85. HOLLY: Why is it Greater?
86. LAYLA: Because they say it is.
87. HOLLY: How do we get to Ireland?
88. RABAA: This man is taking us to Fishguard, to get a boat.
89. LAYLA: You don't expect to have to leave your own country.
90. RABAA: No.

*The van stops. The TRAFFICKER bangs on the metal division between the cab and the back.*

- 90a. HOLLY: Where are we?
91. TRAFFICKER: Everyone out.
92. LAYLA: *(To the TRAFFICKER)* Why?

*We hear the TRAFFICKER get out and come to the back of the van as the dialogue continues.*

- 92a. TRAFFICKER: Out!

*They start to climb down from the back of the van.*

98. LAYLA: **It wasn't Fishguard. It was a warehouse with hundreds - I don't know how many hundreds of people, families, all ages. Children with their lives on their backs.**
99. VOICE 2: What's going on?
100. TRAFFICKER: You're changing vans.

101. LAYLA: We paid you to take us to Fishguard.

*Someone grabs the TRAFFICKER aggressively.*

103. TRAFFICKER: Get your hands off me.

104. RABAA: Maybe so they can't track the vans.

105. HOLLY: What's happening?

106. VOICE 2: We've paid money for this.

107. TRAFFICKER: You get your hands off me or you won't be going  
anywhere.

108. VOICE 1: You threatening me?

109. HOLLY: Why are there so many people here?

110. LAYLA: I don't know.

*TRAFFICKER 2 shouts to the assembled people, through a megaphone.*

111. TRAFFICKER 2:(Megaphone) There will be vans taking everyone to  
Fishguard.

112. VOICE 1: When?

113. WOMAN: We've been here two days!

114. RABAA: How far from the Welsh border are we?

115. TRAFFICKER 2: I know there are some delays.

116. WOMAN: There's no food, no toilets –

117. TRAFFICKER 2: We can't help that.

118. LAYLA: There are children here –

119. TRAFFICKER 2: The first five vans are outside now and we'll be -

*At this news, everyone starts to run outside.*

120. RABAA: Come on –

121. TRAFFICKER 2: Wait -

For Christ's sake –

You need to wait in here –

*Too late. The crowd are at the vans.*

122. TRAFFICKER 1: You can't all get in five vans.

123. LAYLA: Don't let go of my hand.

124. HOLLY: What's happening?

125. LAYLA: We're going to get in one.

126. HOLLY: Mum?

127. LAYLA: I've got a child. Please can we get through.

Can we get in? Go on, Holly.

128. HOLLY: Ok.

*HOLLY gets in.*

129. LAYLA: Excuse me.

130. TRAFFICKER: It's full.

131. LAYLA: My daughter –

132. TRAFFICKER: No - that's it now. / Mind the doors.

133. LAYLA: I need to get in the van. My daughter's in the van.

134. HOLLY: Mum!

135. LAYLA: I need to go in that van –

136. HOLLY: No! No!

137. LAYLA: She's my daughter –

138. HOLLY: Mum!

*The van doors shut.*

139. LAYLA: I have to go with my daughter.

*She bangs on the van doors.*

Let me in.

140. TRAFFICKER: Out the way -

141. LAYLA: *(Following the TRAFFICKER)*

My daughter's in that van.

*He shuts the DRIVER'S door.*

142. LAYLA: Wait! Holly?

*She bangs on the door*

Holly?

*The van leaves.*

Holly!

143. LAYLA: **And suddenly everything was different. And we couldn't go back. We couldn't even go back a minute. Twenty seconds. I just. I didn't see it coming.**

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**SCENE FOUR**

*LAYLA and RABAA are in the back of a crowded van, travelling again.*

*We hear the sound of PEOPLE talking quietly around them, a TODDLER crying and moaning intermittently and a PARENT trying to comfort them.*

144. RABAA: We'll find her at Fishguard. She'll be waiting for you.

145. LAYLA: Do you think he's messaged the other driver?

146. RABAA: No. No-one's using 'phones. He's not going to risk alerting the Sigint.

149. LAYLA: The what?

150. RABAA: Sigint. They're part of the Police.

151. LAYLA: I never heard of them.

*As RABAA speaks, we hear the TODDLER cry again and its PARENT comforting it.*

152. RABAA: That's how they like it. I came here from Syria with my family. All I wanted was to get to Great Britain. I was so sure everything would be okay when I got to this Great place. This place where everything is fair and everyone queues up.  
  
Once we're in Wales the worst'll be behind us.

154. LAYLA: I won't feel safe 'til I'm over the Irish sea.

156. RABAA: In Syria, my mum and dad never let us take our shoes off. They never let us take our warm clothes off, any time they called us, we must be ready and go. I thought when I got here, I could stop.

*The TRAFFICKER bangs on the partition again.*

159. TRAFFICKER: Quiet! We're coming up to the bridge.

160. RABAA: The Severn Bridge.

162. RABAA: We're nearly in Wales.

163. TRAFFICKER: Heads down. No movement.

*The TODDLER complains.*

164. PARENT: Shhh.

165. TRAFFICKER: No noise. Shut it!

166. LAYLA: **And in that dark. That quiet. My head under bags and coats and blankets, hardly breathing. I could see the bridge. Big, blue sky above it. I felt Rabaa find my hand. Hold it tight.**

*The van is slowing down.*

167. LAYLA: What's happening?

169. TRAFFICKER: *(From the cab)* Quiet!

*We hear chanting from outside, coming closer. Welsh voices.*

170. RABAA: Listen.

171. PROTESTER: *(In Welsh)* Ewch nôl i 'le da chi'n dod!

*Suddenly, there's banging on the van, Loud. With branches from trees.*

*Shouting between the TRAFFICKER and the PROTESTERS.*

172. PROTESTERS: *(Sing)* We hate England and we hate England –

173. PROTESTERS: Saeson scum!

174. TRAFFICKER: Shit. Shit!

175. PROTESTER: Da ni'm isho chi yma!

176. RABAA: We're going backwards.

177. PROTESTERS: *(Outside)* Out! Out! Out!

178. PROTESTER: *(Over a megaphone)* Ni 'dy Rhyddid i Gymru!

179. TODDLER: Mummy! Mummy!

*Fearful crying from inside the van.*

180. PASSENGER: What's happening?

181. TRAFFICKER: Shut up and let me concentrate.

*Lots of beeping of car horns. Shouting from outside.*

182. PROTESTER: *(Over a megaphone)* We want an independent Wales!

183. PROTESTER: We want a proper border.

184. PROTESTER: *(Over a megaphone)* Cymru i'r Cymry!

*The sound of police sirens joins the soundscape as the van reverses faster.*

185. LAYLA: This is dangerous –

186. PROTESTER: *(Over a megaphone)* Be 'da ni isho?

187. PROTESTERS: Annibynniaeth!

188. PROTESTER: *(Over a megaphone)* Pryd da ni'i isho fo?

189. PROTESTERS: Rwan!

192.       PROTESTER: *(Outside)* Ewch o 'ma!

*The van, reversing erratically, throws people around. Then crashes.*

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**SCENE FIVE**

*LAYLA and RABAA are walking along a road on the outskirts of Aust.*

193. RABAA: The other bridge is two miles from here. Won't take us long.

194. LAYLA: What if it's blocked?

195. RABAA: We have to try it.

*LAYLA takes her phone out.*

196. RABAA: What are you doing?!

197. LAYLA: I just want to know where Holly is.

198. RABAA: You switch that phone on they'll pick up your signal and be onto you in minutes. She will be over the border by now.

201. LAYLA: She's only eight.

202. RABAA: But she's smart?

203. LAYLA: Yeah.

204. RABAA: And she knows how to stay safe?

205. LAYLA: Yeah.

206. RABAA: So have hope.

207. LAYLA: Yeah.

208. RABAA: Hopes what keeps you going.

*As they walk on, a white van screeches up next to them. From inside, a RACIST MAN in his early twenties shouts.*

209. RACIST: Go back where you come from.

210. LAYLA: Let's get out of here –

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**SCENE SIX**

*We catch up with the two women walking along a side street.*

214. LAYLA: If we get to the main road, we can look for signs.

215. RABAA: I don't want to. I'd rather stick to the smaller roads.

*A RACIST MAN comes out of the pub.*

216. RACIST 2: *(Shouting behind him)* Night!

217. RABAA: Come on –

218. RACIST 2: Oy! What you doing?

219. RABAA: We need to go -

220. RACIST 2: What's that?

221. LAYLA: It's just a scarf.

*He grabs RABAA by her scarf.*

222. RABAA: Get off me.

224. LAYLA: She'll take it off –

225. RACIST 2: You're not meant to wear those no more –

226. RABAA: What I do and how I look is my business.

227. RACIST 2: It's against the law.

228. RABAA: Leave me alone.

229. RACIST 2: We don't want you. Filling our hospitals and crowding  
our schools.

230. RABAA: I was a cleaner in your hospital -

231. RACIST 2: They're our jobs.

*He grabs her.*

232. LAYLA: Let her go.
233. RACIST 2: My dad saw everything he worked for pissed away.
234. RABAA: Take your hands off me.
235. LAYLA: Please.
236. RACIST 2: While scum like you do very well for yourselves.
237. RABBA: What did you call me?
238. RACIST 2: Scum.
239. RABAA: I am not scum. I am a human being. Same as you.
240. RACIST 2: You're nothing like me.
241. RABAA: Let me go.
242. RACIST 2: Scum.
243. RABAA: I mean it.

*She tries to kick him away.*

244. RACIST 2: Agh! You don't kick me.

*He hits her. She falls.*

245. RACIST 2: We want justice. And fairness

*The RACIST kicks RABAA.*

246. LAYLA: Leave her alone -

*He kicks her again.*

248. RABAA: Please –

249. LAYLA: Rabaa.

250. RACIST 2: And unity.

*He kicks her – we hear the sounds she makes and the impact. LAYLA tries to pull him off, but fails.*

251. LAYLA: Rabaa get up –
252. RACIST 2: Getting our jobs.
253. LAYLA: Get off her -
254. RACIST 2: For our families.
255. LAYLA: You're going to kill her.

*LAYLA grabs a piece of wood from a nearby structure – we hear it being pulled, maybe from a fence or hoarding.*

256. RACIST 2: Our communities.

*LAYLA comes at him, roaring.*

257. RACIST 2: Our nation!
258. LAYLA: Leave her alone!

*She hits him round the head.*

Rabaa?

*She crouches down.*

Rabaa?

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**SCENE SEVEN**

259. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: Thank you for ringing –

*Another voice cuts in, at slightly the wrong rhythmic moment, almost like an advert.*

260. SECOND AUTOMATED VOICE: *(Energetic, Australian accent)*

Thank you for calling Health Solutions for the world.

261. LAYLA: Come on -

262. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you need immediate medical attention  
and an ambulance is the only transport suitable for  
your condition –

263. LAYLA: *(To herself)* Yes.

264. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: Press 1.

*LAYLA presses 1 - beep.*

If you are a Citizen with English Citizen Status, press  
1.

If you are a Resident without English Citizen Status,  
with Visa 601 status or an EU Citizen, please press 2.

265. LAYLA: Two.

266. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you are -

*LAYLA presses 2 – beep - and the voice moves on.*

If you are a Resident with private hospital cover, press

1.

If you are a Resident with Ambulance Cover only,  
press 2.

If you are a Resident requiring cover for immediate  
assistance, press 3.

*LAYLA presses 3 - beep.*

Please key in the Resident number for the person  
requiring Immediate Ambulance Cover.

266a. LAYA What?

266b AUTOMATED KIND VOICE This is a 12-digit code beginning NMP.

This can be found on Resident cards or on any  
communication with Citizen Services.

267. LAYLA: I don't know -

*A moment, then the message repeats.*

268. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: If you would prefer to access our service  
online, you can do so through our website:

269. LAYLA: Rabaa. Rabaa?

270. RABAA: Mnh...

271. LAYLA: Rabaa – I'm getting an ambulance.

272. RABAA: No –

*The AUTOMATED VOICE continues under them.*

273. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: To return to the main menu, press hash  
at any time.

274. LAYLA: It's okay –

275. RABAA: No. Not your 'phone.

276. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: To speak to an operator, press star.

277. LAYLA: I only put it on for this call –

278. RABAA: If they find us, I may as well be dead.

279. AUTOMATED KIND VOICE: To return to the main menu, press hash  
at any time.

280. LAYLA: I'm sorry –

281. RABAA: Your 'phone. Turn it off.

*RABAA struggles to get up.*

282. OPERATOR: *(On the 'phone) This is Sigt*

283. RABAA: Turn it off!

284. LAYLA: I am. Don't get up –

*LAYLA's 'phone makes a beep – beep – beep alert sound and then we*

*hear:*

285. VOICE: This is Sigt. Miss Price, for security please state  
your full name and the first line of your address -

286. RABAA: Take the battery out. Take it out –



287. LAYLA: (Crying) Okay –

*LAYLA wrestles with her 'phone, dismantling it. RABAA is furious and desperate.*

288. RABAA: We have to move.

289. LAYLA: You can't move –

290. RABAA: Help me –

*LAYLA helps RABAA up. RABAA is in pain.*

291. LAYLA: I'm sorry –

*They set off, walking.*

292. RABAA: Just walk.

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**SCENE EIGHT**

*A Doctor's surgery. LAYLA is at the counter. LAYLA speaks quietly at all times, not wanting to make herself any more visible than she needs to.*

293. LAYLA: Excuse me. My friend has been hurt.

294. RECEPTIONIST: Is she registered with this practice?

295. LAYLA: No.

296. RECEPTIONIST: Does she have health insurance?

297. LAYLA: No she doesn't.

298. RECEPTIONIST: And is she here with you?

299. LAYLA: No, she's outside. She's been attacked.

300. RECEPTIONIST: You need to call the police.

301. LAYLA: She needs a doctor.

302. RECEPTIONIST: You'll have to get her to a hospital.

303. LAYLA: I can't. We can't afford it.

*The RECEPTIONIST starts to go.*

304. RECEPTIONIST: There's nothing I can do to help you.

*LAYLA walks out of the Doctor's surgery. She is walking across the car park when someone approaches from behind.*

305. BABAK: Excuse me.

306. LAYLA: It's okay, I'm going.

307. BABAK: I'm a Doctor here. I want you to tell me what's happened.

308. LAYLA: A friend of mine has been attacked.

*LAYLA is dissolving into terrified tears.*

309.      BABAK:      Where is she?

310.      LAYLA:      She's down here, by the bins.

*They set off.*

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**SCENE NINE**

*As LAYLA speaks in voice over, we hear the interior of a car – them travelling to the farm.*

**311. LAYLA:** He said his name was Babak and he took us in his car. Rabaa hardly conscious on the back seat. After about half an hour there were flags ahead. Like bunting, hanging high above a farm gate. And a painted sign that said “You are now entering The Edge. And we drove into a farmyard. There was an Old farmhouse on one side. Barns and stables on the other. And people in the fields beyond. Babak said everything would be okay. And he said he’d help me find you.

*BABAK’S house. BABAK enters.*

312. LAYLA: Anything?

313. BABAK: No.

314. LAYLA: Oh God.

315. BABAK: Apparently hundreds of people got across the border this afternoon, in the confusion. Just as the Welsh Nationalists took the bridge.

318. LAYLA: How can I just sit here?

319. BABAK: We’ll get you across – just give me a chance to find the best way.

320. LAYLA: Do you think she might've been arrested?
321. BABAK: The likelihood is that her van got through and she's in Fishguard by now. I've asked the medics at the camp there to look out for her.
322. LAYLA: Tell me my baby's safe.
323. BABAK: I think she's safe.  
I've been everywhere. I've spoken to everyone I can.
324. LAYLA: I want to know she's safe.
325. BABAK: We can't know. But it's likely she is.  
You're doing everything you can at this moment.
326. LAYLA: It doesn't feel like it.
327. BABAK: I know. But you are. Listen, I came here from Iran. I have seen many people killed and injured. I remember my Grandmother. They were bombing my city and she was hurt. I cried beside her, because I couldn't help her. That's when I decided to be a doctor. Because the most painful thing is not being able to do anything.
328. LAYLA: I need to go.
329. BABAK: There have been protests up and down the border, from Prestigne to the Severn. That's what you'll walk into if you go to the border now. Stay here tonight and I'll find another way for you to get across.
330. LAYLA: I want to see Rabba!

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**SCENE TEN**

*LAYLA and BABAK walk through the farmyard, to the place where RABAA is being treated.*

332. LAYLA: What is this place?
333. BABAK: The Edge. About 9 miles from the Welsh border.
334. LAYLA: In England?
335. BABAK: We're our own country.
336. LAYLA: What this his farm?
337. BABAK: Yes. We announced our independence nearly a year ago. The farm belongs to Sheila, she was living here on her own. Her husband had died. And she offered to take in refugees. She's eighty seven. She helped me learn English. Get A levels. Apply to medical school. And I helped on the farm. Over time more people came. More refugees. And we started getting hassle. So we closed our borders.
338. LAYLA: How?

339.       BABAK:       Took a vote. Made passports. We've got our own stamps, our own visas.  
We offer visas to people who need them. Homes to people who need them. Who want to work the land. We've turned the barns and stables into accommodation. We've opened a school in the hay loft. Kids from Sudan, Eritrea, Swindon. Look!
- 339a.       LAYA           He pointed to a giant mural on the side of the barn.  
  
                                  "Give me your tired, your poor,  
                                  Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free".
- 339b.       BABAY           When our countries won't do what countries should, we have to make our own.
-

**SCENE ELEVEN**

348. LAYLA: Babak says you want to stay?
349. RABAA: I slept all night. For the first time since I can remember. I feel safe,
350. LAYLA: That's good.
351. RABAA: I haven't felt safe for so long. I was in a Detention Centre. They came to my house. Took my 'phone. Said my asylum status was revoked and I may be deported. I asked them when I would know. They said two weeks. I was there for a year and a half. The woman I was sharing a room with started biting and slapping herself. The guard said she was looking for attention. They started to watch her. You wake up and a man is looking at you. She threw herself down the stairs. I couldn't be there anymore. Will you stay?
352. LAYLA: I have to find Holly. Babak's trying to sort a way for me to get to Wales.
353. RABAA: I love you.
354. LAYLA: I love you too.
-



**SCENE THIRTEEN**

*BABAK'S car. He and LAYLA are driving to the Welsh border.*

356. BABAK: Not far now.
357. LAYLA: Does he know who I am?
358. BABAK: He said he'll be waiting for you.
359. LAYLA: Okay.
360. LAYLA: What are all those tents?
361. BABAK: City workers. Most of the people living in them work in Bristol. But they can't afford to live there. Shiny on the inside, shanty towns around the outside. You not seen it before?
362. LAYLA: Not like this.
363. BABAK: Same in London. Sheffield. Just like Rio. Beijing. Mumbai.
-

**SCENE FOURTEEN**

*LAYLA and BABAK, in BABAK's car, hidden in undergrowth.*

364. BABAK: Okay? Keep your change of clothes dry – above your head if you need to. It might be wet in there.

*She starts to get out of the car.*

365. LAYLA: Look after Rabaa.

366. BABAK: She's safe with us. Call me when you can.

367. LAYLA: Yeh.

368. BABAK: I made you food. Some sandwiches and fruit. Some water. Some nuts.

*He hands it to her.*

369. LAYLA: You're very kind.

370. BABAK: Tell him Babak sent you. There's a steep slope down to the tracks, where the entrance to the tunnel is. I'll keep looking for Holly.

371. LAYLA: If you find her –

*LAYLA can't finish her sentence.*

372. BABAK: I know. I'll tell her.

373. LAYLA: Thanks.

---

**SCENE FIFTEEN**

*LAYLA is scrambling down the bank to the entrance to the Severn Tunnel, through overgrown vegetation.*

**374. LAYLA: I could see the mouth of the tunnel, but there was no sign that anyone had been there for years. Just this hole in the landscape.**

*She arrives at the entrance and shouts – we hear her voice echo.*

375. LAYLA: Hello? Hello?  
Anybody there?

*A TUNNELLER grabs hold of LAYLA from behind, shoving his hand over her mouth. LAYLA'S scream is muffled.*

376. TUNNELLER: Shut up.  
All I want is for you to be quiet. That's all.

377. LAYLA: I'm sorry.

378. TUNNELLER: Don't shout. Don't scream. Just tell me, quietly, what you want. If you make a noise, I'll knock you out.

*He takes his hand from her mouth.*

379. LAYLA: (Quiet) Babak sent me.  
Babak sent me.

---

**SCENE SIXTEEN**

*LAYLA and the TUNNELLER are wading through chest-high water in the Severn Railway Tunnel, he's some way ahead of her. The echoing sound of running water down the walls and from an underground river.*

380. TUNNELLER: Don't touch the sides. They're deep with soot.
381. LAYLA: Is there always this much water?
382. TUNNELLER: This is nothing. It's an underground river. They used to pump it out.  
All right?
383. LAYLA: Cold. Can you slow down?
384. TUNNELLER: If you want to get hyperthermia. I'm not staying in here any longer than I have to.
385. LAYLA: How much further?
386. TUNNELLER: We turn off in a minute for the ladder.
387. LAYLA: What ladder?
388. TUNNELLER: Iron access ladder. You come up at Sudbrook Pump House.
389. LAYLA: In Wales?

390. TUNNELLER: Yep. You can make your way from there.

*He continues.*

I used to work on the railways. This tunnel was a nightmare before they closed it. People jumping on the trains, between the carriages, then up onto the roof – trying to get across to Wales. Not a pretty sight usually, at the other end.

391. LAYLA: Is that why they closed it?

392. TUNNELLER: They couldn't agree who was going to police it. The English said the Welsh, the Welsh said the English. Everything goes via Gloucester now. Right – we're turning off down this header –

393. LAYLA: Where?

394. TUNNELLER: Put this on.

*He gives her a snorkel and goggles like you'd find at the beach.*

395. LAYLA: You're joking.

**396. LAYLA: He gave me a snorkel and mask. Pink. Like you'd give to a child at the seaside.**

*The TUNNELLER puts his on.*

397. TUNNELLER: Don't wear it, then.

398. LAYLA: Where are we going?

401. TUNNELLER: Reach your hand down –

402. LAYLA: Under the water?

403. TUNNELLER: Just a few inches. Feel the recess?
404. LAYLA: Yeah.
405. TUNNELLER: That's the passageway.
406. LAYLA: How tall is it?
407. TUNNELLER: About three feet. You'll need to go in head first. Keep  
your snorkel scraping the top of the tunnel. There's  
usually a few inches of air. Ready?
- 407a. LAYLA Yeah
- 407b. TUNNELLER: One, two three
-

**SCENE SEVENTEEN**

*LAYLA is emerging from underwater in the low tunnel to the ladder. She breathes and splutters.*

408. TUNNELLER: Ladder's here. Give me your hand.

*She does.*

Got it?

409. LAYLA: Yeah.

410. TUNNELLER: You climb up to the top.

411. LAYLA: Where are you going?

412. TUNNELLER: I'm going back.

Bang three times on the door and they'll let you out.

*We hear the splash of water as he ducks under again. We start to climb the iron ladder in the echoing brick tunnel with LAYLA.*

**413. LAYLA: That was when it came. The change. The knowing. That there was no-one else. No police. No community. No neighbours. No family. Just me.**

*Her foot slips on a rung and she loses her footing – she shouts at herself: fierce, gritted.*

414. LAYLA: No!

*She shouts again, echoing, into the tunnel.*

No!

**415. LAYLA: Looking for you.**

*She manages to hang on. A moment as she breaths, panicked. Then carries on.*

**And that if you could be found, I would find you. If  
I had to climb this ladder - or whatever I had to do  
- for the rest of my life. Two tiny dots of human  
heat, in a world tearing itself apart over a broken  
system. I would make my way to you.**

*She bangs on the hatch three times. It opens. And she breathes in the fresh air.*

**But I should have started the struggle long ago.**

---



**SCENE EIGHTEEN**

*We hear the sound of a lorry driving along a road, from inside the cab.*

**416. LAYLA:** A lorry driver took me through Wales, crouched behind his seat, so if there was a road block and we were stopped, they wouldn't find me with their heat sensor.

**Seven hundred and fifty pounds.**

*The lorry stops and the door opens. The engine stays on the whole time.*

*She gets out and the lorry door closes. The lorry drives off. As she tells us about walking through Fishguard, we hear some of what she describes.*

**At Fishguard. There were families milling the narrow streets. Shops with their wares piled outside. Only it's not ice-creams and buckets and spades they're selling, but lifejackets. Mums trying them on their children for size.**

**I looked for you. Asked in the shops. Walked the rows and rows of tents in the park, stepping over children asleep on plastic bags on the grass. I asked at the Tourist Information and the Red Cross stand.**

**And then I went and asked about the boats.**

---

**SCENE NINETEEN**

*A hotel room near Fishguard. DARREN, white, 30s talks to LAYLA. He eats sweets from a packet intermittently.*

417. DARREN: Red Bull?

418. LAYLA: No.

419. DARREN: Sure?

420. LAYLA: *(She relents)* Okay.

*He opens a can.*

421. DARREN: Good girl. I live on the stuff.

*He opens another can and passes it to her.*

Don't know day from night.

Mike's a good bloke, you know. I've been working for him for three years. He saw a niche in the market.

Started out with one boat. Now it's an industry.

We're a wholly Welsh company. And when our health insurance services are run by Australians, the rail companies by Germans and the Dutch, electricity by the French and the prisons and detention centres by Americans, that's something to be proud of.

422. LAYLA: Is that what they meant by taking back our country?

423. DARREN: What?

424. LAYLA: Nothing. Is it legal, what you do?

425.       DARREN:       Mike's got so many businesses. The hotel. Loads of buildings. A block of flats. He's got online businesses. A casino. We register the boats as a fishing company. Vessel management. You don't have to go with us. You can choose your agent. But in the league table, we're near the top. You know how you get that place in the league table?
426.       LAYLA:        No.
427.       DARREN:        It's how many make it safely across.  
One: We know the sea.  
Two: We're not greedy.  
Three: We respect the boat's capacity. No more than two hundred per vessel.
428.       LAYLA:        When does the next boat leave?
429.       DARREN:        That I can't tell you. Once you pay your money, your decisions are our decisions. You trust me.  
*We hear the crinkle of a sweet packet.*  
Want a sweet?
430.       LAYLA:        Thanks.  
*She takes one.*

431. DARREN: People laugh at me, but I love sweets. Always  
chewing on something.  
*He's at the window.*  
Look.  
*LAYLA joins him.*  
Community Patrol are out.
432. LAYLA: What are they doing?
433. DARREN: Looking for people. Picking people up.  
*We can hear sirens and a disturbance outside.*  
You've come all this way on your own?
434. LAYLA: I was with my daughter.
435. DARREN: Where's she now?
436. LAYLA: I don't know. She got in a van in England and I didn't.  
I've been looking for her all day.
437. DARREN: You think she got a boat?
438. LAYLA: I don't know.
439. DARREN: How far ahead of you was she?
440. LAYLA: A day, maybe two. I need to know she's made it  
across before I go. Do you have lists of passengers?
441. DARREN: Nah.  
*LAYLA takes a photo from her purse.*
442. LAYLA: This is her. It's from last year, but she looks the same.

443. DARREN: I can have a dig around. Ask people who've taken the boats out.

444. LAYLA: Can you?

445. DARREN: Sure.

*He reaches for the picture.*

Can I take this?

446. LAYLA: It's the only picture I've got.

447. DARREN: I won't lose it.

448. LAYLA: Okay.

*She gives it to him.*

449. DARREN: Why don't you have a bath?

450. LAYLA: No -

451. DARREN: My treat. It's Mike's hotel. I can do what I want. Perk of the job.

Run yourself a bath. I'll see what I can find out.

---

**SCENE TWENTY**

*LAYLA is in the bath. DARREN enters the room.*

452. DARREN: Layla?

453. LAYLA: Yes –

*She gets out of the bath and grabs a robe.*

Hang on –

454. DARREN: I reckon she's gone across.

*LAYLA comes out of the bathroom.*

455. LAYLA: On a boat?

456. DARREN: Someone looking like her came in on Monday. She was travelling with an older woman. Left yesterday morning on her own. We think.

Here's your picture.

*LAYLA takes it.*

457. LAYLA: Thanks.

What happens when you get to the other side?

458. DARREN: There's an oil platform in the sea. Disused. When the boat gets there, we ring the Irish military who pick you up and take you to Cork.

We need to get you across, don't we?

459. LAYLA: Yes.

460. DARREN: This is what I do. Help people get across. Help you get to your daughter.  
Stay here tonight if you want. If you don't want to get picked up.
461. LAYLA: How much is the boat?
462. DARREN: How much have you got?
463. LAYLA: Seven hundred and fifty.
464. DARREN: You can get a boat for that. But you won't make it to the other side. People don't know what they're doing. You've seen those lifejackets they're selling in town?
465. LAYLA: Yes.
466. DARREN: Most of them, when they get wet, they soak up water. They soak it up and pull you under. I don't want you to waste your money.  
Let me speak to Mike.
467. LAYLA: Would you?
468. DARREN: You look worried. Don't worry. I'll speak to Mike. I'll make it okay.  
Eh?
469. LAYLA: Yes.
470. DARREN: We don't want you worried.  
Do we?

*He reaches over and touches her. She shifts around.*

471. DARREN: You okay?

472. LAYLA: Yeah.

473. DARREN: Bit tired?

474. LAYLA: Yeah.

475. DARREN: What you wriggling for?

476. LAYLA: Nothing.

477. DARREN: I can touch you, can't I?

We're making things right between us, aren't we?

You don't mind that.

*The sound of the sea takes over. A rough, unfriendly sea.*

---



**SCENE TWENTY ONE**

*LAYLA and almost two hundred other refugees are on a boat on a choppy sea, arriving at a disused oil platform.*

**478. LAYLA: There were more than two hundred of us. I kept counting.**

**Over and over. Two hundred and eighteen. Two hundred and nineteen. Two hundred and twenty.**

**Kept myself screwed up inside myself. Deep down. A seed in the earth.**

*The SMUGGLER speaks over a loud hailer – we are close to him, with*

*LAYLA.*

**479. SMUGGLER: (Loud hailer) We're coming up to the oil platform now.**

**As we come alongside it, we'll secure the boat.**

*We hear a CHILD crying with the cold.*

**There's a ladder. You need to climb the ladder onto the platform.**

**480. VOICE 1: How long do we have to wait there?**

**481. SMUGGLER: Once everyone's off, the Irish Navy will be told and they'll come and pick you up.**

**482. VOICE 2: It's freezing. There's kids here.**

*We start to hear PEOPLE shouting, distant over the noise of the sea and the boat – from the oil platform. LAYLA speaks, close to the SMUGGLER.*

483. SMUGGLER: The quicker you get on the rig, the quicker we can get you picked up.

*REFUGEES start to climb the ladder.*

486. LAYLA: There are people up there already. On the platform.

487. SMUGGLER: *(On loudhailer)* Next one on the ladder. Let's have the next one.

488. VOICE 3: Why are there people up there?

489. SMUGGLER: Hold onto the sides.

490. LAYLA: Why are there people on the platform?

491. SMUGGLER: One at a time.

*A generalised panic starts to spread.*

**492. LAYLA: Against the grey stone of the sky, there were faces. Up on the platform.**

*We hear the shouts from the rig more clearly now.*

493. VOICES: Help! Help us!

**494. LAYLA: Bobbing in and out of vision as waves hit the boat. And not just one or two. Hundreds.**

495. VOICE 1: Oh God.

496. SMUGGLER: Don't move about in the boat.

497. LAYLA: (To the SMUGGLER) It's the people from the last trip,  
isn't it?

498. SMUGGLER: What?

499. LAYLA: They haven't been picked up.

*As the SMUGGLER starts to untie the dinghy on the side of the main boat..*

*Panic rises as people realise how unsafe they are.*

501. LAYLA: Ring the Navy.

502. SMUGGLER: I'm going to.

503. LAYLA: Where are you going?

504. SMUGGLER: I'll ring the Navy on my way back.

505. LAYLA: You need to ring the Navy now. They need to come  
and get us now. This isn't safe.

*The SMUGGLER starts to get into the dinghy. LAYLA grabs him.*

You're not leaving.

506. SMUGGLER: This is nothing to do with me.

507. LAYLA: Every person on here is to do with you.

508. SMUGGLER: The messes you've got yourselves in are your  
messes, not mine.

509. LAYLA: We're the same, you and me.

510. SMUGGLER: I'm just doing my job.

511. LAYLA: You and me and everyone else on this boat. We're  
the same.

512. SMUGGLER: I just do what I'm told.

513. LAYLA: Where's your 'phone?

514. SMUGGLER: Get off me.

*LAYLA shouts to everyone.*

515. LAYLA: I'm not letting you go.

516. SMUGGLER: Get off –

*He hits her and she falls from the boat into the water. As we go under the water with her.*

---

**SCENE TWENTY TWO**

*As LAYLA speaks, we feel as though we're under water.*

**517. LAYLA: Not all stories start with Once Upon A Time. Some stories start when you're not looking. When you're doing something else.**

**And by the time you realise it's the wrong story – that you need to change it, it's got so big. It's taken hold.**

**And you trace the story back, back and you think, if only I'd known. If only I'd known this would happen, I'd have done something. But you didn't. You didn't do anything.**

*A memory from LAYLA and HOLLY'S past plays.*

**520. HOLLY: (Memory) What happens in the end?**

**521. LAYLA: (Memory) It's bed time, Holly.**

**522. HOLLY: (Memory) But I don't know what happens in the end.**

*We move into the hospital completely, hearing the scene from HOLLY and the NURSE'S POV.*

**523. HOLLY: Mum?**

**524. LAYLA: I love you, Holly.**

**525. HOLLY: (To the NURSE) Can she hear me?**

**526. NURSE: Layla, can you hear me?**

LAYLA is surfacing – it sounds like rushing water as the voices and sounds of the hospital clarify.

There's someone here for you, Layla.

527. HOLLY: Mum?

528. LAYLA: *(Indistinct)* Yeah?

529. NURSE: There you are, she's heard you.

531. LAYLA: Holly? Where are we?

534. NURSE: You're in Ireland, Layla. In Cork.

535. HOLLY: In hospital.

536. LAYLA: Why are you helping us?

537. NURSE: I'm a nurse, that's what I do.

539. LAYLA: I didn't know this was going to happen.

540. HOLLY: It's all okay.

**541. LAYLA: We don't know what's going to happen next.  
Nobody knows. No matter how much some people  
tell us they do, until it's history, it's up to us.**

541. HOLLY: I love you mum.

542. LAYLA: I love you so much.

**543. LAYLA: Anything could happen.**

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THE END

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