

DISPLACE

By Zoha Bharwani

A Note on Casting:

Casting of the characters should reflect the diversity present in refugee camps; remember who this play is representing. Migrants from Syria, Kurdistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Khartoum, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon to name only a few. The dialogue will take place in English, French, and Arabic. Cast people who know the languages. The main character and her brother should be Syrian; the rest of the cast is left to the discretion of the individual performances.

Setting:

This play is meant to be performed as a pop-up performance in any outdoor open space. The audience sits on blue tarps laid out in the open space, or stands around the edges. If there are natural rock formations or benches in the space, they may sit on those as well.

In the center of the open space is the main stage. The set is the bare skeletons of a refugee tent, a tarp draped over four beams. The audience should be able to see through the whole structure.



If there are trees and natural posts around the outskirts of the open space, clothes lines may be strung out. The whole effect should be one such that the audience has been displaced from their home to the second Calais jungle c. November 2018.

Prior to the show beginning, the cast will mingle with the audience, acting as though they are a part of the crowd. When not performing, cast members will sit on the tarps beside the audience and watch the action with them.

The lighting is provided by two LED lamps, such as those found on soccer fields lighting night games, pointed at the tent formation. They should be programmable to create strobe effects when necessary.

Characters:

Leyan (20)

Sa'ad (17)

Naima (22)

Hasan (18)

Ahad (18)

Ensemble:

French Police/CRS Officers

Sa'ad's friends (all 16-18 in age)

Auberge Des Migrants marchers

i.

LEYAN writes by the light of her phone screen. She stops fairly frequently to check the time, check for text messages. She looks up, looks about the camp, listens.

The sound of teenage boys laughing can be heard in the distance. Leyan looks in that direction.

Nothing happens for some time. Leyan grows anxious, tries calling twice. No answer. Laughter in distance, followed by shushing.

SA'AD and his group of 3-4 friends, including AHAD and HASAN, emerge from the audience, laughing and slapping each other on the back. They burst into the tent.

LEYAN - Sa'ad!! Shoo mushkilatik?! (*what's your problem*) Where the hell were you?

SA'AD - (*sugary sweet*) Ana bi kher, shukran, wa inti okhti? (*I'm fine, thank you, and you, sister?*)

Sa'ad's friend laugh, wink at Leyan, Ad Lib flirtatious comments in Arabic.

LEYAN - Chub Skitto (*shut up*)! Barra (*get out*)! What are you doing keeping him out so late?! Go to bed, shoof el waqt (*look at the time*)!

Sa'ad's friends exit, snickering, ad lib.

LEYAN - No jokes now, where were you?

SA'AD - You worry too much. We were just playing football.

LEYAN - Come here, why do you smell like that?

SA'AD (*moves away quickly*) - I don't smell anything. I don't smell like anything.

LEYAN - Ya ghabi (*oh, idiot*), you think I don't know tobacco when I smell it? Go change, disgusting.

SA'AD - Okay okay, I know, I'm sorry.

Sa'ad changes into another tattered tee.

SA'AD - What's new with you?

LEYAN - Same old, Naima came by for a bit, we walked towards town and stopped by the center.

SA'AD - I was there too!

LEYAN - Oh, were you? I wouldn't know, you never call or text.

SA'AD - Leaaanne.

LEYAN - Okay, okay. What did you get up to?

SA'AD - We found another open space behind the trees back there. We were just kicking a ball around, astarfarah.

LEYAN - Hm. Sounds like plenty of idle time to text me back.

SA'AD - My phone died Leyan, insil mawdo3 (*let it go*).

LEYAN - Aasefe (*sorry*), you just worry me.

SA'AD - I have something for you - the mail came to the center today.

LEYAN - Did we get something?

SA'AD - You remember 3'ami (*uncle*) Hammoudi? He came to visit us a few years ago in Hama, he was kind of, uh - abyadh (*white*) - you know what I mean?

LEYAN - Watch your language, I'm sure they've caught on to that word by now, the way you and your friends throw it around in front of the officers.

SA'AD - Okayyy just you know what I mean right? You remember how he would talk? (*exaggerates haughty British accent*) "My deear, how aaahre you?" Like he would even speak Arabic like that - "el hem du lileh hebeebtee" (*praise be to God, my love*).

Leyan chuckles in spite of herself.

LEYAN - Yeah, I remember having the impression that he had tried to completely rub Syria from his speech... I didn't mind so much after the Eidi he shoved in my hand though; it was more money than I'd make in a month working at the store.

SA'AD - He sent a postcard!!

LEYAN - How did he find us...? He couldn't have known we're he—

SA'AD - Didn't Ami (*mom*) tell him before we left?

LEYAN - No.

SA'AD - Ahh

LEYAN - Sa'ad...

SA'AD - Okay well I may have written to him first; his company website lists a P.O box...

LEYAN - Sa'ad!

SA'AD - I didn't tell him anything you wouldn't have told him! I just told him we had to leave Hama and we are stopping in France and Amar — (*backtracks quickly*) but he offered Leyan!! He said if we could find a way to get to Manchester we would have a home with him — I didn't ask him for anything —

LEYAN - Of course he offered! You backed him into a corner! I can't believe you told him about Amar where the hell is your decen—

SA'AD - Not everything! I just said we got separated, 3'ami knows how these things go—

LEYAN - How these things go?!

SA'AD - No, okhti, that's not what I me—

LEYAN - Amar was murdered, Sa'ad! And if you don't shut your mouth you might be next! You can't send letters to people we haven't seen in years, announcing to anyone who reads that letter how to find us, how to find you! Just keep your mouth shut and your head down, I'm working on figuring this out for us the right way.

SA'AD - How long are we supposed to wait here with our mouths shut Leyan? It's been 7 months. Yeah, I might be next, and it won't be because I blabbed. It'll be because we have an opportunity and you aren't willing to take it. We can leave before winter comes, there are trains — the boys and I have been watching, we know when they—

LEYAN - Chub! Shut up! That's enough. You KNOW people die trying to get on those trains. You are NOT going to be one of those numbers they report - do you even know?? 12 people died trying to get on those trucks and trains last month! Last month!! If you think I can stand to lose you — I just — have you even thought about — gambling with your life like this, what the hell?!

SA'AD - As opposed to what? What you are doing? Lying low, hoping CRS finds you tomorrow instead of today? What are you living for here?

LEYAN - For you! For what's left of our family, don't talk as if you don't know that! Don't you dare talk about leaving like that —

Sa'ad is finally silent for a beat.

SA'AD - Okay. Can you think about it at least?

LEYAN - Think about what, you haven't thought -

SA'AD - Leyan, we have a future. We have relatives - friends, even - who will lay their own security on the line for us. I know how you feel about my friends but all of them admire you and would do anything to help you. Please just think about it.

LEYAN - We're done talking about this tonight.

SA'AD - Mashi (*okay*), khalas (*done*), I understand.

Sa'ad makes his bed: he rolls out a tarp, spreads a sheet over it, props a plastic bag full of his clothes at one end, and covers himself with a raggedy but warm-looking comforter. Leyan resumes writing by phone light.

SA'AD - What are you writing?

LEYAN - Nothing. Just notes to myself. Like a diary, kind of.

SA'AD (*not believing her*) - Are these notes so urgent that you can't wait for daylight?

LEYAN - Just some things I don't want to forget. (*Changing topic quickly*) How did the football game go today?

SA'AD (*registering the abruptly-changed topic*) - Hmm it was fine. We won.

LEYAN - Mhmm nice.

SA'AD - I'm sleeping, leyl sa'eeda, tusbahi 3a 5er (*good night*), Leyan.

LEYAN - Good night habibi.

Leyan stops writing. She reads over her words once, then turns off her phone light. LED lights out.

ii.

The LED lights stay off for this movement sequence.

Police officers arise from out of the audience, turn their flashlights on, begin rustling the tarps in the outskirts of the audience, encircling but not approaching Leyan and Sa'ad's tent. Yelling in French and Arabic as the police make their rounds through the audience.

POLICE (*overlapping, ad lib*)

//Bâtards! Réveillez!! (*Bastards! Wake up!*)

//Qu'est que c'est (*What is this*)? Où as-tu volé ça (*Where have you stolen this from*)?

//Oy, bâtard, défonce-toi (*Hey bastard, fuck you*)! Tu me manques de respect... (*You're disrespecting me*)

//Merde (*Shit*)!! Ce salaud a volé ces provisions (*This asshole has stolen these provisions*).
Donne-moi, DONNE (*Give it to me, give it!*)

//Cela vous montre (*This will show you*)!!

Sound of slashing and beating tarps. Screams.

Leyan turns her phone light on. Police freeze in their spots, Turn to face Leyan and Sa'ad. Flashlights on them as Leyan pulls Sa'ad closer to her.

Police officers stalk toward her tent slowly like wolves, encircling her tent, keeping their flashlights on her.

Movement sequences ensues. Police enter the tent, take the sleeping bags, stove, clothes, move them out and pass them around, eventually returning them. They are safe this night but the threat is there, very near. The police get close to Leyan, reach out, almost touching her, and then turn away from her at the last second. Flashlights out at the same time.

iii.

LED lights up. The next morning.

Leyan wakes up first, checks to make sure Sa'ad is still there. He's sleeping, they're safe for another night. Leyan puts her bedsheets away, begins cooking breakfast, takes down the clothes from the clothes line, as she waits for Sa'ad to wake up.

Sa'ad wakes up.

SA'AD - Sabah al khayr (*good morning*), ahlaaan wa sahlān ya okhti jameela hlwe, (*hello my lovely sister*), it's a new day, we made it, huh?

Sa'ad winks. Leyan smiles in response.

LEYAN - Come, I made your favorite potatoes.

SA'AD - You're the best. I'll have to eat quickly, we're getting together at Hassan's to watch the game.

LEYAN - Okay take care. The wifi is on today, please text or call me if you're going to be late coming home. I worry - you understand, right?

SA'AD - Of course. The center is open for a few hours today, I'll charge my phone if I can.

LEYAN - Yalla okay get out of here then.

SA'AD - While I'm at the center, do we need anything?

LEYAN - See if you can get another tarp. That one hasn't been replaced since —

SA'AD - Got it, I'll look. The CRS has been confiscating tarps though, so the center was hesitant to give them out. No tents or blankets either.

LEYAN - That's what I feared. I don't know how the new ones are going to sleep next month, it's already getting so cold at night. We got lucky to come here when we did.

SA'AD - Yeah, lucky...

Leyan chooses to ignore this. Sa'ad grabs his backpack.

SA'AD - Yalla bye!

LEYAN - Ma'a Salama (*good bye*). Don't smoke anything, ya hmaar (*donkey*).

Leyan pulls out the sheet of paper she had been writing on, reads it over as she cleans the small stove.

Leyan's close friend, NAIMA, rises from the audience,. She carries a laundry basket. She takes down some of the clothes from various clotheslines, puts them in her basket, and enters the tent from behind Leyan.

NAIMA - Sabah al kher habibti, distracted today?

Leyan jumps.

LEYAN - Oh it's you!

NAIMA - Um, excuse...

LEYAN - Oh come on, you know what I meant - I'm very happy to see you. Ki fiq?

NAIMA - Nafs al shay. Had a bit of a scare last night.

LEYAN - Ya Allah - I heard it, I didn't know it was near you.

NAIMA - Yeah; it was very close. Mahmoud lost his mind a little.

LEYAN - Y'al al miskeen. What happened?

NAIMA - I think since he lost his eyesight, his hearing has gotten better; he heard them so clearly he thought it was our tent. I had to hold his head and keep his mouth shut; he tried so hard to yell.

LEYAN - Ya Rabi (*oh my God*). Nightmare.

Leyan and Naima fold clothes together in silence for some time.

NAIMA - Wa anti (*and you*)? Everything okay?

LEYAN - Honestly... Mb3araf (*I don't know*). Sa'ad is restless. Like he's going to pounce.

NAIMA - He's spent a significant portion of his life here, almost a year, no?

LEYAN - 7 months.

NAIMA - He's young, it makes sense he wants to be somewhere else, somewhere he can grow in peace.

LEYAN - I know, I want that for him too. I'm trying, you know that.

NAIMA - We all are, I guess.

More silence. More folding.

LEYAN - Naima?

NAIMA - Shoo (*what*)?

LEYAN - Have you heard about the march that's being organized by L'Auberge des Migrants?

NAIMA - No, but I'm not surprised. They're always trying something or another.

LEYAN - They're marching on foot all the way here, from Ventimiglia.

NAIMA - That's sweet. Their hearts are in the right place.

LEYAN - Naima they're powerful people... There are retired attorneys organizing it...

Naima stops folding.

NAIMA - What are you trying to say?

LEYAN - I've been writing. About Amar. About what they do here, the CRS. I want l'Auberge to know. Everyone here knows someone who's been affected by the way they treat us. Kids! They treat 15 year olds like criminals! Look what they've done to Mahmoud —

NAIMA - Don't bring Mahmoud into this.

Naima glances around nervously.

LEYAN - Naima! You can't be serious. You know as well as I do that wasn't an accident. One case can be an accident - this happens every few days!!

NAIMA - What are they supposed to do, we're not supposed to be here. They've cleared this site once already...

LEYAN - There's no excuse for the way they treat us! Their rubber bullets and teargas blinded Mahmoud, you owe it to him to share his story.

NAIMA - No, I owe it to him to keep him safe. I failed him -

LEYAN - You didn't, you were helpless then. But l'Auberge, they're coming to meet us, to listen to us, and fight for us. We just need to give them the evidence - What are you doing - where are you going?? Naima!!

NAIMA - I'm done. I can't listen to this right now.

LEYAN - Naima, please just hear me -

NAIMA - I can't, not after last night, not after what happens every other night. What the hell is wrong with you?! Do you have any idea what they would do to you if they caught wind of your grand plans?! Do you?! Mahmoud is a kid, look what they've done to him. And for what?! Minding his own fucking business and sleeping in his own shit tent. He wasn't on some mission to incriminate the CRS and expose them to the whole fucking world. The world knows, Leyan, and it doesn't give a shit about us. If you try to make this your fight they will tear you to shreds by night.

LEYAN - What the fuck am I supposed to do?! Wait around and watch Sa'ad try to escape?! He's becoming restless, and the boys aren't good for each other - he'll do something irrational. Or his friend will. God forbid he try to leave -

NAIMA - He won't, he knows what it would do to y-

LEYAN - You know what has happened to the boys that try to leave - worse than death... What am I supposed to do? I couldn't protect Amar, I don't know what I'd do if I lost Sa'ad, I'd kill —

NAIMA - Khalas. Don't finish that sentence. I hear you. But please, I'm begging you, this isn't the way to protect him. He needs his sister strong and safe. I need you safe. You can't go stirring trouble with the CRS. Listen, just wait til you hear what's become of your asylum request. Please just wait til then. It can't be much longer.

LEYAN - We both know we'll be rejected. They rejected almost 75,000 seeking asylum last year. Out of over 100,000. It's been 7 months, we have to try another way.

NAIMA - You don't know for sure. Please just wait.

Leyan folds clothes in silence. Lights out. Naima goes back to sitting in the audience.

iv.

Night. One LED light, dimming slowly.

Leyan is alone in her tent again. She checks the time and checks for messages over and over. Reads the paper she had been writing on.

She busies herself by laying out the sheets for their beds, using the light of her phone screen. The LED almost completely out now.

Police begin their searches at the outskirts of the playing space, questioning the audience members furthest from the tent. Police overlapping, ad lib in French.

Train sounds in the distance.

Suddenly, a scream is heard. Leyan puts her phone light out, pitch darkness.

In the dim light, we can make out Sa'ad and a friend supporting a third person on their shoulders. The third figure is crying; Sa'ad and his friend are trying to hush him. They crouch, hide in the audience to dodge police, making their way towards the tent. They rush in and lay the figure down on the sheets Leyan has laid.

SA'AD - Okhti, sa3'adina (sister, help us).

Leyan claps a hand over her mouth. Lights out.

v.

Both LEDs come up slowly. It is daytime again.

We finally see the figures in the light. On the tarp, HASAN lies shirtless. His shirt is a few feet away, drenched in blood.

Leyan kneels over HASAN's body, redressing his wounds. As she peels back the dressings, we see slashes under his eye, and across his ribs.

Sa'ad and his other friend AHAD are asleep, leaning against the tent posts. Sa'ad wakes up, comes over to his sister.

LEYAN - Sabah al kher (*Good morning*).

SA'AD - Yeah.

Sa'ad watches Leyan work. They kneel by each other in silence. Sa'ad looks at his friend.

LEYAN - I don't know what to do about the broken rib.

SA'AD - I'll see if there are any medical volunteers at the center today.

LEYAN - Please don't go out today. We can figure something out to hold it in place. You don't need to leave today, please. I was able to stop the bleeding and pain enough so he could rest. Just stay with him — stay with me.

SA'AD - I can't stay here.

Leyan registers what he really means.

LEYAN - How did it happen?

SA'AD - We were going to watch the Man United game. He made a joke — that the view of that match would be better from Manchester. We laughed it off, I said “3’ami (*my uncle*) could get us tickets.” We all thought he was joking — (*breaks off, collects himself*).

SA'AD - I don't know what happened after that, it happened really quickly. He heard the train, and he ran off - towards the razor wall, you know the one blocking the Eurotunnel? We ran after him, yelling for him to stop, we all knew and he knew the CRS would be doing their rounds. He jumped on the wall, he didn't care how much it cut his hands. But they got him. They got him, and they pulled him down off the fence, and they hit — so hard —

Sa'ad breaks off. He tries to collect himself.

SA'AD - We couldn't do anything, we would have been beaten. Right? We couldn't do anything. We couldn't. We waited. Just sat there. We saw the whole thing happen and didn't do anything. We didn't do anything.

Leyan pulls him close, holds him. It could have been him.

LEYAN - You did what you could. You did the right thing, and you brought him here, where you knew I could help. I will always be here to help. You couldn't do anything else.

SA'AD - Will he remember that we didn't come help him?

LEYAN - He will understand. He will understand when he comes to his senses. There was nothing for you to do.

Ahad wakes up and sees the two embracing. He lingers by the post for a second.

LEYAN - Sabah al kher Ahad. Ki fiq (*how are you*)?

AHAD - (*mumbles*) Alhamdulillah (*All praise to God*). Wa anti (*and you*)?

LEYAN - Alhamdulillah.

AHAD - Hm. Has he said anything?

LEYAN - Only in his sleep. I stayed with him through the night, changed the dressings as he bled through. I don't know what to do about the rib.

AHAD - We can find a doctor. There will be volunteers everywhere today in preparation - they don't want the Auberge to see the real jungle. *(To Sa'ad)* Int jae? *(Are you coming)?*

Sa'ad is torn. Leyan leverages the momentary hesitation.

LEYAN - He should stay. In case Hasan wakes up again. He will want to see a friend's face.

AHAD - Okhti *(sister)*, I could be that face too. Khalas, I understand. Ana ra7 roo7 *(I'll just go)*.

LEYAN - Deer balk 3a halk *(take care of yourself)*.

AHAD - *(with sarcasm)* Insha Allah *(God-willing)*.

Ahad exits the tent. Begins asking audience members if they are doctors/nurses or know of any doctors/nurses nearby.

LEYAN - Sa'ad --

SA'AD - Leyan I know what you're going to say. Please just don't right now. There will be plenty of time - it's not like we're going anywhere anytime soon.

LEYAN - I just wanted to tell you that Hasan is going to be okay.

SA'AD - Oh, okay.

LEYAN - And it's not your fault. You didn't do this to him.

SA'AD - What do I say to him?

LEYAN - He won't blame you. He can't, he knows who is at fault.

SA'AD - He was so close. I just think - what if he had made it? Over the wall at least - he's smart, he could figure out the eurotrain easily. What if we had helped him —

LEYAN - Sa'ad -

SA'AD - Or at least followed him, fended off the CRS for a bit, just long enough.

LEYAN - It doesn't work that way. That's not what happened. Hasan is here in our care because that doesn't happen.

SA'AD - You make it sound like I forgot.

LEYAN - Even if you had chased after him and he made it over, then what? He would try to get on the eurotrain, but that could have meant death. Maybe he is lucky.

SA'AD - What the fuck Leyan?

LEYAN - I know you constantly think about leaving and because of that I spend every day unsure of whether you will come home at night, not even come back to me, just, even survive -

SA'AD - I mean, here I am.

LEYAN - — whether you will make it to the next day in tact. Where you would end up if you tried and failed to escape. There has to be another way --

SA'AD - Yeah, you think you can tell the Auberge about what happens here. I know. Naima told me.

LEYAN - She had no right —

SA'AD - She had every right. You think you're doing it to protect me, to make me think there's another option beyond this life. You're not. You're doing it because you are in complete denial of our reality.

LEYAN - The reality, you said yourself, was that there are people who want to help us here.

SA'AD - The reality is you can't protect me. No one can. No one could protect Hasan.

LEYAN - Hasan was rash, you would never —

SA'AD - Hasan's only fault was that he saw our reality too clearly. He understood - so many of the people that you lecture me about, the ones getting killed by trains - they understood.

LEYAN - There's nothing to understand except not to be so rash, we're making the best of this —

SA'AD - Leyan, they understood that you either live in this hell or you die trying to get out. There's no other option; no magical organization is going to bail you out.

LEYAN - Astaghfirullah (*God forgive you*). We are so much better off than we could have been - The volunteers here are good people; they've given us everything we have. The auberge will listen! They're coming here for us. They're marching across this country in solidarity with us. And when they know what it's really like they will help us. They have to. You just need to be patient. And have some iman (*faith*).

SA'AD - (*scoffs*) Iman! Yes, iman! You know I'm sure if Hasan had some iman he would be in a different situation right? Maybe a few more ribs intact. And I'm sure that little boy that got run over by the refrigerator truck just needed some iman. And those people killed by the eurotrain - why didn't they just have some iman? Innocent people that suffer and die every day in these pathetic excuses for tents at the hands of these officers lack iman? Leyan you're fucking blind. Iman is the difference between heaven and hell - it has no effect on life or death here. God gave up on us a long time ago, put your iman in something else.

LEYAN - I cannot believe you. Astaghfirullah, you should be ashamed of yourself.

At this point the play diverges based on whether or not a doctor or nurse is found in the audience. 'Doctor' will be used going forward but can be replaced by 'Nurse'

v.i.

Ahad enters with the doctor in tow. He carries pamphlets and a bottle of pain medications.

AHAD - The center was open today - they gave us these instructions for Hasan; how he should breathe and rest so he can recover - when he wakes up of course. Doctor/Nurse (*name*) is volunteering today.

LEYAN - Marhaba Doctor - thank you for taking the time to see us. I'm Leyan, and this my brother Sa'ad's friend Hasan. He hasn't woken up yet since he was -- um, since he got in a fight. I have been dressing his wounds; I think the bleeding has stopped. There is a lot of bruising around the ribs so I thought maybe one is broken. Can you look at it please?

The rest of the scene is improvised from here. It should read to the audience through the reactions of Sa'ad, Leyan, and Ahad that, with the help of the volunteer Doctor or nurse, Hasan has a good chance of near complete recovery.

If the volunteer doctor is nervous or unsure of what to do on stage, Leyan should prompt him with things like "I thought maybe we should wrap it with this to hold it in place" or "Maybe I can support him for you while you wrap this around him". These scenarios should be rehearsed thoroughly.

At a certain point during the procedure, Hasan will wake up. He will see the doctor's unfamiliar face first and panic, but Sa'ad and Ahad will be there to hold him still and help calm him. Sa'ad gives him a pill for the pain. By the end, it should read as though Hasan is trying to cooperate with the doctor as much as he possibly can.

LEYAN - Thank you so much, Doctor. We really appreciate it. Bless you, there is so much good in your heart, thank you.

Ahad escorts the doctor back to the audience.

Sa'ad kneels beside Hasan and holds his forehead. Leyan gives the two some space and busies herself by cleaning the tent.

SA'AD - Hey brother -

HASAN - Hey man, what've I missed?

SA'AD - Just us fussing over you, nothing you're not used to.

Hasan cracks a pained smile.

SA'AD - How are you feeling?

HASAN - Sad. I don't get to kick your sorry hmar (*ass*) at football now.

Sa'ad's laugh is relief.

SA'AD - You'll be back at it in no time.

HASAN - It'll just suck to watch you all play without me.

SA'AD - We won't. There are so many other things we can do while you're healing. We can play cards! Or dominoes? We don't need to play football for now we can just watch the Man United -- uh

HASAN - Hm?

SA'AD - Hasan, what happened to you? How did you end up like this?

HASAN - I got in a fight right? Who was the other guy? I bet he's in way worse shape... Mmm where was I again? You probably saw it, you were there, no?

Ahad enters the tent and overhears the last part of these questions. He and Sa'ad share a glance.

AHAD - My man, Hasan, how's it going?

Ahad goes in for a handshake/shoulder-bump but sees Hasan wince in pain.

AHAD - Hey I'm so sorry. How are you feeling?

HASAN - Good, good. Sa'ad here was just doting on me, telling me all the things you're all going to do for me out of pity.

AHAD - Best believe it.

HASAN - How long have I been out?

SA'AD - Just the night. We haven't left your side.

AHAD - Well, except to find the doctor.

HASAN - *(chuckles)* You're too good to me.

SA'AD - Hey man, you'd do the same for either of us.

AHAD - If not more...

HASAN - That's true. You're my family.

Hasan gestures to the medication bottle.

AHAD - It's for the pain.

HASAN - Let me get some more of that. I'm feeling it again.

SA'AD - You should rest. We'll get you inside.

Leyan comes over to help readjust Hasan. After he is comfortable and resting, Ahad and Sa'ad leave the tent to talk.

Scene rejoins here.

v.ii.

Ahad returns: no pamphlets, no pain medications, no doctor found in the audience.

SA'AD - Hey, man - nothing?

AHAD - The center was closed. I couldn't get a hold of anyone, and no one knew where I could get a hold of any meds either.

LEYAN - Wow. Okay. Well, there's a lot of swelling and bruising near his ribs, so we definitely need to patch that up, at least make it stable until he can be seen. Sa'ad hold up his back, Ahad support his head. I'll wrap.

Leyan proceeds to bind Hasan's ribs and a flat board together with an old shirt. During this process, it should read to the audience that Hasan's prognosis looks very poor.

Hasan wakes at some point during this procedure and yells out in pain and panic.

SA'AD - Tnafas (*breathe*) ya Hasan, hey, breathe. It's okay, nahna huna (*we're right here*).

Ahad grabs a wet towel for Hasan's forehead. Hasan calms slightly but is still in immense pain. It renders him in a semi-conscious state, and he nods off at times. When Leyan has finished tying the shirt, she leaves the boys.

SA'AD - Hasan, hasan - keef hasis (*how are you feeling*)?

HASAN - (*In a daze*) - I got him right?

AHAD - Who? Who are you talking about, who did you hurt??

HASAN - The boy I fought with, I won right?

Hasan nods off again.

LEYAN - Bring him inside - he needs all the rest he can get. It'll spare him from being conscious of this pain.

Sa'ad and Ahad readjust Hasan to bring him inside the tent interior and then step out.

Scene rejoins here:

v. cont'd:

AHAD - They must have hit his head. He doesn't remember anything. What do we do?

SA'AD - Mb3raf (*I don't know*).

AHAD - What are we supposed to tell him? We can't lie to him, he's our brother.

SA'AD - But if we tell him the truth I don't know what he will do to us. Or do to himself?

AHAD - This is some bullshit. I feel like such a coward but I think you're right - I don't think we can tell him anything right now, not in the state he's in.

SA'AD - If he tries anything the CRS will kill him - they won't be forgiving of a second attempt.

AHAD - You really think this is going to protect him? What if it all comes back to him?

SA'AD - You better hope we're nowhere in sight.

LED lights out.

vi.

Morning, both LED lights up. Hasan is resting in the tent. Ahad is asleep on a tent post. Sound of the zuhr adhaan, morning call to prayer.

Leyan is taking down laundry from the clothes lines.

Naima comes up behind her with a small plastic bag of cans.

NAIMA - Salaam habibti.

LEYAN - Hi. Ki fiq?

NAIMA - Honestly just worried about you all. I came to check on you - and Hasan. I brought you some things. Al3'am Yusef was giving some of his older bean cans away for only 40 centimes so I figured if you didn't have the chance to stop by -

LEYAN - That's very kind of you, shukran.

NAIMA - (*shyly*) It's not a small task, what you're doing. Your household has doubled.

LEYAN - It's nothing. Ahad is helpful, I think he really balances out Sa'ad's ghadhab (*anger*), you know?

NAIMA - Is he okay?

LEYAN - He's fine. He just blames himself and doesn't want to blame himself so he looks other things to blame, and then he gets angry. He has no iman.

NAIMA - It's hard to have iman here. You are strong in your faith and I'm sure he admires that.

LEYAN - No, he blames me for it. He thinks I'm 3'abee (*an idiot*).

NAIMA - He just doesn't know how to keep that faith yet, and honestly sometimes it feels like faith here isn't doing anyone any favors, so he doesn't know why he should try to keep that faith either.

LEYAN - Why did you tell him about the march? I confided in you.

NAIMA - He needed to know. I know you are doing it for him - but you're not thinking of the way you're putting yourself at risk. He would have blamed himself if something happened to you and he hadn't known your plan. As would I.

LEYAN - I'm not going to go through with it, but I don't know what else to do. Do you have a better idea? Sa'ad says Calais is our dead-end. We either try to escape or we sit here and waste away at the mercy of the French. But every night they try to run and every night they are beaten when they fail.

NAIMA - Listen, Leyan, I understand you. I know what you do for others. What you've done for Hasan. I know you haven't slept in days to wash that boy's wounds and keep him safe. You can't live like this.

LEYAN - It's worth it. He could die of an infection so easily with how deep his wounds are. And I don't even know if there's internal bleeding. I don't have a way to keep his skin clean without washing the wounds and washing the cloth I cover it with.

NAIMA - I understand that, but it isn't fair to you. You have been through enough and for the people "supervising" this camp to put us all through more - it's not right.

LEYAN - It's the way things are. We are not in a position to change things.

NAIMA - I know. Not alone. But listen, if you still want to share your story I think you should. I will stand with you.

LEYAN - Where? How? I can't just yell to a bunch of French marchers that my brother was murdered and my other brother's best friend is bleeding out in our tent as I speak.

NAIMA - There will be reporters here before the march. They can record you, and they can blur out your eyes on the camera. Or just take your story. They interviewed Abdullah after his brother

tried to cross and went missing - he asked to remain anonymous. He told me this - and they have to keep your identity confidential if it's for your safety.

LEYAN - They're not going to take my word for it. This is French media, French police, French people. They're going to side with their authorities.

NAIMA - I'll go with you. I'll tell them my story. We know other women, other men - like you said, everyone here has someone that has suffered from this abuse.

LEYAN - I've tried.

NAIMA - Let me try with you. You don't need to do this alone. Ana jae m3'ak (*I'm coming with you*).

LED lights out.

vii.

Morning, both lights up. Ahad asleep on a post, Sa'ad and Hasan in the tent. Leyan prepares potatoes over the small stove outside the tent.

Hasan stirs a little in his sleep, mumbles, then violently cries out and kicks. Sa'ad wakes as Hasan's nightmare winds down. Hasan calms down, and Sa'ad gets out of bed to join Leyan by the stove.

SA'AD - Sabah al kher, Leyan.

LEYAN - Hi. Sleep okay?

SA'AD - Mm. Yeah, it was fine. Inti nmti mbareh? (*did you sleep at all last night*)?

LEYAN - No, Hasan's collarbone was oozing —

SA'AD - Ew, muqarif (*that's gross*).

LEYAN - Yeah, I just tried to clean that a few times but it was hard to do so without waking him up.

SA'AD - He's been having more nightmares.

LEYAN - I noticed. He never seems to remember when he wakes though.

SA'AD - Good.

Leyan looks at him questioningly.

SA'AD - What?

LEYAN - I'm not going to say anything to him, but I think you should.

SA'AD - Why would we do that?

LEYAN - You asked me if I thought he could forgive you - I think he will. I think you just need some —

SA'AD - Leyan. We're not talking about this again right now.

LEYAN - Okay, okay. But I'm not saying in Allah, I get that that is hard right now. I'm saying at least in your friends. In your family. Would you tell me the truth if I were in his position?

SA'AD - Yes. I think... Or maybe not. Mb3araf.

LEYAN - I would want to know.

SA'AD - I would too.

LEYAN - Okay. Well, just think about it.

SA'AD - Okay.

LEYAN - Okay. Anyway, there are enough potatoes here for all of you for breakfast.

SA'AD - All of us? Laween rayha? (*where are you going*)?

LEYAN - Uh, I just want to run a few errands. I haven't left our tent in a while.

SA'AD - Errands? Here?

LEYAN - No, I mean, I'll just go to the center, and Al3am Yusuf is giving away cans for 40 cents...

SA'AD - The center's closed today, and Al3am Yusuf gave out his cans yesterday.

LEYAN - Oh, Naima said, um, maybe he still had some.

SA'AD - Leyan.

LEYAN - I just need some air. Like, away from here.

SA'AD - Leyan, the truth, Elili (*tell me*). What's going on?

LEYAN - It's the march. It's soon. They're sending reporters.

SA'AD - And?

LEYAN - I just thought I could tell them. About the conditions. About Hasan? Amar.

SA'AD - I can't believe you.

LEYAN - It would be anonymous.

SA'AD - No, I know, I'm just a little taken aback. (*Teasing, laughing to himself*) 3aneedha (*she's stubborn*).

LEYAN - How?

SA'AD - You remember how you chewed me out for writing to family about Amar?

LEYAN - Things were different.

SA'AD - How much of a difference has one boy getting beaten made? It happens every day.

LEYAN - It could have been you.

SA'AD - It wasn't though. I'm here. We're still here.

LEYAN - I don't want to be. We shouldn't be; you deserve to grow up in safety.

SA'AD - What do you hope to achieve?

LEYAN - I just need someone to know. Someone who might be able to do something. And it's not just me —

SA'AD - Naima?

LEYAN - Yes, but others too. Mothers. Brothers. Fathers, Uncles, children - everyone knows someone who wants their stories told. The reporters want the truth, and we have it for them.

SA'AD - So, all these people, you convinced them?

LEYAN - Me and Naima, yeah.

SA'AD - Wow.

LEYAN - What?

SA'AD - Nothing. I'm just, um...

LEYAN - Just?

SA'AD - Nothing. Well. Just really proud.

Leyan smiles. She goes to collect her things for the day.

LEYAN - You know what to do for his bandages, right?

SA'AD - Yep, and his rib.

LEYAN - Perfect. Call if you need anything.

SA'AD - You too.

LEYAN - Sure. See you.

SA'AD - Inshallah.

Sa'ad goes over to the tent as Ahad is waking up.

AHAD - Hey.

SA'AD - Morning.

AHAD - Ohh potatoes!

SA'AD - (*chuckles*) - Yeah, Leyan made them, they're my favorite.

AHAD - Cool, yeah - where is she?

SA'AD - She said something about errands.

AHAD - Oh, okay, cool.

Sa'ad hands Ahad a clean shirt he pulls off a clothes line. As Ahad is changing, Sa'ad makes 3 plates of potatoes.

AHAD - It's kind of weird not having her here.

SA'AD - She'll be back soon. We can take care of Hasan if he wakes before she's back.

Ahad comes over to Sa'ad to claim his plate.

AHAD - Thanks, man.

Sa'ad sets the third plate aside. He watches Ahad say a quick prayer before taking a bite.

AHAD - Mm. These are really good.

SA'AD - Yeah. What do you say before eating?

AHAD - Just Bismillah (*In the name of God*).

SA'AD - Why?

AHAD - More out of habit than anything.

SA'AD - Hm.

Sa'ad eats in silence for a bit. Ahad just looks at his plate.

SA'AD - Ant bikher? (*you good?*)

AHAD - Yeah.

SA'AD - Hm.

Beat.

AHAD - Um. My mom said it before every meal. And like, whenever she added ingredients to the pot, she took His name.

SA'AD - Oh. Asaf (*sorry*), man.

AHAD - No it's okay. She had iman, I know she's fine, wherever she is.

SA'AD - Do you?

AHAD - Do I what?

SA'AD - Have iman?

AHAD - Oh. I mean, I have to. Don't you?

SA'AD - Mb3araf, man. I don't know.

AHAD - Oh.

Eat.

AHAD - How do you do that? I feel it was a part of everything my mom did.

SA'AD - I just don't think about it much.

AHAD - What about Amar?

SA'AD - Mb3araf.

AHAD - You think about him. All the time, I know.

SA'AD - Yeah.

AHAD - Do you have salaam without iman?

SA'AD - I don't know. Not really, no peace, no. I don't want to think he's just gone.

AHAD - Yeah. I need to know she's somewhere. Aminah (*safe*), s3eeda (*happy*). She kept us safe and happy her whole life.

SA'AD - But I don't know where he is. Why he doesn't say anything.

AHAD - I think that's the iman part.

SA'AD - BA3raf (*I know*).

Eat.

AHAD - Leyan has iman. A lot of it. I admire it.

SA'AD - (*teasing*) Ant mashoura (*you're smitten*), aren't you?

AHAD - (*flushing*) Oh my God no, Astaghfirullah. She's your sister, like family.

SA'AD - Mmm family. That you *admire*. A lot.

AHAD - Yusaaah, khalasna (*dude, we're done*).

SA'AD - (*laughing*) Mashhi (*okay*).

AHAD - Why would you even say that?

SA'AD - Ana 3am bimzah, ya rajul (*I'm teasing you, man*). Besides, it's kind of cute.

AHAD - It's not true!

SA'AD - Na'am okay.

AHAD - Stopp. Astaghfirullah.

SA'AD - Oh come on.

AHAD - What??

SA'AD - I'm giving you my blessing, man.

AHAD - Yusaah there's nothing to bless.

SA'AD - Really?

AHAD - No.

SA'AD - No what?

AHAD - Ya Allah can you drop it?

SA'AD - Not until you admit it.

AHAD - There's nothing to admit!!

SA'AD - Really?

AHAD - She's just kind of pretty.

SA'AD - AHA!

AHAD - Okay but that doesn't mean anything! Ahtharee muha katheeran (*I respect her a lot*).

SA'AD - She respects you too, but I also see how she looks at you, ya ahmok.

AHAD - What??

SA'AD - Nothing. You're too jabaan (*cowardly*) to do anything anyway.

AHAD - I am not, I just don't want to take any liberties.

SA'AD - Mashi, whatever you say.

Ahad smiles shyly to his plate of potatoes.

SA'AD - Lateef.

AHAD - Ya ALLAH, khalas!

SA'AD - Okay okay sorry. I had to.

Sa'ad collects the plates and washes up. Ahad takes the remaining plate into the tent to Hasan.

AHAD - Hey, Hasan, feek (*wake up*).

Hasan mumbles.

AHAD - Hasan! Lazim takul (*you should eat something*).

HASAN - Akil? (*food?*)

AHAD - Yes, bthathas (*potatoes*)!

Hasan wakes slowly, and Ahad helps him sit up enough to eat the potatoes. Hasan's condition should reflect whether or not he received medical attention. He may be able to feed himself, or Ahad will help him.

Sa'ad joins the two when he's finished watching.

SA'AD - Yusaah, guess what?

HASAN - What?

SA'AD - Ahad's got a crush.

Ahad kicks Sa'ad.

HASAN - Dude, nice!

AHAD - Ya Rabi.

SA'AD - Okay, okay I'm just kidding. But really, guess what?

HASAN - What?

SA'AD - Man United plays Man City today! The boys are gonna come help us get you to Khalid's T.V!

HASAN - Yesss finally! Wow, how long has it been?

AHAD - Too long. They played Juventus last week but none of us were really up to following then, we were worried about you.

HASAN - So wait, the last game we saw was...?

Ahad and Sa'ad respond at the same time:

AHAD - Bournemouth.

SA'AD - Everton.

Ahad and Sa'ad look at each other. Again at the same time -

SA'AD - Yeah, Bournemouth.

AHAD - Everton, you're right.

Shit.

HASAN - I remember Everton. 2-1, right? What's this about Bournemouth?

Ahad and Sa'ad wait for the other to respond first.

HASAN - We didn't see that. We were going to right? Champions league...

Things are coming back.

SA'AD - No, I think we were going to do some exploring or something else.

HASAN - Where?

AHAD - No yes yes we didn't watch it, we went, like, by the trains.

Sa'ad glares at Ahad. Ahad realizes his mistake. Waiting for blow to fall.

HASAN - The trains. It was night then. Trains...? Why were we there?

Sa'ad grabs the pain medications.

SA'AD - Hey, man, you should rest.

HASAN - Why?

AHAD - Aren't you tired?

HASAN - I mean, a little. I'm confused though. What - how did this happen again?

Ahad looks at Sa'ad desperately.

SA'AD - You got in a fight. Ahad is right, it was by the trains at night. We were talking about watching Bournemouth, and some guy heard us and insulted Man United. You got really mad and insulted him. The guy threw a rock at us, so you went for him.

AHAD - Yes, and we ran over to back you up, but you had scared him off, so we just came to take care of you.

Hasan laughs.

HASAN - So I did this to myself for Man United, huh? Sounds like me.

SA'AD - You've always had conviction - and a temper.

HASAN - Great combo yeah. Well they better play a damn good game tonight; I sacrificed a rib for this.

Sa'ad and Ahad laugh nervously.

HASAN - Okay, yeah I'm feeling it again. Do I have some time before the game?

AHAD - Yeah dude of course. We'll tell them to postpone the game for you if need be. I'm sure none of their other fans have sacrificed a rib for them.

Hasan chuckles. Takes a pain pill. Ahad and Sa'ad help to readjust him, then leave the tent. As the LED lights black out, they look at each other. A mutual understanding of the close shave. Guilt.

viii.

One LED light, night is falling. Leyan paces around the perimeter of her tent. Sa'ad, Ahad, and Hasan have not come home.

Sound of Ethiopian pop in the distance, intercut with Michael Jackson's Billie Jean.

Leyan busies herself with more laundry folding but she is distracted. She restarts folding the same shawl several times.

A group of rowdy drunk men arise from the audience. We first see them only in the distance gathered in one of the vomms, clapping each other on the back. Ad lib in Arabic, French expressions cutting in at times.

MAN 1 - Mahla, ahdhhi alfatha??

MAN 2 - Ey.

MAN 1 - Kem jameeel

Man 1 stumbles closer to Leyan's tent. She does not see him or the others.

MAN 4 - Eh bâtard, reviens! Elle a une frère combatif -

MAN 1 - Je veux voir sa beauté avec mes propres yeux, Jamil n'a pas de goût - hmmm je ne vois rien frère??

The men approach Leyan's tent, torn between their curiosity about her beauty and their responsibility to keep their drunk friend in check. Leyan notices, and backs into her tent.

MAN 1 - JAMIL!! Hahaha kem jameeeel - tu a du gout, si j'ai dit quelque chose d'autre je le retire.

MAN 2 - I told you, get in line asshole.

MAN 3 - Dude, leave her...

MAN 1 - PREtty, come here, don't be scared, I'm as nice as you are beautiful...

MAN 4 - Damn, she is something...

MAN 2 - You want her - take her... after me!!

MAN 3 - Wallahi I do but it's not right.

MAN 4 - Nothing right about any of this but here we are.

MAN 2 - Habibti you make the jungle more beautiful for us animals, come out and play...

At this point, the men are all around her tent, cackling, hanging back but intoxicatedly roving like wolves. Leyan backs to the center of her tent, frozen. Her fingers close around a broom.

Despite their initial restraint, the men are overcome by the sight of a woman alone and defenseless. Loss, loneliness, repression, intoxication: the men close in on Leyan.

Ad lib as they slowly reach out, pulling at her hijab, pulling at the curls of hair that fall as the hijab is removed, still exhibiting some semblance of restraint, or at least hesitation.

Leyan regains consciousness and swings the broom; the men are taken by surprise and fall back a few steps. Come back with renewed vigor, rage at her denial. Grab her, force the broom from her hands, rip her shirt. As it rips --

SA'AD - What the fuck is going on?!!! GET YOUR FILTHY FUCKING HANDS OFF HER YOU FUCKING PIGS!!!!

Sa'ad, friends at his heel, runs into the tent from opposite side as men entered. Sa'ad grabs the man whose hand still clutches the fabric of Leyan's shirt and punches him in the face. Sa'ad's friends grab the intoxicated men, fight escalates quickly.

Yelling, screaming, the noise draws a small crowd of onlookers who arise from the audience, Naima included.

NAIMA - LEYAN!! LEYAN??

LEYAN - SA'AD!! STOP, let him go, stop, STOP PLEASE! BAS!! PLEASE KHALAS!
SA'AD!!!!

Leyan escapes the tent, rushes to Naima. Naima grabs Leyan. Over the din, we hear.

NAIMA - They need to stop, make them stop, it's loud it's too loud it's too fucking LOUD
Leyan we have to make them stop --

It is too late. Out of the crowd of onlookers:

POLICE 1- PUTAIN! QU'EST-CE QUI SE PASSE ICI??

POLICE 2 - BÂTARDS QU'EST-CE QUE VOUS FAISEZ??

Police circle the tent, grabbing the boys and the men indiscriminately. Yelling in their faces, intimidating, grabbing, punching, and throwing them to the ground, smashing things in the tent beside them. Ad lib in French from police, yelling in Arabic in response.

Ahad and Sa'ad manage to escape the tent for a second. Quieter in the background, still fighting.

AHAD - Sa'ad, Sa'ad it's the officer who beat Hasan. We can't let him treat us like this again.
You got my back?

SA'AD - Ahad we can't fight them!! You know what they can do, it's too late, just let's get out of here, Leyan is safe.

AHAD - Bro, are you some fucking coward?? We've lied to Hasan all this time - this is the least you can do for him. You're just gonna leave Hasan and the rest of them in there to get the shit beaten out of them again? You owe them, they're the only family you have here --

SA'AD - Leyan wouldn't forgive me --

AHAD - She'll understand, we saved her life, she owes you - you know and she knows exactly what they would've done

SA'AD - I left her alone, that's why this happened. She doesn't owe me, I let that happen to her.

AHAD - Look, I don't care what you do, I just know that I'm not a fucking coward and I will not let those fuckers hurt any of my boys again; I'm not just going to sit and watch again - and if you are half a man you won't either.

With that, Ahad picks up a fallen wooden beam by the corner of the tent and runs into the fight. LED lights strobe as Ahad slams the beam into an officer's head.

Everything following happens by strobe light. We only see vignettes.

Sa'ad runs into the tent as the officer raises the butt of his gun to hit Ashd. Sa'ad latches on until he's hit in the eye by another officer and falls backwards. Sa'ad's other friends, as well as the drunk men, most of whom are already on the floor, keel over as the officers begin to kick them.

Leyan and Naima and some other onlookers scream and run inside to clutch the officers.

NAIMA - PLEASE SIR, PLEASE STOP, he's only 15!!!

Officer slaps Naima across the face and she falls back, outside the tent.

An officer radios for more back-up, despite clearly already overpowering all the men and boys.

3 more officers arrive. One signals the others.

NEW POLICE OFFICER - Couvrez!! Protegez vos visages! Un, deux -- TROIS!!

The gas bomb is thrown into the midst of the group of men and boys. Tent is clouded in smoke. The ones who can scatter quickly, and the police disperse as well, clutching masks to their faces as they leave the tent. Someone doesn't get up. Someone rushes into the tent to the person still there. We can not see, continued strobe.

Suddenly, all lights on playing space go out, and the LEDs light the audience. A massive rush of movement from all around the audience seating.

Audio from this video

<https://twitter.com/aubergemigrants/status/985220019557724160?lang=en>.

plays in the background as around 30 planted “marchers” scramble up from the audience, raising flags and banging drums.



The volunteers, some of whom don the t-shirts in the above picture, cheer loudly after the audio speech ends. Some play hand drums, others clap along, some dance, all chant “A bas les bars barrés, Calais défiguré” and wave white flags, rainbow flags, and posters. They circle around the back of the audience for some time, some weaving through the audience, and some making their way to the center of the stage, just outside the tent. After 5 repeats of the chant, they all simultaneously raise their flags or fists, then stop moving and fall silent. The standing marchers should be peppered throughout the audience and close to the tent set.

All lights out, single spotlight on Sa’ad’s body in the tent; Ahad and Leyan hunched over it.

Fin.