

A FAMILY AFFAIR

by

Sean Aita

www.schooltours.at

Hello and welcome to ...

... **A Family Affair!** *A what?* Family, ok, but an affair? Who? Who with? When? How?

No, not to worry! As many words in the English Language, the word *affair* has several meanings. And the title of this play, brought to you by **Vienna's English Theatre**, simply means: *Family Matters*.

And yes, the play is about **families**, in more ways than one. There is Danny, an English teenager, who lives with his mum, a drama and English teacher. Danny's mum and dad are divorced – so that's one 'half-family'.

And then there's Zainab, a refugee teenage girl from Syria, and her dad – the other 'half-family'. They had to leave Syria and now live in the UK. What about Zainab's mum, you may ask? You'll find out in the course of the play, but let me tell you: it's a very, very sad story!

Zainab and Danny both go to Bournemouth High School – and this is where they meet! For Danny the UK is home and English is his mother tongue, but Zainab comes from a **foreign country** with a very **different culture** and a **different language**. So, as you can imagine, things are quite difficult for her in the beginning. But thanks to Danny, school life soon becomes much easier for her.

So when Ms Morris and Mr Habib meet at parent's evening, something else is happening ... their parents, having an *affair*? Zainab doesn't want to share her dad and Danny is not keen on getting a strict stepfather, so they try to stop their parents from seeing each other. Not very nice, hmm?

However, $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$: two cultures, two languages – one happy family!

So all that *matters* now is ...

... that you enjoy the play! Have fun!

Helena Hirsch

*There are some **quick-check comprehension questions** at the end of the text. More **exploitation strategies and activities** can be found in the accompanying **worksheet** (available as from September 2017).*

Worksheet available online
www.schooltours.at

The Characters

This play is performed by four actors.

Danny Roberts	a teenage schoolboy
Milly Morris	Danny's mother - she is divorced from his father and uses her maiden name
Zainab Habib	a refugee teenage girl from Syria
Ramy Habib	Zainab's Father, a refugee from Syria

The cast double all other roles.

The story takes place in Bournemouth, UK.

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Scene 1

DANNY: *(to the audience)* Hi, I'm Danny Roberts, and this my town, Bournemouth. It's a nice place. It's in the South of England and it's got a really cool beach, which is great when it's hot, but as this is England it's usually raining most of the time. I go to Bournemouth High School. It's OK, if you like sports. We do cricket, football, hockey, tennis, volleyball *(as he mentions each sport the other actors mime throwing or kicking balls which always end up hitting him)*... and rugby *(the other actors tackle him, throw him onto the floor and sit on top of him)*. I hate sports! They're so boring. I'd rather do anything than chase some stupid ball around a field.

ZAINAB: *(to the audience)* Hi, I'm Zainab, originally from Syria¹, but now living in the UK. I quite like sports. I love reading, baking cakes, and looking after my pet mouse.

DANNY: Oh, yeah. I like mice, too.

ZAINAB: No, you don't.

DANNY: Yes, I do. They're great on toast.

ZAINAB *punches him in the arm.*

DANNY: This is the story of how Zainab and I first met each other, and eventually became friends.

ZAINAB: Just friends? We're more than that, surely?

DANNY: Yeah. You're right. *(He gives her a high five.)* Though when we first met, we didn't get along right away.

ZAINAB: That's a fact!

ZAINAB & DANNY: Here's how it happened.

DANNY: It was Monday morning and I was late for school. Again! I was just tiptoeing past² the headmistress Mrs Kirkham's office when ...

MRS KIRKHAM: Ah, Daniel Roberts!

DANNY: Yes, Mrs Kirkham? Sorry, Mrs Kirkham, I had a problem with the bus.

MRS KIRKHAM: Never mind about that now. It's not ideal, but I suppose you'll have to do³.

DANNY: What do you mean, Mrs Kirkham?

MRS KIRKHAM: There's a new pupil joining the school today. I need you to be her class 'buddy'⁴. You can show her around the school, and explain how things work. She's a refugee from Syria, and has been through a lot. I hope

¹ ... ursprünglich aus Syrien ...

² ... auf Zehenspitzen vorbei schleichen

³ ... es ist nicht gerade ideal, aber es geht jetzt nicht anders (= du wirst genügen müssen)

⁴ ... jemand, neben der/dem man im Unterricht sitzt, aber nicht wirklich befreundet ist

you'll do your best to make her feel welcome.

DANNY: I'll try, miss, but isn't there anyone else to do it?

MRS KIRKHAM: Her buddy was supposed to be Shona Mitchell, our Head Girl¹.

But Shona's mother has just called to say she's got an upset stomach, and won't be at school today. Everyone else is in class so it will have to be you, unless you'd prefer to have a detention² this evening for being late? It is ten past nine, you know.

DANNY: Yes, miss.

ZAINAB and her father, MR HABIB, enter. ZAINAB is wearing a hijab- a headscarf- and black trousers.

MRS KIRKHAM: Ah, Mr Habib, Zainab, welcome to Bournemouth High School. Asalaamu alaikum ('*peace be with you*').

MR HABIB: Wa alaikum salaam ('*and peace be upon you*'). You speak Arabic?

MRS KIRKHAM: Just a few words. I lived in Dubai for six years. This is Daniel Roberts, one of our year elevens³. He's in the same class as Zainab and has volunteered to show her around the school⁴ today.

DANNY: (*under his breath*) Volunteered!

MR HABIB: Sorry, please excuse bad English. This is a boy?

DANNY: (*under his breath*) Duh!

MR HABIB: A boy, to show Zainab school? No. Not good. Zainab must meet with woman ... girl. Not boy.

MRS KIRKHAM: I'm very sorry, Mr Habib, but as you know this is a mixed-sex comprehensive school⁵. I know you wanted to get Zainab into Bournemouth School for Girls, but there were no places available. I'm afraid that both, you and she, are going to have to get used to the fact that there are boys here as well as girls. However, this arrangement will only be for today.

MR HABIB doesn't look very happy about this, but he shrugs his shoulders.

MR HABIB: I understand. Thank you.

MR HABIB whispers something into ZAINAB's ear. She nods agreement. He shakes hands with MRS KIRKHAM and then exits.

MRS KIRKHAM: Right. Now I really must get ready for my meeting with the school governors. I'll leave you two to get to know each other.

Neither DANNY nor ZAINAB look very pleased. There is an awkward silence.

DANNY: (*to the audience*) After hearing her dad speaking English, I thought that her English was just as bad. (*To ZAINAB*) OKAY. (*Very slowly and clearly as if to a child*) MY NAME IS DANNY. I AM GOING TO SHOW YOU AROUND THE SCHOOL NOW. (*To the audience*) I took Zainab around the whole school and showed her the classrooms, playing fields and

¹ vgl. Klassensprecher/in

² Nachsitzen (Strafmaßnahme)

³ in Ö: 9. Schulstufe/Alter ca 15 Jahre

⁴ ... hat sich (freiwillig) bereit erklärt, ihr die Schule zu zeigen ...

⁵ Gesamtschule für Burschen und Mädchen

the refectory¹. We'd nearly finished the tour when we got to the Science block. (To ZAINAB) WE ARE DOING CLASSES ON CHARLES DARWIN THIS TERM. CHARLES DARWIN – EVOLUTION?

ZAINAB *shakes her head as if she doesn't understand what he means.*

YOU KNOW... MONKEY ...

DANNY *pretends to be a monkey. This doesn't help either so he pretends to be a monkey growing into a cave man, and then a modern man. It is pretty comical.*

MONKEY – MAN! MONKEY – MAN!

DANNY: (*under his breath*) I don't know why I'm bothering². You probably don't believe in evolution anyway.

ZAINAB: Of course I believe in evolution. The Islamic scholar İbrahim Hakkı of Erzurum who lived in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century, long before Charles Darwin, is famous for saying that “between plants and animals there is a sponge, and, between animals and humans there is a monkey”.³

DANNY: You can speak English!

ZAINAB: So can you!

DANNY: Yeah. I was born here. You weren't.

ZAINAB: My mother was an English Teacher in a school in Aleppo, she spoke to me in English every day from when I was little.

DANNY: Why didn't you say so before?

ZAINAB: You didn't give me much of a chance. And, I'm sorry but it *was* quite funny listening to you. (*She copies him*) MONKEY – MAN! MONKEY – MAN!

DANNY: Yeah, really funny. I can't stop laughing. You let me go on like a complete idiot for the past ten minutes.

ZAINAB: It seemed to me that you'd already made up your mind⁴ that I was the one who was an idiot. You spoke to me like a baby.

DANNY: How was I to know you could speak English? Your dad can't.

ZAINAB: You could ask.

DANNY: You made a monkey out of me. Literally⁵.

ZAINAB: Better to be a monkey than a sponge.

DANNY: Charming. I thought Muslim girls were supposed to be quiet, and shy?

ZAINAB: I thought English boys were all supposed to be gentlemen? Or is that just a cliché⁶, too?

DANNY: Okay. Mrs Kirkham can give me a detention if she wants to, but I'm not going to hang around where I'm not wanted. You're clearly smart enough to find your own way to maths class. Have a nice day.

¹ Speisesaal

² Ich weiß nicht, warum ich mir das antue!

³ Der islamische Gelehrte ... im osmanischen Reich ... zwischen Pflanzen und Tieren ist der Schwamm

⁴ ... als hättest du schon beschlossen, dass ich der Dummkopf bin ...

⁵ Du hast einen Affen aus mir gemacht – im wahrsten Sinn des Wortes!

⁶ Klischee, Annahme

He exits.

ZAINAB: *(to the audience)* I felt really bad about the way I'd spoken to Danny.

DANNY: Good!

ZAINAB: He was only trying to help me, after all. *(To DANNY)* Even if he did mess it up. *(To the audience)* The next day in class I tried to make it up to him¹.
She is holding a tin – she passes it to DANNY.

Here.

DANNY: What's this?

ZAINAB: It's an apology.

DANNY: An apology in a tin?

ZAINAB: It's a traditional Syrian cake.

DANNY: It's not sponge, is it?

ZAINAB: *(smiles)* Ha, ha. Walnuts and semolina² – it's called a Harisi.

DANNY: Sorry. I'm allergic to nuts.

ZAINAB: Oh.

DANNY: Funny, huh?

ZAINAB: What is?

He imitates a monkey.

DANNY: A monkey that's allergic to nuts! But thanks anyway.

ZAINAB: *(laughing)* No problem.

DANNY: See you around.

ZAINAB: Yes, see you around.

Scene 2

DANNY: *(to the audience)* Although Zainab and I were in the same class I didn't really make much effort to get to know her properly³.

ZAINAB: You were too busy with your own friends.

DANNY: And with my music. *(To the audience)* Did I mention that I'm a drum and bass DJ⁴?

ZAINAB: Here we go!

DANNY: I produce a few tracks of my own, and do some gigs⁵ around town whenever I get the chance. I'm going to be in the music business when I leave school.

He puts on headphones and moves to the sound of a drum and bass track.

Everybody in the house say YEAH!

CAST: YEAH!

¹ ... wollte ich mich mit ihm versöhnen

² Walnüsse und Gries

³ ... ich habe mich auch nicht wirklich sehr darum bemüht, sie näher kennenzulernen ...

⁴ D'n'B oder Jungle, instrumentale dance music

⁵ ... ich mache einige Eigenproduktionen und trete auch immer wieder auf ...

DANNY: Everybody in the house say OH YEAH!

CAST: (*and audience*) OH YEAH!

DANNY: Everybody in the house say BOOYAH!

CAST: (*and audience*) BOOYAH!

DANNY: That's what I'm talking about! Big up the Bournemouth massive homies!¹

ZAINAB: Danny – will you stop showing off²!

DANNY: I'm not showing off.

ZAINAB: You are!

DANNY: Maybe just a little bit.

He puts some sunglasses on and strikes a silly pose.

ZAINAB: Okay, Okay, Okay. Can we get on with the story, please?

DANNY: Sure. I'm not stopping you. (*To the audience*) I wasn't showing off!

ZAINAB: You were.

DANNY: Was not! Carry on, then.

ZAINAB: Thank you, Danny! The next few weeks at school were alright, but I didn't have any friends at all to begin with, and spent most of my break-times sitting on my own. Things got a bit better when one of the PE teachers, Mr Briggs, encouraged me to have a go at some of the sports on offer³ at the after-school club.

MR BRIGGS hands ZAINAB a few different pieces of sports equipment. She does quite well with each of them.

I finally decided to play tennis. It wasn't really possible for girls to play tennis in my part of Aleppo – it was *haram*, forbidden. Anyway, all the tennis courts had been bombed. But the Imam at the Mosque we started going to in Bournemouth is much more liberal⁴ than the one at home, and he told my dad that it was okay.

Two other girls come out to play tennis (one of them is played by the actor playing Danny).

ZAINAB: I played every Thursday, and after a while a couple of the other girls talked to me a bit.

GIRL 1: Can we have our ball back, please?

ZAINAB: Sure.

GIRL 2: Thanks.

ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) I worked hard at school; the only class I really didn't like was drama with a teacher called Miss Morris.

MISS MORRIS, the drama teacher, enters. She is wearing a cardigan that is inside-out.

MISS MORRIS: Right everybody, gather round and focus, please. Deep breath in, and long breath out. Deep breath in, and long breath out. Now shake everything

¹ ... Jugendspr., 'und jetzt geht's ab, meine Freunde' (homies = homeboys, Kumpel)

² ... angeben, sich darstellen

³ ... er hat mich dazu angehalten, einige der angebotenen Sportarten auszuprobieren

⁴ ... der Imam ... hat nicht so starre Ansichten/ist liberaler ...

out, that's right, loosen all of your muscles. Okay, is everybody ready to work? Good. Today we're going to create characters based on animals. Choose what kind of animal you want your character to be like. Think about it carefully. Is it big and aggressive, or small and nervous? Does it live deep in the jungle, or in the heat of the desert? Is it intelligent, or simple-minded? Really go deep – find the inner animal in you.

One of the pupils (RAJ) runs around blowing raspberries at the others.

MISS MORRIS: What are you doing, Raj?

RAJ: I'm being a camel, miss.

MISS MORRIS: Camels don't blow raspberries¹, Raj.

RAJ: I know, miss. They spit at people, but I thought you'd prefer me to blow a raspberry instead.

MISS MORRIS: (*sighing*) Thank you, Raj. Perhaps you'd like to try another type of animal?

RAJ becomes a very loud and aggressive dog. He tries to bite DANNY in the leg.

DANNY: Down, boy! Down! Anybody got a muzzle²?

ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) Miss Morris wanted me to audition³ for Juliet in the school play of "Romeo and Juliet", because ...

MISS MORRIS: (*very theatrically*) I want to set it in a war zone between two clashing cultures⁴.

ZAINAB: But I'd never done any acting before, and I felt embarrassed on stage⁵.

ZAINAB speaks some lines from "Romeo and Juliet" very quietly and very badly.
Gallop apace you fiery footed steeds, towards Phoebus lodging⁶.

MISS MORRIS: Thank you, Zainab.

ZAINAB: So she quickly changed her mind.

MISS MORRIS: I'm setting the play on Mars.

PUPILS: What?!

ZAINAB: It was a relief, as Danny was playing the part of Romeo.

DANNY: In a space suit! Listen, Zainab, half the girls in school would have killed to play Juliet to my Romeo.

ZAINAB: You're such a big-head⁷.

DANNY: True. It's not easy being perfect. Now I *am* showing off!

ZAINAB: Miss Morris was a nice enough person, but a little bit ... she sometimes came to school wearing things inside-out.

MISS MORRIS notices her cardigan, and turns it the right way round, but has trouble getting her arm into the sleeve again.

¹ ... die Zunge zeigen und dabei Spucklaute von sich geben

² ... Platz, Hund, Platz ... hat jemand einen Beißkorb? ...

³ vorsprechen, sich bewerben

⁴ ... es soll in einem Kriegsgebiet spielen, wo zwei Kulturen aufeinander prallen

⁵ ... ich habe mich auf der Bühne geniert ...

⁶ Originalzitat aus *Romeo and Juliet*

⁷ Angeber, eingebildeter Typ

And she was very forgetful.

MISS MORRIS: Where are my glasses? I can't find my glasses. Has anyone seen my glasses?

PUPIL: They're on top of your head, miss.

MISS MORRIS: Oh yes! Thank you.

DANNY: Okay, Zainab. Enough about Miss Morris, just get on with the story.

ZAINAB: Sorry, Danny, but the next bit of the story is also about her. At the end of the first term there was a parents' evening at the school. Dad came in to speak to the teachers about me. The first teacher he met was Miss Morris.

MR HABIB enters. He approaches a table where MISS MORRIS is waiting.

MISS MORRIS: Good evening. Mr Habib?

MR HABIB: Yes.

MISS MORRIS: How nice to meet you.

They shake hands. They hold hands slightly longer than normal. They clearly find one another attractive.

Uh, sit down please. My name is Milly Morris, I teach your daughter Zainab English and drama.

MR HABIB: Zainab loves English.

MISS MORRIS: She does. I don't think she's quite as keen on drama¹, though.

She speaks English very well, but she still needs to practice as much as possible. I am going to lend her some English books to read at home.

MR HABIB: I understand, but Zainab Syrian.

MISS MORRIS: Yes, of course. She is Syrian and needs to keep in touch with her culture as well².

MR HABIB: Arabic poetry. We read together at home.

MISS MORRIS: You read Arabic poetry together? How lovely. *(She quotes)* Be happy for this moment, this moment is your life.

MR HABIB: Omar Kyam!

MISS MORRIS: My favourite poet.

MR HABIB: *My favourite poet!*

They smile at one another.

ZAINAB: *(to the audience)* All in all, I thought that things at my school were okay – until something happened that made me change my mind. Our PE teacher, Mr Briggs, gave an announcement at assembly³. *(She exits)*

MR BRIGGS: All right, year elevens. Settle down. This year's swimming lessons begin next week. We will be using the Littledown sports centre as usual. I will assign you to your swimming groups according to ability⁴. Don't forget to bring a towel, and please be here at school at nine o'clock sharp on Monday morning to get the coach to the pool.

¹ ... Bühnen-/Theaterspiel mag sie nicht so gerne ...

² ... sie muss auch ihrer Kultur verbunden bleiben

³ ... er machte bei der morgendlichen Versammlung in der Schule eine Ankündigung ...

⁴ ... ich werde euch je nach Können den jeweiligen Gruppen zuteilen ...

Scene 3

MR BRIGGS blows a whistle. We are at the swimming baths, but the other pupils are not visible. MR BRIGGS holds a clipboard.

MR BRIGGS: Stop splashing that water around, Miller, I can see you. It's two lengths of the pool as a warm-up. No running please, Carter. Why? Because it's slippery and you might fall and break your neck, God forbid. Smith, no diving in the shallow end¹!

ZAINAB re-enters wearing a Burkini. Another girl, KAREN, enters from the opposite side. She is wearing a one-piece swimsuit but is wrapped in a large towel.

KAREN: Sir!

MR BRIGGS: Yes, Karen?

KAREN: Are we going camping this year?

MR BRIGGS: What are you talking about?

KAREN: Are we going camping this year?

MR BRIGGS: No, we are not going camping.

KAREN: Then why is she wearing a tent?

There is laughter from other pupils.

MR BRIGGS: It's a Burkini, as you well know. We're not in France², thank you, Karen. I don't think remarks like that are either funny or clever. You can come and see me for a detention every evening this week after school.

KAREN: But Sir!

MR BRIGGS: You're extremely lucky that I'm not suspending you³, young lady. Now get out of my sight. I'm sorry about that, Zainab. I'm afraid it's just ignorance. I can't see that your costume is much different from a wetsuit⁴ really.

ZAINAB: That's alright, Sir. I don't think I want to go swimming after all. I'll just go back to the dressing room.

MR BRIGGS: I'm sorry, but it's not up to you to choose. This is the class swimming lesson, and everybody has to join in.

He looks at his clipboard.

You're in group A, the beginners group.

ZAINAB is handed a rubber ring. She puts it on.

ZAINAB: *(to the audience)* I spent a horrible couple of hours splashing about in the babypool – I'd never been swimming before in my whole life. *(She replaces her dress over the swimsuit as she speaks)*. While I was trying not to drown⁵ I saw lots of the other pupils staring at me, and whispering behind their hands. I don't know if they were really talking about me, or if that was just how it felt at the

¹ ... am seichten Ende (des Beckens)

² In Frankreich ist das Tragen eines Burkinis verboten.

³ ... sperren, vom Unterricht ausschließen

⁴ Neoprenanzug

⁵ ... ertrinken

time, but it made me feel pretty miserable. When we were outside the pool waiting for the bus, the others walked past.

DANNY: (*walking past her*) Hi, Zainab.

ZAINAB: Hi, Danny.

KAREN *passes ZAINAB.*

KAREN: (*under her breath*) Loser!

DANNY: (*stopping*) Did you say something, Karen?

KAREN: You heard me.

DANNY: Leave her alone.

KAREN: Get lost.

DANNY: I've got a little poem for you. Roses are red, violets are blue, I have five fingers, the third one's for you.¹

He holds up his middle finger.

KAREN: I know why you're defending her², Danny 'lover boy' Roberts. You like her. You're in love! (*Sings*) Danny and Zainab sitting in a tree K.I.S.S.I.N.G

DANNY: Your lips keep moving but all I can hear is blah, blah, blah. Goodbye, Karen.

KAREN *exits.*

DANNY: Are you okay, Zainab?

ZAINAB: I'm fine. I didn't ask you to say anything to her, you know. I can fight my own battles.

DANNY: Ouch! You really don't like being helped, do you?

ZAINAB: No. I guess I don't.

DANNY: Why not?

ZAINAB: I don't want to need help any more.

DANNY: Everybody needs help sometimes.

ZAINAB: I'm not everybody. I'm me. Why did you say something, anyway?

DANNY: It's not because of what she said. I don't like racism, fascism, pretty much anything ending in "-ism". Look, if you want me to back off³, no problem. Sorry to have bothered you.

He turns to leave.

ZAINAB: No, please, don't go. I'm sorry, Danny. I grew up arguing with my older brother Tarek all the time. He used to call me after a plant that grew in our garden in Syria – Sobara. You call it prickly pear⁴.

DANNY: Where is he now? Your brother?

ZAINAB: (*slight pause*) He's in Syria ... with my mother.

DANNY: Didn't they come over with you and your dad?

ZAINAB: No. They couldn't.

DANNY: Why not?

¹ Eigentl. ein kurzes Liebesgedicht, aber hier als Abfuhr verwendet (siehe Worksheet)

² ... ich weiß, warum du sie in Schutz nimmst ...

³ ... wenn's dir lieber ist, lasse ich dich eben in Ruhe ... (eigentl: ziehe ich mich zurück)

⁴ Kaktusfeige

ZAINAB: Look. The coach is here!

DANNY: Oh. Yeah, okay. See you round then?

ZAINAB: See you round.

He walks away and then comes back.

DANNY: Hey. I'm playing a gig tonight at Halo if you want to come down.

He hands her a flyer.

ZAINAB: Halo?

DANNY: It's a club, in town.

ZAINAB: I'd really like to, but I don't think my father will let me out. Not to a club. He's pretty strict.

DANNY: I noticed that. (*Imitating him*) Not good! Zainab must not speak to boy! Just tell him you're doing homework at a girlfriend's place. I'm on quite early¹. You can be back by ten.

ZAINAB: That won't work.

DANNY: Why not?

ZAINAB: Because I don't have any friends; or anything to wear to a club.

DANNY: Oh. Right. I know; I'll send my friend Sasha round to collect you at seven. You live off Winton High Street, don't you? She's great, she'll help you get away.

ZAINAB: I don't know.

DANNY: No, you're right, it will be much more fun to stay at home on your own, and do your homework!

ZAINAB: Okay, okay. I'll come.

DANNY: Good.

ZAINAB: My father's only strict because he wants to protect me, you know.

DANNY: Bournemouth isn't Syria. It's not dangerous here.

ZAINAB: The dangers are just different. See you later.

DANNY: See you.

Scene 4

ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) Danny's friend Sasha picked me up and we took a bus into the town centre together.

SASHA: Here, Zainab. Danny said you might need some help with your outfit, so I brought us both some rave gear for the gig².

She opens a bag and takes out some bright neon clothes. She passes ZAINAB a neon tutu.

ZAINAB: I can't wear this. It's much too short!

SASHA: Don't worry, you can just pull it over your trousers, and wear it on

¹ ... ich bin relativ früh an der Reihe ...

² ... Rave-Klamotten für das Konzert/den Auftritt ...

top of them.

ZAINAB: Really?

SASHA: Uh huh. You'll probably start a new trend.

They both put on the clothes she has brought.

SASHA: There! You look awesome. Wait! *(She pulls out a lipstick)*. Just a spot of lippy¹.

ZAINAB: My dad will go crazy if he sees me looking like this!

SASHA: No, he won't.

ZAINAB: Why not?

SASHA hands her a day-glo wig.

SASHA: Because he wouldn't recognise you!

Drum and bass music – DANNY is DJ-ing. Everybody is dancing.

ZAINAB: The gig was brilliant!

DANNY: Everybody in the house say YEAH!

CAST: YEAH!

DANNY: Everybody in the house say OH YEAH!

CAST: OH YEAH!

DANNY: Let me see you big it up², Bournemouth!

SASHA: Hey, Zainab, neat moves out there³!

ZAINAB: Thanks, Sasha. I'm having a really great time. Thanks so much for picking me up.

SASHA: No problem. But it's Danny you should thank, not me.

ZAINAB: You're right. I will. *(To the audience)* After the gig we all caught the bus back to Winton.

SASHA: Here, Zainab. Help yourself.

She passes ZAINAB a large paper bag.

ZAINAB: What is it?

SASHA: Fish and chips!

ZAINAB: I don't see any fish.

SASHA: That's because I ate it all. Have a chip!

ZAINAB: Thanks, Sasha. And Danny, thanks for everything. You've turned out to be a great class buddy after all. I'm sorry I've been a bit prickly.

DANNY: Don't worry about it... Sobara!

SASHA: Sobara? Her name's Zainab.

DANNY: Private joke⁴. So long, Sobara.

He gives her a high five.

ZAINAB: So long, monkey boy! *(To the audience)* I'd had a great evening, but when I got home I found my father looking a bit depressed. *(To MR HABIB)* Is everything alright?

¹ ... und noch ein bisschen auf die Lippen ...

² ... Jugendspr., 'und geht schon, gib ihm' (z.B. bei Clubbings, Rave Parties, etc.)

³ ... du bewegst dich super da draußen (auf der Tanzfläche) ...

⁴ ... privater Scherz, d.h. geht niemand sonst etwas an

MR HABIB: Everything good, daughter. Everything good.

ZAINAB: Everything *is* good, dad.

She kisses him.

Goodnight.

DANNY: (*to the audience*) But everything wasn't good really. Zainab's dad was a senior manager¹ at a university in Syria, a very important job. But because his English was poor he had to work in a supermarket in Bournemouth.

We see MR HABIB scanning groceries.

ZAINAB: He was very happy to have a job, and pleased to be making some money for us to live on, but it wasn't very interesting for him. A few days after the gig it turned out that I was right about Bournemouth having dangers, too. My father was walking home from the supermarket when ...

A member of the British Defence League² enters.

BDL MAN: Oy! You! Why don't you go back to where you came from? We had the Brexit vote to get rid of you lot³. We've got our country back now. Hey – I'm talking to you.

MR HABIB: No trouble please.

BDL MAN: No trouble? No trouble? You're in big trouble.

He pushes MR HABIB a couple of times, and then tries to punch him in the face, but he ducks in time and avoids the blow.

MISS MORRIS enters. She steps between the BDL MAN and MR HABIB.

MISS MORRIS: Leave him alone.

BDL MAN: Who's gonna make me? You? Get lost, you stupid cow.

She does a Karate 'claw' pose and makes a noise.

BDL MAN: (*laughing*) Is that supposed to scare me? Ooh! Please don't hurt me, I might cry. I told you to get lost.

He tries to push her away but she puts him in a wrist lock, using his strength against him. The BDL MAN squeals in pain.

Aghhh! Let go of me!

MISS MORRIS: Are you going to behave?

BDL MAN: Ow! Agh! Yes, yes alright! Just let go!

MISS MORRIS: Good.

She pushes his wrist hard and then releases him.

BDL MAN: (*nursing his wrist*) Agh! You bitch!

The BDL MAN exits.

MR HABIB: Thank you.

MISS MORRIS: It's Mr Habib, isn't it? Zainab's father.

MR HABIB: That's right. Please, call me Ramy.

MISS MORRIS: I'm Milly. Are you hurt, Ramy?

¹ leitender Angestellter

² politische Organisation, die sich aus der Hooligan Szene entwickelt hat.

³ ... wir hatten die Brexit-Volksabstimmung, damit wir solche wie euch loswerden ...

MR HABIB: Only pride. How do you do this?

He imitates the 'claw'.

MISS MORRIS: Ten years of evening classes in self-defence, learning Kung Fu.

It's the first time I've ever used it in real life. Look, I'm shaking like a leaf¹!

MR HABIB: You are brave.

MISS MORRIS: Not really. You should call the police.

MR HABIB: (*upset*) No, no. No police, please. No trouble.

MISS MORRIS: Alright. Don't worry. I'm very sorry about what that idiot said to you. I hope you don't think all English people are like him.

MR HABIB: No. Most people are kind. We came to England with nothing, but people helped us. I am - I don't know how to say it in English - thankful to England?

MISS MORRIS: Do you mean grateful to England?

MR HABIB: Yes. I am grateful to England, for our new home.

MISS MORRIS: You are very welcome here.

MR HABIB: And you are very kind person. The heart of a poet, and the courage of a lion².

They stare into one another's eyes. There is a 'ting' – true love has struck. They gaze at each other for a few moments as if hypnotised. DANNY and ZAINAB enter.

DANNY: (*to the audience*) I think you can guess what's coming next.

Scene 5

ZAINAB: I realised that something was different when I got home that night. My father was in a really good mood.

There is Syrian folk music playing. He swings her around in a folk dance step.

MR HABIB: Welcome home, daughter. I want learn better English!

ZAINAB: I want *to* learn better English.

MR HABIB: I want *to* learn better English.

ZAINAB: I'm pleased to hear that. If you learn better English it'll help you to get a job that you like.

MR HABIB: (*speaking carefully and clearly*) How was school today?

ZAINAB: It was fine. Why are you in such a happy mood?

MR HABIB: England is good place for us to live.

ZAINAB: (*correcting him*) England is *a* good place for us to live.

MR HABIB: England is *a* good place for us to live.

ZAINAB: Why?

MR HABIB: There are good people here.

¹ ... ich zittere wie Espenlaub (wie ein Blatt im Wind)

² Das Herz einer Dichterin und den Mut einer Löwin (vgl. Arabisch, sehr bildhafte Sprache)

ZAINAB: There are good people everywhere. You just need to find them.

MR HABIB: I have very wise daughter. (*He corrects himself*) I have a very wise daughter!

MR HABIB pats her on the cheek and kisses her on the forehead.

ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) It was great to see dad smile again. Things had been very bad for us in Syria before we left, and I knew that being in a new place wasn't easy for him. Over the next few weeks he slowly became more like his old self again. His English got much better, too.

MR HABIB: Zainab! I have a new job.

ZAINAB: That's wonderful, what is it?

MR HABIB: I start working for a charity called the International Care Network¹ on Monday.

DANNY: (*to the audience*) Zainab's father had a new job, but he also had a secret.

ZAINAB: That's right. He made sure that every evening after work he 'accidentally' bumped into Miss Morris².

DANNY: And she made sure that she 'accidentally' bumped into him, too.

We see MR HABIB and MISS MORRIS approaching each other, they stop to chat for a while, laugh, then wave goodbye. They walk away but then both turn back to look at one another at the same time. There is a 'ting'.

ZAINAB: Finally one weekend my father told me ...

MR HABIB: I'm going out with some friends from the mosque this evening. I may be home quite late.

ZAINAB: I was a bit suspicious³, because he seemed very nervous and spent a long time getting ready.

MR HABIB prepares himself for a night out.

I decided to follow him, just to see where he was really going. Zainab Habib, secret agent!

ZAINAB follows her father. DANNY becomes a shopkeeper.

MR HABIB: A dozen red roses, please.

SHOPKEEPER: Twenty-five quid, mate⁴.

He pays and the SHOPKEEPER hands him the flowers.

ZAINAB: Flowers?

A restaurant sign appears: The Luxor Restaurant.

ZAINAB: A restaurant?

MISS MORRIS appears. ZAINAB hides her face until she has passed.

Miss Morris?

MISS MORRIS meets MR HABIB. They shake hands. He gives her the flowers. There is a 'ting'. They stand gazing at each other for a few moments.

ZAINAB: No!

¹ NGO (Non-governmental Organisation) im Bereich Flüchtlingsbetreuung

² ... jeden Abend lief er ‚zufällig‘ Miss Morris über den Weg

³ ... das schien mir ein bisschen verdächtig ...

⁴ mate = Freund (umgangsspr.; wird auch verwendet, wenn man sich nicht persönlich kennt)

Scene 6

DANNY: The next morning at school I knew right away that Zainab had a new problem. Morning, Zainab!

ZAINAB *grunts. She throws her school bag on the floor and sits down.*

DANNY: What's the matter?

ZAINAB: Nothing.

DANNY: Come on! It's me, Danny. Monkey boy!

ZAINAB *sighs.*

ZAINAB: You know Miss Morris?

DANNY: Er, yeah. What about her?

ZAINAB: She went out to a restaurant with my father last night – on a date.

DANNY: WHAT!!! No way! She can't have!

ZAINAB: That's how I feel.

DANNY: I don't believe it!

ZAINAB: You seem very upset about it.

DANNY: That's because I am upset. I'm very upset.

ZAINAB: Why is that?

DANNY: She didn't tell me.

ZAINAB: Huh? Why would she tell you?

DANNY: Because I have a right to know.

ZAINAB: A right to know? You don't mean that you, and she ...?! Are you ...?

DANNY: What? No! NO!

ZAINAB: Then why?

DANNY: You mean you don't know?

ZAINAB: Know what?

DANNY: Miss Morris is my mum.

ZAINAB: Your mum! She can't be!

DANNY: She is.

ZAINAB: But your surname is Roberts; hers is Morris.

DANNY: She's divorced from my dad. Morris is her maiden name¹.

ZAINAB: But she's so ...

DANNY: So *what*?

ZAINAB: You know!

ZAINAB *does a gesture to show she thinks Miss Morris is a little bit crazy.*

DANNY: She wasn't always like that. She started to crack up a bit² when my dad

left. She didn't want to go out at all for months, and just stayed at home eating boxes of chocolates and crying all night.

¹ Mädchenname

² ... sie hat ein bisschen zu spinnen angefangen ...

ZAINAB: Where is your dad now?

DANNY: He lives in Florida with his boyfriend Laurence.

ZAINAB: Boyfriend?

DANNY: Yeah. So what?

ZAINAB: Nothing. It's just a bit of a surprise.

DANNY: Tell me about it. You know, I wondered if something had happened to mum at the weekend.

ZAINAB: Why?

DANNY: She wore a matching pair of socks to school for the first time in ages.

ZAINAB: This is a disaster.

DANNY: It's not *that* bad is it? They just went to a restaurant, didn't they? It's not against the law.

ZAINAB: I thought you were unhappy about it?

DANNY: Only because she didn't tell me.

ZAINAB: What if they want to get married?

DANNY: Married? What are you talking about? They hardly know each other¹.

Wait a minute. She *can't* marry your father anyway. He's married already, isn't he? What about your mother? She's still in Syria, right? With your brother?

Pause.

ZAINAB: Yes.

DANNY: Well, then.

ZAINAB: They were both killed in a barrel bomb attack².

DANNY cannot speak for a moment, he is so shocked.

DANNY: Oh, my God. I'm so sorry.

ZAINAB: It's okay. It happened nearly three years ago now. I still think about them both every day, but it's not as painful now as it was at first.

DANNY: It's terrible.

ZAINAB: I know I told you that I don't like being helped, but you have to help me with this.

DANNY: Help you to do what?

ZAINAB: Stop them from seeing each other. Split them up.

DANNY: Split them up?

ZAINAB: My father is all I have left. I'm sorry but after all we've been through together I don't want to share him with the first woman he meets who's nice to him³. I don't want another mother – or another brother. And I don't want him to get hurt. He's very vulnerable right now⁴.

DANNY: Okay. I understand. Of course I'll help you. To be honest I don't want another father, either. Your dad's really strict⁵, isn't he?

¹ ... sie kennen sich doch kaum ...

² Fassbomben-Angriff

³ ... ich will ihn nicht mit der ersten Frau, die nett zu ihm ist, teilen ...

⁴ ...er ist derzeit leicht verletzbar ...

⁵ ... sehr streng ...

ZAINAB: He is now. He used to be much more relaxed before the war started.

So, do we have a deal?

DANNY: We do. (*They shake hands.*) How do we start?

ZAINAB: We start by showing them how upset we are about it. They both kept it secret from us. That means they both feel guilty.

Scene 7

ZAINAB is with her father. DANNY is with his mother.

ZAINAB: Why did you lie to me?

MR HABIB: I'm sorry, Zainab. I was afraid you might be upset about it.

DANNY: You didn't even tell me you were seeing someone.

MISS MORRIS: I was embarrassed – going on a date at my age.

DANNY: With the father of one of your pupils.

MISS MORRIS: We didn't do anything wrong. We just talked, and talked.

DANNY: How? He can't even speak English properly.

MISS MORRIS: It didn't matter. He's very funny, and charming. He makes me laugh.

ZAINAB: Have you forgotten about my mother already? How could you even think of going out with another woman?

MR HABIB: You are right, daughter. I know it is shame... (*he can't think of the word.*)

ZAINAB: Shameful¹. Yes, it is.

MR HABIB: But, I like this woman. She is a very kind person.

DANNY: Think of how Zainab must feel.

MISS MORRIS: Losing her mother and brother like that must have been terrible for her, for both of them. The poor girl.

ZAINAB and DANNY: (*together*) You won't try to see him/her again?

MISS MORRIS and MR HABIB: (*together*) No.

ZAINAB and DANNY: (*together*) You promise?

MISS MORRIS and MR HABIB: (*together*) I promise.

Scene 8

ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) Every evening my father and Miss Morris still passed each other on the way home.

DANNY: But they didn't stop, or speak, anymore.

They approach each other, slow down, almost stop, but then carry on walking.

ZAINAB: We thought we'd solved the problem. Though my father stopped

¹ beschämend, eine Schande

smiling and didn't play music in the house any more.

DANNY: And mum went back to putting on her clothes on inside-out.

ZAINAB: But we were both sure it was all for the best. Weren't we, Danny?

DANNY doesn't seem quite so certain.

DANNY: Yeah.

ZAINAB: Back at school there was finally something that Danny needed *my* help with.

DANNY: Maths homework! I'm hopeless at equations¹.

He goes into the audience for help with a maths problem. He then asks ZAINAB for help.

And then there was Sports Day – the worst day of the year.

Lots of balls are thrown at him.

DANNY: My mum and Zainab's dad kept their words. They didn't try to see each other again, but then fate took a hand² and changed things.

MRS KIRKHAM: Good morning, pupils. The Bournemouth High School Parent-Teacher Association³ has decided that this year, the annual charity fundraising event will be in aid of⁴ the International Care Network.

ZAINAB: *(to Danny)* That's the charity my dad works for!

MRS KIRKHAM: The ICN supports local refugees and their families, and helps them settle here in Dorset.

DANNY: *(to the audience)* There was a fundraising committee at the school ...

ZAINAB: The ICN asked my father to join it ...

MR HABIB enters.

DANNY: And the Headmistress Mrs Kirkham asked my mother to be the Chairwoman⁵.

MISS MORRIS enters.

MR HABIB: Oh!

MISS MORRIS: Oh!

There is a 'ting'. They gaze at one another for a moment before stepping apart.

DANNY: Mrs Kirkham decided that in order to raise money for the charity the school would hold a folk-dancing evening.

MISS MORRIS: As one of the only teachers in the school who was able to dance more than two steps ...

MR HABIB: And as someone who knows how to dance the Dabke, an Arabic folk dance ...

DANNY: My mum –

ZAINAB: And my dad –

MR HABIB and MISS MORRIS: *(to each other)* – found ourselves together

¹ Gleichungen

² ... aber dann funkte das Schicksal dazwischen und alles wurde anders ...

³ Schulgemeinschaftsausschuss

⁴ ... (die jährliche Wohltätigkeitsveranstaltung ist diesmal) zu Gunsten der ICN ...

⁵ Vorsitzende

again.

MR HABIB: These are the steps to the dance.

MR HABIB shows MISS MORRIS some dance steps. She copies him.

MISS MORRIS: It would be great if we could teach some of the pupils the steps so that they could join in on the night.

MR HABIB: Good idea. Would anyone like to join us to learn the steps to the Dabke?

Audience interaction. MR HABIB teaches the steps to pupils.

When he has finished ZAINAB pulls him away.

ZAINAB: Dad! What's going on?

MR HABIB: I am teaching the steps to the Dabke.

ZAINAB: I'm not talking about *them* (*she points at the pupils*). I'm talking about *her* (*she indicates MISS MORRIS*).

MR HABIB: Nothing, Zainab. You have my word. This is for the charity, nothing else. I swear.

ZAINAB and DANNY watch from the side.

ZAINAB: This is not good. Not good at all.

DANNY: It's just for a charity event, it could be okay. Maybe.

ZAINAB: Look at them. They still really like each other. You can see it.

DANNY: Yeah. I guess you're right.

ZAINAB: But what can we do? How can you stop two people from liking each other?

DANNY: Maybe that's it, Zainab. Maybe you can't stop people from liking each other. It's just human nature¹.

ZAINAB: Fine. If you want my father to make you keep your room clean and tidy², make you do your homework every evening as soon as you get home, and go to bed by 10pm every night that's ok by me. You'll have to stop doing gigs, too.

DANNY: Hold on, just a minute. There *was* something in psychology class we learned about. Something called 'aversion therapy'³.

ZAINAB: Aversion therapy? What's that?

DANNY: It's when you do something, and something nasty happens to you right away.

ZAINAB: I don't understand.

DANNY: Okay. Say if every time you ate an apple someone jabbed you in the arm⁴ with a pencil.

He jabs her with his pencil.

ZAINAB: Ow!

DANNY: Pretty soon you wouldn't want to eat apples any more.

¹ ... das ist einfach menschlich ...

² ... wenn du willst, dass mein Vater dich zwingt (dein Zimmer in Ordnung zu halten, etc.)

³ Aversionstherapie

⁴ ... in den Arm pieksen/stechen ...

ZAINAB: True. You want us to jab them both in the arm with a pencil?
DANNY: No! Yes. Sort of.
ZAINAB: What do you mean?
DANNY: My mum and your dad are supposed to dance together for the opening of the fundraising event ...
ZAINAB: Uh huh.
DANNY: So we could do something to sabotage it¹, and see if we can find something to put them off each other² at the same time.
ZAINAB: I see. So what exactly do we do?
DANNY: Hmm. Let me think.
ZAINAB: I've got an idea. Lavender!
DANNY: Lavender?
ZAINAB: My father is totally allergic to it. It makes him sneeze like crazy. If your mum wears a perfume with lavender in it, he won't be able to stand it.
DANNY: How can I get my mum to do that?
ZAINAB: Good question ... Pretend my dad sent it to her as a present?
DANNY: Genius!
ZAINAB: It's your turn to think of something.
DANNY: My mum has this really weird reaction to alcohol³. She never drinks it because even the smallest amount makes her do really weird things.
ZAINAB: Really? Like what?
DANNY: She loses control of her limbs⁴. They flail all over the place. She's been known to accidentally kick people.
ZAINAB: Cool. My dad doesn't approve of drinking, anyway.
DANNY: I can put some wine in her smoothie before she leaves the house.
ZAINAB and DANNY give each other a high five.
ZAINAB: On the night of the performance, things went according to plan.
MISS MORRIS enters. She is about to go out and sprays herself with perfume.
DANNY hands her a smoothie.
MISS MORRIS: Thank you, darling! Mmm, this tastes good. What's in it?
DANNY: Um. Grapes?
The scene moves to the school. Backstage at the event.
VOICE OVER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this evening's charity gala in aid of the International Care Network.
MR HABIB and MISS MORRIS enter.
MISS MORRIS: Hi Ramy, how are you? All ready for the event?
MR HABIB: Yes, I...a..ah...ah! (*He sneezes*) Atishoo!
MISS MORRIS: Bless you⁵! Oh!

¹ sabotieren, ruinieren

² ... damit sie sich nicht mehr leiden können ...

³ ... meine Mutter reagiert ganz eigenartig auf Alkohol ...

⁴ ... sie hat ihre Gliedmaßen nicht mehr unter Kontrolle ...

⁵ Wohlsein!

Her legs suddenly wobble.

MR HABIB: What's wrong? (*He sneezes again violently*).

MISS MORRIS: Nothing. I just felt a bit ... never mind.

VOICE OVER: Please welcome our own Miss Morris, and one of our pupils's parents, Mr Habib, who will start the evening by showing us the Syrian Dabke.

MISS MORRIS: That's us! We're on!

The sound of applause. MISS MORRIS and MR HABIB walk to the centre of the stage. MISS MORRIS walks very slowly and carefully. As they take up their position to start the dance, MR HABIB begins to sneeze. Music starts. As they try to dance, MISS MORRIS's movements become more and more wild and MR HABIB's sneezing gets worse and worse. They both eventually exit.

DANNY enters.

DANNY: (*to the audience*) Although they both went home feeling pretty bad, our plan wasn't really a success.

ZAINAB: All we managed to do was ruin the start of the charity fundraiser.

DANNY: My mum and Zainab's dad spent the next couple of days texting each other to see if they were feeling any better.

Scene 9

ZAINAB and DANNY are back at school.

ZAINAB: Well, that was a dead loss¹. What's the plan now?

DANNY: I don't know.

ZAINAB: Right. Danny, can you get me your mother's phone?

DANNY: Why? What do you want it for?

ZAINAB: You'll see. Just get me the phone.

DANNY & ZAINAB: (*to the audience*) A few minutes later ...

DANNY returns with the phone.

DANNY: Here. It was in her desk as usual. Don't do anything too crazy.

ZAINAB: Don't you trust me?

DANNY: No. Not really!

ZAINAB writes a text, and then presses send.

ZAINAB: Okay. Job done.

DANNY: What did you write?

ZAINAB: Something that will work.

DANNY: (*reading the text*) "Dear Ramy. I'm sorry, but we can't be friends any more. I know that you have feelings for me, but I also know that I could never take the place of Zainab's beloved mother. So there is no future for us."

¹ ... ein Totalversagen ...

Goodbye.” (To ZAINAB) When my mum sees this she’ll know that she didn’t write it.

ZAINAB: I know. You can tell her that I wrote it, and I meant every word.

DANNY: I see. Alright.

ZAINAB: What’s the matter?

DANNY: Nothing.

ZAINAB: Tell me.

DANNY: I think it will upset her, that’s all.

ZAINAB: I’m sorry. But it can’t be helped. I need my dad.

DANNY: I know. I get it.

ZAINAB: Danny was right. Miss Morris was upset. And so was my father – very upset.

MISS MORRIS and MR HABIB enter. They sit on either side of the stage looking very unhappy.

DANNY: Gran called, she wants to know if you want to go to the movies with her?

MISS MORRIS shakes her head.

ZAINAB: (holding a backgammon board) Shall we play a game of Tapa, father?

MR HABIB shakes his head.

DANNY: Why don’t we go out for a walk on the beach?

MISS MORRIS shakes her head.

ZAINAB: Aren’t you hungry? I’ve made dinner for us both. It’s your favourite.

MR HABIB shakes his head.

We were both a bit worried about our parents. I didn’t like seeing dad so depressed.

DANNY: And I didn’t like seeing mum unhappy, either.

ZAINAB: I saw how things were affecting her¹, too. Miss Morris asked us to work in groups and make a story to show to the rest of the class. I was in a group with Danny and Sasha, and they asked me to tell the story of the journey my father and I made from Syria to the UK. They helped me by doing most of the acting. It’s funny, but because it was my story, I wasn’t nervous about being on stage like before.

ZAINAB and DANNY: (together) Zainab’s story.

She steps forward to narrate the story.

ZAINAB: My name is Zainab and this is the story of how I came to England. I was born in Syria, in a city called Aleppo. I lived there together with my father Ramy, my mother Ghaniya, and my brother Tarek.

The other actors step forward to take on the roles of her family.

My father worked at the University, my mother was an English teacher, and my brother and I went to school. We had lots of friends, and a nice house with a garden. But when war broke out, rebels, government troops, Jihadis,

¹ ... wie betroffen sie war ...

and ISIS¹ all fought each other to control the city. People like us were in the middle of it all. Our house was not safe, because of the bombings, so we were forced to live in the cellar.

MOTHER: It's getting too dangerous for you to go to school, Zainab. You and your brother must stay at home now.

ZAINAB: What will we do? We can't just stay indoors, down here all the time. I'll go crazy. It's *so* boring. I don't want to be stuck in here with nobody to talk to except Tarek.

He pretends to prick his finger on her.

BROTHER: Ouch! Listen to our mother, Sobara.

ZAINAB: Don't call me that!

BROTHER: Then stop being so prickly, and do as you are told. There are bad people out there.

ZAINAB: I know, I'm not stupid.

BROTHER: No, just annoying.

ZAINAB pokes her tongue out at her brother.

MOTHER: Zainab! Tarek! Behave yourselves, and be nice to each other.

ZAINAB & BROTHER: Okay, mum.

They both poke their tongues out at each other behind her back. She exits.

BROTHER: Seriously, Zainab, we have to try to make things easy for mum and dad. They are doing their best, but we have to accept that our lives can't stay the same now².

ZAINAB: I know. It's just so unfair. What about my friends? Won't I be able to see them?

BROTHER: The streets are getting too dangerous. You could be kidnapped, or worse.

ZAINAB: Father still goes to work every day.

BROTHER: Not for much longer. He hasn't been paid by the university for a month, and he was stopped by a patrol last week. They told him he must join them or they will kill him the next time they see him.

ZAINAB: Who were they?

BROTHER: He didn't say.

ZAINAB: In the winter of 2013 it was very cold, and dad got sick.

Zainab's FATHER is coughing. He is wrapped in a blanket. Her MOTHER touches his forehead.

MOTHER: You're burning up³, you need some medicine.

FATHER: Don't worry my love, I'll be fine.

BROTHER: Let me go out to the market. We need more food, and I can try to get some medicine at the same time.

¹ ... Rebellen, Regierungstruppen, Jihad-Anhänger und die Terrororganisation Islamischer Staat ...

² ... wir müssen uns damit abfinden, dass unser Leben anders wird ...

³ ... du hast hohes Fieber ...

ZAINAB: We don't have any money.

MOTHER: I still have this.

FATHER: No. Not your wedding ring. I still have some things left to sell.

A camera and a watch. They can go first.

MOTHER: Alright, but we need food and medicine much more than gold.

Tarek and I will go to the market.

FATHER: No, it's not safe.

MOTHER: We have to get food.

ZAINAB: Let me come, too.

MOTHER: No, my angel. I need you to stay here to care for your father. We won't be long.

FATHER: Take the camera and the watch. Give Zainab your ring. Gold is very valuable now¹, it might be stolen.

MOTHER: Alright. But remember, a ring can be replaced. Protecting our family is all that matters now. We need to get out of this city – out of Syria.

FATHER: Where could we go?

MOTHER: There are other Syrian families in England now – we could be, too.

Here, Zainab.

She gives her the ring.

BROTHER: I'll bring home some prickly pears for you, Zainab!

ZAINAB: Just be careful – both of you.

MOTHER: We will.

She takes ZAINAB aside.

Take good care of your father.

They all embrace. Zainab's MOTHER and BROTHER exit.

ZAINAB: Fifteen minutes after they had left my father and I felt the explosion shake our building². Half of our district was destroyed. One of our neighbours told us what had happened. A helicopter dropped a huge bomb right on the market place.

Pause. There is silence as ZAINAB and her FATHER look at one another.

FATHER: We must go to England, Zainab. It will be safe there.

ZAINAB: How will we get there?

FATHER: It won't be easy, and it'll take some time to arrange. Leave it to me.

ZAINAB: Father had to sell all of our possessions, and even our house – though it wasn't worth much. He gave the money to a 'fixer'³ - a man who helped people escape the city for money.

Her FATHER gives money to the FIXER.

ZAINAB: We went in the back of a truck from Aleppo to the Lebanon. When we got to the Lebanon we were supposed to take a boat to Cyprus⁴.

¹ Gold ist jetzt sehr wertvoll.

² ... spürten wir, wie die Explosion unser Haus erschütterte ...

³ Schlepper

⁴ ... sollten wir ein Boot nach Zypern nehmen ...

FATHER: Where is the boat?

FIXER: You need to pay more.

FATHER: But I have given you all my money.

FIXER: That's not my problem. You need to pay more.

FATHER: We don't have anything else.

FIXER: If you want help ... you need money.

FATHER: We have given you all we have.

ZAINAB: Not everything.

FATHER: What do you mean, Zainab?

ZAINAB: Here.

ZAINAB takes her mother's wedding ring from her pocket.

MR HABIB: No, Zainab. You can't give him your mother's ring.

ZAINAB: I don't want to. But what would mother say?

MOTHER's voice is heard.

MOTHER: Remember, a ring can be replaced. Protecting our family is all that matters now.

ZAINAB: The fixer took the ring, and we were given places in a boat. The sea crossing to Greece was the most terrifying thing I've ever experienced¹ in my whole life. We clung onto a tiny raft² in waves that seemed as tall as houses. It was pitch dark in the middle of the night, all the food had gone, and water began to seep into the boat³.

PEOPLE ON BOAT: Help! We're sinking!

FATHER: It's alright. Stay still. Don't panic. It'll be alright. Just stay calm and don't move about.

ZAINAB: My father was amazing. He calmed everyone down and then began to sing a Syrian folk song that lifted everybody's spirits.

FATHER sings.

Just as he finished singing a powerful light hit our boat. It was a Greek navy ship – and we were all saved. Three weeks later we were here in Bournemouth.

Scene 10

DANNY: Hearing Zainab's story helped the rest of the class to understand her a lot better. It helped me understand her, too. (*To ZAINAB*) That's why you don't want to need help from anyone.

ZAINAB: I don't mind your help, Danny. I like it that you want to help other people. (*To audience*) Having the chance to tell my story actually made me start to like Miss Morris's drama class.

¹ ... es war das Schrecklichste, was ich jemals erlebt habe ...

² ... wir klammerten uns an ein kleines Schlauchboot ...

³ ... es war stockdunkel ... und Wasser begann in das Boot einzudringen ...

DANNY: But mum was still really unhappy. (*To his mother*) Do you want a piece of chocolate, mum?

MISS MORRIS: No, thanks.

ZAINAB: And so was my dad. Do you want a nice cup of coffee?

MR HABIB: No, thanks.

ZAINAB: After two months of complete misery, Danny and I couldn't take it anymore¹, so I borrowed my father's phone.

She writes a text. MISS MORRIS's phone chimes.

MISS MORRIS: (*reading text aloud*) Dear Miss Morris. Although you will never, ever, ever, take the place of my beloved mother, it is clear that you have found a place in the heart of my beloved father. He has had enough unhappiness in his life. Please come to tea on Saturday afternoon at three o'clock, and bring Danny with you. I am baking Harisi – traditional Syrian cakes. I will make some without nuts for Danny. Yours, Zainab.

DANNY: And so we both came to tea.

MR HABIB and MISS MORRIS stare at each other. There is a 'ting'.

ZAINAB: And the rest is history. Like I said at the start of this story, Danny and I are more than friends.

DANNY: We're stepbrother –

ZAINAB: And stepsister. Miss Morris ...

MISS MORRIS: Milly!

ZAINAB: Milly, and Danny can never replace my mum, and my brother Tarek, but I have grown to love them both now.

DANNY: Thanks, Sobara.

ZAINAB: My pleasure, monkey boy. And I think in my heart of hearts² that my brother and my mother would both have liked them, too.

DANNY: Zainab's dad is still pretty strict.

MR HABIB: (*To ZAINAB and DANNY*) Make sure you're both home by half past nine at the latest.

DANNY: But mum's working on it.

MISS MORRIS: Ramy! They're going to a gig.

MR HABIB: Half past eleven?

ZAINAB: (*to audience*) Life in post-Brexit Britain is not very easy for a mixed marriage³, but the UK has had a long tradition of welcoming people from all backgrounds and cultures.

The cast join together and dance an Arabic folk dance.

The End.

¹ ... nach 2 Monaten Elend hielten Danny und ich es nicht mehr aus ...

² ... in meinem tiefsten Herzen ...

³ Leben in einer Mischehe ist nach der Brexit-Abstimmung nicht so einfach ...

Quick Comprehension Check

Scene 1

- Which school do Danny and Zainab go to?
- Does Danny like sports? Why/why not?
- Why does Danny have to show Zainab round the school?
- Where is Zainab from?
- Is Zainab's father happy about Danny showing her round? Why/why not?
- Why does Danny think Zainab can't speak English?
- Does Danny like the cake Zainab bakes for him? Why/why not?
- What is the cake called?

Scene 2

- What does Danny do in his spare time?
- Does Zainab like sports? Which?
- Which part does Miss Morris want Zainab to play in the school play?
- Describe Miss Morris. What type of person is she?
- What happens when Mr Habib meets Miss Morris?
- What kind of poetry do they both like?

Scene 3

- What is Zainab wearing for her swimming classes?
- What does it look like?
- Does Zainab like swimming? Why/why not?
- How does she feel about Danny defending her?
- In Syria, what did Zainab's older brother call her?

Scene 4

- Who is Sasha? How does she help Zainab?
- Does Zainab enjoy dancing in the club? Why/why not?
- What was Mr Habib's job in Syria, and what does he do now?
- Do you know what *Brexit* means?
- What is the *BDL* and what does the man tell Mr Habib?
- Do you like the way Miss Morris handles the situation? Why/why not?

Scene 5

- How is Mr Habib different now? What does he want to do?
- What is his new job?
- Zainab follows Mr Habib when he's going out. What does she discover?

Scene 6

- Does Zainab know that Miss Morris is Danny's mum? Did you know?
- Why are the kids so upset about their parents seeing each other?
- What are they going to do about it?

Scene 7

- Danny and Zainab make their parents promise
..... . Is this fair, do you think?

Scene 8

- What is the school's annual fundraising event in aid of?
- Who works for the ICN?
- The Chairwoman of the fundraising committee is
- Miss Morris and Mr Habib are performing an Arabic folk dance called
.....
- How are the kids sabotaging the performance?

Scene 9

- Zainab writes a text message to her father, using Miss Morris' phone.
What does it say?
Is this OK, do you think?
How does Danny feel about this?
- What is their next project in drama class?
- What happened to Zainab's mother and brother?
- How did she and her dad get to the UK?
- What did Mr Habib do to help the other people on the boat?
- How do *you* feel about Zainab's story?

Scene 10

- Zainab writes another text message.
Who does she send it to?
What does it say?
- How does the play end?

Did you expect this to happen? Say why/why not!

- What about the performance? Like it? Yes/no. Say why!
- Which character did you like best? Which did you not like at all? Why?