



This script is part of the B!RTH project managed by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, supported by the Oglesby Charitable Trust and originally commissioned by the Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester.

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SYRIA:

Question & Question

by Liwaa Yazji

translated by Clem Naylor

CHARACTERS

Hind	Syrian woman in her mid-twenties who has been sold into the sex industry. Beirut, Lebanon.
Nouf	Syrian woman in her early forties, searching for her husband in a refugee camp. Calais, France.
Talar	Syrian campaigner in her early thirties, who has recently had a child following a rape. Damascus, Syria.
Investigator (M)	Male. Questioning Nouf in Calais, France (Sc 1, 4, 8)
Psychiatrist (M)	Male. Questioning Talar in Damascus, Syria (Sc 2)

Asylum Official (F)	Female. Questioning Hind in Beirut, Lebanon (Sc 3, 6)
Asylum Official (M)	Male. Questioning Hind in Beirut, Lebanon (Sc 3, 6)
GP (F)	Female. Examining Talar in Damascus, Syria (Sc 5)
Psychiatrist (F)	Female. Questioning Talar in Damascus, Syria (Sc 7)
Police Officer (M)	Male. Interviewing Hind in Beirut, Lebanon (Sc 9)
TV Presenter (F)	Female. Interviewing Nouf in Calais (Sc 12)
Charity Worker (F)	Female. Questioning Hind in Lebanon (Sc 14)
Voice 1 (F)	Female (Sc 15)
Voice 2 (M)	Male (Sc 15)

Q&Q was commissioned for the BIRTH festival and first performed in October 2016 at the Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester UK with the following cast:

Nouf	Carla Henry
Hind	Nadia Eman
Talar	Katie West
Investigator/Psychiatrist/ Asylum Official/Police Officer/ Voice 2	Abdul Salis
Asylum Official/Psychiatrist/GP/ TV Presenter/Charity worker/ Voice 1	Purveen Hussain

Directed by Emma Callander

SCENE 1

SMALL POLICE INTEROGATION ROOM IN CALAIS

Investigator M: How are you today?

Nouf: How would you like me to be?

Investigator M: Did they help you with your tent?

Nouf: Do you want me to think you're worried about me?

beat

Investigator M: Why do you want to have children here, in the camp?

Nouf: Who asks a woman a question like that?

Investigator M: No woman can want to have children in conditions like this.

Nouf: We see things differently.

beat

Investigator M: (*Bored*) Name?

Nouf: Nouf al-'Akl. From a village called al-Sha'ira. If you understood anything about tribes, I'd tell you more, but you don't. No-one understands anything anymore. Do you understand what's going on? You're foreign, you speak lots of languages – can you help me understand what's going on?

Investigator M: Where's your family?

Nouf: In Syria, in Jordan. In Turkey, in Zaatari, in Kilis, in Shatila. In the Bekaa, in Tripoli. In Greece. In Bulgaria. In Sweden, maybe Denmark. In Germany. In the sea, in the forest. Dead. Fighting. With the regime and against the regime, with the Kurds and against them, with Da'esh and against Da'esh. With the Russians and against the Russians. Where's my husband?

Investigator M: We still don't know.

Nouf: We say that in war the first thing you lose is the truth.

Investigator M: Who told you he was here in Calais?

Nouf: He told me.

Pause

Investigator M: Why did you burn your tent, Nouf?

SCENE 2 **PSYCHIATRIST'S ROOM IN DAMASCUS, SYRIA**

Talar: Do you have more women coming to you than men?

Psychiatrist M: There are more women at the moment, yes.

Talar: Why?

Psychiatrist M: Women and children are obviously affected more...

Talar: War's worse for women, isn't it? Men bring death. And women bring life.

Psychiatrist M: That's a generalisation. Let's go back to the 19th of October.

Beat

Psychiatrist M: Let's go back together. Step by step. 2011.

Talar: February. The sit-in in front of the Egyptian Embassy and the Libyan Embassy. March. The demonstration at the Umayyad Mosque. The sit-in in front of the Ministry of the Interior. The Deraa Declaration. The Artists' Declaration, the Journalists' Declaration, the Cinematographers' Declaration, the Writers' Declaration. The Artists' Demonstration. The Meydan Demonstration, every Friday. Meydan, Berzeh. Rukn ed-Din... I had a camera. Do you know what it means to have a camera?

Psychiatrist M: Were you scared?

Talar: I put three hard drives worth of clips on YouTube before I went to prison.

Psychiatrist M: What did you want to document?

Talar: 167 hospitals bombed in one year. 62 doctors martyred. 44 paramedics and volunteers killed, some in double strikes. 88% of the doctors and paramedics who died, died helping others to live. A building gets bombed, the paramedics arrive, then the planes return to bomb them. That's the sort of thing I filmed And... And... Have you heard of the White Helmets?

Psychiatrist M: Do you know members of the White Helmets?

Talar: Is the half hour up yet?

SCENE 3 ASYLUM APPLICATION OFFICE, LEBANON

Hind: Again?

Asylum Official F: One last time for today.

Hind: I just want someone to tell me where my daughter is.

Asylum Official F: That's why you've got to talk.

Hind: I was coming back from work. I was working as a waitress. The power was out on the whole street. I don't usually wear high heels.

The soldiers at the checkpoint were all young and... angry. I couldn't see very well. I tripped and fell. A young man came to help me get up. The soldiers shined a torch in our faces, and asked "What's your relationship with this man?" The man jumped in quickly and said "Get your ID out for him so he can see."

I got flustered and fumbled with my handbag in the dark for a bit. He acted like he was helping me get the ID out and tipped everything onto the floor. The soldiers got fed up. He said, "Now's not the time for wearing high heels." A tall young man, bald, wearing an expensive tracksuit. If he hadn't come and helped me, the soldiers would have eaten me alive. Why would I suspect him?

ASYLUM OFFICIAL M WHISPERS TO ASYLUM OFFICIAL F

Asylum Official F: He's asking whether that was the man.

Hind: I'm a donkey. Tell him that. Donkey, Sir. Yes that was the man.

Asylum Official M: It's on your file that you were involved in prostitution and possibly facilitating prostitution, and you want us to accept your asylum application to the UN. Is that right?

SCENE 4 SMALL POLICE INTEROGATION ROOM IN CALAIS (SAME AS SC 1)

Investigator M plays a TV report

Nouf: *(On report)* It was night time. It was windy. The heater fell over. My tent and my neighbour's tents went up in flames. We're stuck here in hell. Between two fires. I just needed some warmth. They're sending planes to rescue dogs in Syria. But we've been here for months. What have we done wrong?

Investigator M: You said in the report that a heater caused the fire.

Nouf: I also said they can't leave us to die here.

beat

I've never had a heater.

Investigator M: The old man, your neighbour, is in intensive care. He might not make it.

Nouf: My neighbour, the old man, was never going to “make it”, because of the cold, and the hunger, and the sickness. If you’re worried about him why don’t you give him somewhere better to live?
I guess he could be a terrorist, even at that age!

Investigator M: This isn’t a joke. I’m surprised you have the nerve to-

Nouf: To set myself on fire when I find out my husband has disappeared?
When I’m told that he’s dead? I’ve got a nerve? When my house has turned to rubble? Where do all those people come from to fight for Da’esh? Who’s selling weapons to them and the regime?
I’ve got a nerve!

Investigator M: Everyone here has a story like yours or worse. None of them have committed crimes.

Nouf: That’s not true. You have. And everyone like you.

Investigator M: Why did you come here, if all you want to do is die?

Nouf: When they told me Muhammad was dead, there was no reason left for me to live. All I wanted was to have my husband’s child.
Why is that so hard to understand?

SCENE 5 GP SURGERY, DAMASCUS

GP F: And you live alone?

Talar: -

GP F: Can you hear me?

Talar: Can you hear the sound of the bombs?

GP F: No.
How old are you?

Talar: 29. No. I was 29 then, in 2011.

GP F: What do you do for a living?

Talar: I was delivering aid – medicine, blankets, clothes, nappies.
Distributing weapons of mass destruction.
I just want to know what’s happening to me.

GP F: Stress.

Talar: I was stressed before, but my heart wasn’t beating like this and my hands weren’t going numb. And I didn’t feel sick and dizzy. wasn’t sweating all the time, I wasn’t losing my sight, and I wasn’t shaking.

GP F: Before I give a diagnosis I’d like to do a heart scan and a scan of your thyroid. We have to be sure that there’s no physiological explanation for your symptoms. Do you have diabetes?

Talar: I did all the tests last time. There was nothing out of the ordinary.
Talar laughs at what she just said. She can’t stop laughing. The doctor watches with interest. Talar’s laughter stops.
Sorry.

GP F: Do you sometimes feel very low and sometimes very happy?

Talar: Can you hear the sound of the bombs? They’re louder now.

GP F: You didn’t answer me.

Talar: I’m tense. Angry. I’m disgusted and frustrated – the world’s closed to me. I’m mad and fed up. I don’t know where I want to

go. I want to shout and I want to run. I just want to stop the sounds in my head.

GP F: You hear things? Voices talking to you?

Talar: *Smiling.* It's my voice that's talking to me.

GP F: What does it say?

Talar: One thing and then the opposite.

GP F: What's your relationship with your family like?

Talar: I'm against the regime. It feels strange to say that. After everything that's happened, all the chaos, how can I know what it means anymore?! I know I'm not pro-regime, like my family. I'm not like my family. In the interrogation they beat me and told me that my boyfriend gave me up, and told them everything about me. That my mum was in hospital. They said I'd rot and no-one would know where I was. When I was on my period they gave me one towel every two days. I got ill and they didn't believe me. There was one person who was nice to me. A guard. She brought me a lemon. And every few days the officer would give me a speech about how I'd been brainwashed. After a year and a half in prison I was released. I lived on my own. I was accused of conspiring against the nation and financing terrorist cells. Me and my boyfriend separated after I got out. He had to leave the country. My name is on websites. Why am I afraid, doctor?

GP F: We're all afraid.

Hind: Do I have to cry?

Asylum Official F: If you like.

Hind: Would that help? Tell him how they beat me?

Asylum Official F: You know how many cases he has to deal with. Let's make good use of his time.

Hind: I know how many girls we are, not cases. We're 75 girls. The youngest 17. The oldest is 35.

Asylum Official F: He doesn't have much time. It's written here that you willingly left Damascus with your 'fiancé' and there weren't any problems there at that time. Is that right?

Hind: Do I have to have to be eating bullets to be afraid?

Asylum Official F: And your family?

Hind: Only my mum knows where I am.

Asylum Official F: When the news comes out, your family will find out everything.

Hind breaks down in tears.

Just give me my daughter and let me go.

ASYLUM OFFICIAL F WHISPERS TO ASYLUM OFFICIAL M, HE LEAVES THE ROOM

Asylum Official F: Go on.

Hind: At the start only two of the girls knew I was pregnant. The management forced me to take pills. I had no choice. But the baby didn't die.

Asylum Official F: Did they take you to the doctor?

Hind: When I was bleeding. So I could carry on working.

Asylum Official F: What did you eat?

Hind: The same shit as before. I didn't stop working until I was at six months.

Asylum Official F: That's impossible!

Hind: Anything is possible.

Asylum Official F: It was your first pregnancy?

Hind: You've seen the room we were trapped in. Where we slept and worked and lived. We didn't see the sun. The windows were blacked out and covered with bars. We couldn't get a breath of fresh air. Can you imagine the smell of sweat? The room got smaller as my body got bigger. I just wanted to walk, like any pregnant woman. Just walk.

Asylum Official F offers Hind some water. Hind takes it.

Asylum Official F: And the birth?

Hind: They set the date. They put me to sleep. They woke me up. They brought me back to the hotel. Once they'd taken out the stitches they put me back to work.

Pause.

They told me they'd taken my womb out.

Asylum Official F: My god. That should be added to the file.

Hind: The only thing that kept me going was feeling her inside me. I was so happy when I found out she was a girl. I told her everything. I started wanting to live. I wanted her to live.

Did I tell you her name, Amal, means hope?

SCENE 7

A DIFFERENT PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE, DAMASCUS.

Psychiatrist F: So you're thinking of emigrating?

Talar: Yes.

Psychiatrist F: What's stopping you? A CV like yours should help you get a visa, or asylum. Not everyone has opportunities like you

Talar: I have a mission I need to finish.

Psychiatrist F: Are you still involved in politics?

Talar: Maybe. Maybe I haven't told you. I can't remember. I see so many doctors.

Psychiatrist F: Why are you seeing more than one doctor?

Talar: Because when I've told someone, I can't see their face again.
beat

Psychiatrist F: What do you call your condition?

Talar: One doctor told me it was anxiety. Another told me it was depression. Another said it was "burn out". Another said "anxiety disorder". Someone said it was "trauma" and phobia. That sort of thing.

Psychiatrist F: And how do you feel?

Talar: Horrible.

Psychiatrist F: And you won't tell me what it is that makes you feel like that?

Talar: Everything that touches me. This chair. I can feel the leather sticking to my skin. I can feel the person before me's sweat. The scarf I'm wearing. It feels like it's made out of a sack. Even my mobile, my handbag. Handrails, soap, my sandals when I put them on. The toilet. I can't sit down anymore. My hair when it

was longer. My body feels horrible, my chest. My period - when it comes. I don't know how to escape myself. I can't bear it when my toothbrush is in my mouth.

Pause.

Dust. People when they hold out their hands to shake mine.

Money when someone's handing it to me

Psychiatrist F: Something happened to you. The first or second time you went to the area where you were delivering aid.

(reading) You wrote in your statement: Friday 19 October. 9pm.

It was dark, the power was out. I was coming into Hamouriya and I heard someone's footsteps behind me. I got my phone out and started turning left and right. I called a woman I know

"Um Ayman, I think someone's been following me." She said,

"Don't worry – there's no-one we don't know around there.

They're all with us," I could feel he had got closer. I started

walking faster, trying to lose him in the back streets. But the

whole place looked different. It'd been destroyed. Here there

used to be a building. There where there used to be a big shop

entrance, there was nothing. There used to be a tree with a sign

on it at the crossroads. Not anymore. It was a nightmare. I didn't

know where I was. It wasn't just the place. Even the smell had

changed. There was no light. I started walking faster. I hit a dead

end.

Beat

He grabbed me hard. Like a pig. My eyes were open. I could see my life was going to change. But I'm not the first woman, or the last, to have her life ruined because of the chaos and war and -

Talar: Rape.

Is the time up yet?

SCENE 8 **SMALL POLICE INTEROGATION ROOM IN CALAIS (Same as Sc 1, 4)**

Nouf: Have you ever been involved in terrorist activities? Have you ever financed terrorist activities? Have you ever participated in training camps for weapon-use and terrorist activities? Have you ever considered being involved in terrorist activities? Do you sympathise with terrorist ideology? Does your assessment of acts of terrorism differ from the assessment of the World Counter-Terrorism Organisation?

What sort of idiot writes "Yes"!

Investigator M: Carry on.

Nouf: Have you ever been in one of the following countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, North Korea.

She starts laughing.

Investigator M: I'd like you to answer these questions:

Professional and cold.

Are you here to recruit women to join Da'esh, Nouf? Is everything that you've done intended to deflect suspicion? To put pressure on the authorities to give you permission to enter England? Is there a reason why you wanted to alter your features by burning

them? To change your fingerprints? Was it a failed suicide attack?

What's your opinion about marriage jihad, Nouf?

Nouf: That's enough! I got married according to the Sharia.

Investigator M: You didn't answer me.

Nouf: -

Investigator M: Have you been raped, Nouf?

Nouf: So all the rest of the crimes in Raqqa aren't enough? They have to rape me, do they? No, no-one touched me.

Pause.

I look behind me and there's nothing. And now I look in front of me and there's nothing. I can't have a baby with my husband.

That's my crime. And it's because of war, not God.

SCENE 9

POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM, LEBANON

Police Officer M: Do you know this man?

Hind: No.

The officer shows another photo.

Police Officer M: This one?

Hind: They all look alike.

Police Officer M: He's the owner of the hotel.

Hind: Him!

Police Officer M: You've never seen him before?

Hind: Show me the picture again.

The officer goes back to the photo of Man 1.

It all happened because of him?

Police Officer M: He says he didn't know anything.

Hind contemplates the photo without replying.

He says he got the place as an investment, and that this man (*he changes to a photo of another man*) was the investor.

Hind laughs. The officer switches the photo for a photo of Hind's fiancé – the tall, bald man. Hind looks away.

Hind: Get that picture off the screen.

Police Officer M: Tell me what you know about him.

Hind: He told me his friend owned a small hotel in Jounieh and they needed someone to work there. He was Syrian. He wanted to help a Syrian who was out of work. He told me he loved me and we'd live together in Lebanon. He got me an engagement ring. We have to believe everything that's bad, why shouldn't I believe something good?

beat

Do you know how much he got for me? 2500 dollars.

He took my passport and my ID card. He left me at the apartment, sitting there on my own. I didn't know a single person in all of Lebanon. I was fed up. Who leaves their new wife like that on the first day? I went into the sitting room and found someone I didn't know taking his shirt off on the sofa. I screamed "You're in the wrong house". I told him to get out before I started screaming. I tried to open the door.

Police Officer M: You're lucky he didn't kill you.

Hind: They rape us from the first day. It's to break our spirits.

Police Officer M: What did he want?

HIND STANDS AND PULLS HER CLOTHES UP, MAYBE UNDOES A ZIP TO REVEAL HER LEGS

Hind: You want to see? You want to see me? That's where they put nails in my legs. Do you know why? Because I didn't want to sleep with three men at once.

Police Officer M: Why did none of the customers speak? Didn't you try to tell them?

Hind: One girl spoke. They cut out her tongue.

SCENE 10 **A DARK EMPTY SPACE**

Voice of Nouf: I married late. I thought I'd never get married because I was ugly. That's what everyone said behind my back. I think I'm alright. The day Muhammad asked me I couldn't believe it. I said yes just like that, without asking him any questions or asking my family. I couldn't stand the idea of dying before I could have children. I don't want to be like my aunt the spinster. He's a teacher like me, but he teaches English. He refused to work as a translator for them.

Pause.

My periods were regular before. Then the war started. I don't know what happened to my body. There's no way anyone could know what was happening to them. No way. I was plagued with urinary infections because of the dirt and the water. I was hot and cold. Where I'm from, when a woman's been married three months, she has to get pregnant! I went to the doctor in town.

The only doctor left. I put on a hijab and wore black from head to toe... Da'esh killed my doctor in front of the whole town because they said he was unveiling women, and it was sinful! After that there weren't any more male doctors. And the women doctors escaped because they were scared for their lives.

Imagine getting pregnant from a Jihadi! I would die.

A bright light comes up on Nouf, who is sitting on the ground as if she's sitting in a prison cell.

SCENE 11 **SHOWER**

Talar: *(Taking to herself)*

So Talar, what's the worst thing about experiencing rape?

That I don't know whether the person who raped me knows me, if it was planned or by chance. That I don't know if the regime sent him, or if he was just passing in the street. The chaos. In war, the worst thing isn't being killed by a bomb. It's the chaos.

And what's the easiest thing?

They're all Syrians.

And what do you remember?

I didn't have my period for more than two months. Normal. After that sort of thing. From the disgust, from the shock. My friends got a doctor to come to the house. She told me I was pregnant and

I had to stop taking painkillers if I wanted the baby to be normal...
If I wanted the child at all! I didn't stop the medicine – I didn't want it.

I tried everything to get rid of it. He held on – he wanted to live! The fighting outside was loud. Bombs. And buildings collapsing. And the child was hanging on and wanted to come out. Night felt like day from the light of the rockets. Bullets. People being driven away. People running. And he wanted to come into the world and see it for himself. Some days I felt like he was doing it out of spite. He wanted to be alive. So I gave up. I felt like maybe there was a reason. It was the only way to create something meaningful out of everything meaningless around us.

I couldn't go to a government hospital. I was wanted and where I was living was under siege. Every time the people on the checkpoints changed, I had to come up with a new lie. I couldn't be pregnant without a man! A friend started coming with me as if he was my husband, but when he was kidnapped I didn't know what to do –

I started saying my husband had been kidnapped, but those stories don't always work!

Are you complaining?

There's no electricity. There's no water. There's no disinfectant. There's no vitamins. And hardly any food, I used to see how women were always looking for food and always the last to eat.

They'd feed their children and their husbands and then if there was anything left they'd eat. And everything's so expensive.

When there was water the first thing I'd do was wash myself with a bucket. Then I'd wash my clothes and my pillowcase in the same water, and then I'd wash food in it or use it to give the table a bit of a wipe. And then finally I'd use it in the toilet. That's not a life! *You could have got away but you didn't. Other people didn't have a choice.*

One of the women from the neighbourhood used to come round when her husband was away or the bombing eased off. She started sending her daughter to spend half the day with me, without her husband knowing. There wasn't even internet so I could read about what was happening to me. I felt like I was living in the last century. When there was only folk medicine. I didn't have any information.

The women around you knew it was a boy. They could guess it from the way you looked. They said that if a woman got more pretty when she was pregnant it was a girl.

I was scared I'd stay like this all my life – stay pregnant. I wonder whether it's the same for every woman?

Stop all this madness!

SCENE 12 **TELEVISION STUDIO**

TV Presenter F: So Nouf, tell us your story.

Nouf: It's like all the other stories.

TV Presenter F: We only know those stories because people have told them.

Nouf: We left our village at night. Women, small children, pregnant women, old people. We walked to the Turkish border. There was someone there who knew the quickest route and he took us. At dawn we arrived in a little village. They told us we were in Turkey. Some people went to the police and turned themselves in and they took them to the camp, I think. Me and a few others went on to Izmir so we could find a smuggler to take us over the sea.

That's it.

TV Presenter F: How did you find a Smuggler?

Nouf: You work it out. People tell you. There's a café you go to. As soon as you arrive the smuggler comes up to you. You pay about 800 euros and he takes you to Greece in a boat. I tried four times. It's just luck. Always at night.

TV Presenter F: And how long did it take you to get here from Lesbos?

Nouf: The normal time – maybe two months. We walked all the way, like you saw on the TV. Sometimes we slept in forests, or in someone's house. My God, people helped us so much.-We slept in an empty warehouse, in abandoned houses.

TV Presenter F: *(Smiling)* Nouf, you keep on describing things as 'normal'. But what you're talking about isn't normal, is it?

Nouf: That's what you say.

TV Presenter F: Why did you decide to come here to Calais? You could have stopped somewhere easier, like the camps in Turkey.

Nouf: I'm just looking for my husband. I didn't want to leave
Imagine getting a period and not having a towel and there being
no way of getting one. We're on the open road. Between forests,
You get an infection. Your back hurts. Your knees hurt. You're
dizzy. Your boots are wet, and your socks are torn to shreds, and
your feet are covered in corns. There was one woman carrying her
two-month old son all the way.

TV Presenter F: But isn't it better to have left Raqqa?

Nouf: If you saw what happens to women on the road, you'd know that
no-one leaves home by choice.

TV Presenter F: Ok. And when women arrive here in the camp, is there any
support? Is there anyone to help them?

Nouf: It's like chasing a mirage. What do you find when you get there?

TV Presenter F: Nothing?

Nouf: Nothing that you imagined.
God bless the volunteers here. Who knows what would happen to
us without them?
But politics has ruined all our lives.

TV Presenter F: You wanted to record a message to help you find your husband –
what do you want to say?

Nouf: Muhammad, I am in Calais. I'm waiting for you here in the camp
and I won't move until you come. Come as fast as you can. And I
ask anyone who knows my husband or has seen him or knows
where he is to let him know. His name is Muhammad Sheikh al-
Ard.

Those who do good will be rewarded by God. Thank you.

SCENE 13 **A CHURCH IN DAMASCUS**

Talar: I gave birth to a boy, Father. He was wrinkly and his hair was so black.

Father, there are other people giving birth by candlelight, in field hospitals, without anaesthetics, without disinfectants, without medicine, without doctors, with the walls falling down on their heads and with injured people screaming with pain in the room with them. Women can't just suddenly go into labour when there's fighting going on. The child can't decide when it wants to come. The war decides. That's why in Syria every woman has a caesarean. They set my time for when there was electricity. We were meant to have electricity on the Tuesday. On the Monday night my contractions started. I was in agony until the Tuesday morning, when the electricity came on. I used to think, if one day I want to have a child, I'll do it underwater.

She laughs.

I've heard in Europe now it's in fashion for women to have their babies just with a midwife. At home and not in hospital. And sometimes even in the dark.

She laughs.

It was more or less the same for me... But with one difference – it wasn't my choice. I didn't register the birth.

My hair started falling out. To begin with, the women would take turns to come round but when the siege got worse no-one could leave their homes. Our phones stopped working. There wasn't any food. I couldn't breastfeed anymore. Obviously there wasn't any milk or nappies.

She laughs.

The things I was trying to bring when they arrested me. And when what happened happened.

If it wasn't for a dear friend I would have gone mad. With a thousand lies she managed to get a little machine to extract my milk and feed him. He was hungry. I cried. She said I'd get used to him slowly but surely. That was what I was scared of.

I came to tell you that when I saw his eyes I was afraid. I could see myself in him. The boy's eyes were looking at me waiting to see what I'd do. Maybe it was the fifth day when he looked at me and I saw the eyes of that son of a bitch like he was watching me from inside the boy. He was challenging me. I couldn't look at him anymore. It was like that man still had a hold of me. I started screaming and the baby cried.

That night I knew what I was going to do. I told my friend to take me and the baby in his car. I told him to cover my eyes and drive us. He drove. On and on. Turning one way and the other. I said "Here."

I didn't know where I was. I told him to leave us alone.

Pause.

I told the baby everything. And I left him on the ground and went back to the car. He was sleeping. I didn't say a word.

SCENE 14 **CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE INTEROGATION ROOM**

Charity worker F: Hello. I'm from a charity that deals with issues relating to women's freedom, forced prostitution and the situation of women at times of war and displacement.

Hind: Can you get me my daughter?

Charity worker F: Not directly. There's an organisation that's looking after her until your file-

Hind: People keep on coming and going - Do you even know my name?

Charity worker F: I only know that it isn't your real name.

Hind: Do you have children?

Charity worker F: Yes.

Hind: Tell me how you got pregnant and how you gave birth so I can tell you the difference between you and me -

Charity worker F: Your daughter is in a nursery. She's being looked after by specialists.

Hind: What sort of specialists? I want to see her.

Charity worker F: Specialists in her condition.

Hind: What condition?

Charity worker F: There are obviously lots of things she needs.

Hind: I'll decide what she needs.

Help me register my daughter in my name.

Charity worker F: By law, custody of children sits with the father's relatives and-

Hind: Father?!

The only thing that will keep me alive is that girl growing up and being educated and being strong and making me forget all of this.

The three women simultaneously stand quickly and look directly ahead

Nouf: When I look behind me

Talar: I see nothing

Hind: When I look in front of me

Nouf: I see nothing

They all leave

SCENE 15 **THREE EMPTY CHAIRS**

The spotlights are on the chairs. The chairs are empty. The voices in this scene come from offstage.

Voice 1: Nouf.

There is no answer.

Hind.

There is no answer.

Ok. Talar.

There is no answer.

Where are they?

Pause.

We need to tell Nouf she got asylum, she can travel to England...

Where is she?

Voice 2: Nouf left Calais. Someone said her husband was in Brazil.

Voice 1: Is that definitely true?

Voice 2: Nothing's definite.

Pause.

Voice 1: And Hind?

Voice 2: She went back to Syria. She took her daughter and ran.

Voice 1: And Talar?

Pause.

Where's Talar?

Voice 2: No-one knows anything about her.

Beat.

They don't want anyone to ask them anything anymore.

Pause.

Voice 1: We can't leave the chair empty!

Voice 2: There are lots of other women. That's just three of them. Three of around ten million.

Pause.

Voice 1: What should we do?

Voice 2: We'll keep on asking. What else can we do?

Voice 1: Is it enough?

Voice 2: Lets bring in the next ones.

END