

Hope

Characters: speaking parts for three women and one "daughter" (age not critical), all of them refugees, and three male traffickers. There can be any number of others in a crowd with the women. Parts could be split up among more actors, if available.

At the beginning, the women are waiting in line and the men are offstage.

Woman 1	Is the boat there?
Woman 2	I can't see it.
Woman 1	They told us to wait here. Where is it?
Woman 2	I don't know. Still coming, I guess.
Woman 1	It could be a trick, sister. I don't trust those men.
Woman 2	What's so special about those men? Take my advice, never trust any man.
Woman 3	Can you see the boat?
Woman 1	What's she saying?
Woman 2	No idea. She's not from our country. <i>(to Woman 3)</i> Speak Arabic, can't you?
Woman 3	I don't understand you. <i>(slowly and deliberately)</i> Can – you – see – the – boat?
Woman 1	Sounds like gibberish to me. Africans!
Daughter	Mother, she said "boat". I'm sure she said "boat".
Woman 3	Boat, yes. Can you see the boat?
Daughter	<i>(mimes with actions)</i> Me... See... Boat?
Woman 3	Yes, that's it. Have you seen the boat? <i>(looks happy)</i> Yes?
Daughter	<i>(shakes head)</i> No. No boat.
Woman 3	<i>(crestfallen)</i> Oh.
Daughter	Where do you come from? <i>(slowly and deliberately)</i> What – country – do – you...?
Woman 1	Hey! Hold your tongue, daughter. That's none of our business. Who cares, anyway? Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, what's the difference? We have enough on our plate.
Woman 2	Did she have to run past the snipers in Aleppo? Did she have to get over those mountains? Did she have to give up her wedding rings to those guards...?
Woman 3	I wish I could understand them, maybe we could help each other... I wonder if they've been in prison too? Were they beaten and tortured? Just for trying to find out what happened to their husbands?
Daughter	Look, there's a boat coming onto the beach!
All <i>(at once)</i>	<i>(Shout out in excitement, randomly)</i> A boat! It's here! Hey look! Here's the boat! <i>etc</i>
Man 1 <i>(enters)</i>	Shut up! Do you want the police to hear you? Stop this noise!
Woman 1	It's a very small boat.
Woman 2	They'll never get us all on it. They'll have to leave some behind.
Man 2 <i>(enters)</i>	How many have we got, tonight?
Man 1	Almost 300.
Man 2	The captain says it'll only hold 150, 200 max.

Man 1	Captain! What does he know? He's only the cook from a fishing boat. Tell him to shut up, if he knows what's good for him.
Woman 1	We need to get to the front of the line...
Woman 2	Make sure we stay together. <i>(To Woman 3, pushing her aside)</i> We were here first!
Woman 3	Don't push! There's no need to push!
Man 1 <i>(shouts)</i>	Stop that! You'll all get on board. So long as you have the money.
Man 2	Luxury accommodation! One class only! Next stop Europe...
All <i>(at once)</i>	<i>(Randomly)</i> Europe! I want to get to Europe! America! Germany! UK! etc
Man 3 <i>(enters)</i>	What's going on? I'm waiting to tow the boat out into the deep water, and the tide will be going out soon. Get this rabble on board, can't you?
Man 2	They're worried they won't all fit on.
Man 3	Not my problem.
Man 1	We'll cram them all on somehow.
Man 3	Just get moving. They can always chuck a few off later if they need to.
Woman 1	Did you hear that? He said they throw people into the sea...
Woman 2	Animals! But nothing surprises me, not now. And we've got to go on.
Woman 3	May God protect us. I thought it was bad enough getting across the desert, but now this. Are they really going to take us to sea in that old bucket?
Daughter	Mother, I'm scared. Maybe we should go back.
Woman 1	Back? Back where? Back to what?
Daughter	I want to go home.
Woman 1	We have no home. That's all gone. We're going to a new place now. I don't know where, but we'll find one, I promise you we will.
Man 1	Right, let's see the colour of your money. Final payment ladies, 1000 US.
Woman 2	The three of us are together.
Man 1	Then that's 3000.
Woman 1	We were told 2,500 for us all together. That's what Mohammed said. And it's all I've got left.
Man 3	What do you think you're on? A package holiday?
Man 2	3000. Or the girl stays behind. She can do some work for me, then when she's earned enough we'll send her on to join your happy family.
Woman 2	What do you mean, earned enough? What sort of work are you talking about?
Man 2	Don't ask questions. You know what I mean. Now, have you got the money for my friend, or do I take the girl?
Daughter	Mother! Don't abandon me!
Woman 3	Here. Here's my 1000. And here's another 500 for the girl to go. I can't understand them, but I know your game, you scumbag.
Man 1	Well, listen to her! She's got a nerve... Maybe she'd like to stay behind instead...
Man 3	Come on. This is no time for messing about. Just take the money and let's get going.

Man 1	<i>(Shrugs, takes the money from all the women).</i> Alright, get on board. This is your lucky day, darlings.
Woman 2	It's true. It's really happening. We're really going now.
Daughter	Will we make it across? Mother, I'm scared.
Woman 1	Be strong. I promised your father that I'd get you to Europe, and I will.
Daughter	What will it be like when we arrive?
Woman 1	I'm not sure, but it must be better. Someone will help us. We'll tell them our story and they'll help us, won't they? We can all work, after all. They need workers, don't they?
Daughter	But what if...
Woman 2	Enough. Good or bad, our future is over that horizon. We came into the world with nothing, and now we'll start again from nothing. Except we have the one thing that matters.
Daughter	What's that?
Woman 2	Hope. Never lose hope.
Man 3	On the boat! Come on now. Let's go! <i>(all exit)</i>

Service Notes

Suggested hymn to accompany this script: ***Eternal Father, strong to save***

A prayer for migrants and refugees:

God, no one is a stranger to you. And no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness watch over migrants, refugees and asylum seekers -

those separated from their loved ones

those who are lost

and those who have been exiled from their homes.

Bring them safely to the place where they long to be, and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and those in need.

We ask this through Christ our Lord, who too was a refugee and migrant and who travelled to another land searching for a home.

Amen

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