

THE

JUN  
GLE



EDUCATION PACK



**‘Great is the hope that  
makes men cross borders’**

Safi, Scene 7

**'MORE HOPE THAN YOU HAVE SEEN IN LIFETIMES. MORE PEOPLE OF HEART AND SONG THAN YOU HAVE EVER HEARD. WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH OF ANYTHING, YOU MAKE FROM NOTHING.'**

Safi, Scene 2



## INTRODUCTION

This pack is designed for use by teachers and students in conjunction with the production of **The Jungle** staged at the Playhouse Theatre in London's West End in 2018, following a short run at the Young Vic theatre in 2017.

The pack offers opportunities for debate, discussion and thought around the key issues and questions that the play raises. Whilst broadly intended for students from Year 10 upwards, all content can be adapted to suit younger students and older audience members in Further Education. A list of sources and possible further reading is provided, which may be useful should the production be used as a starting point for devised work.

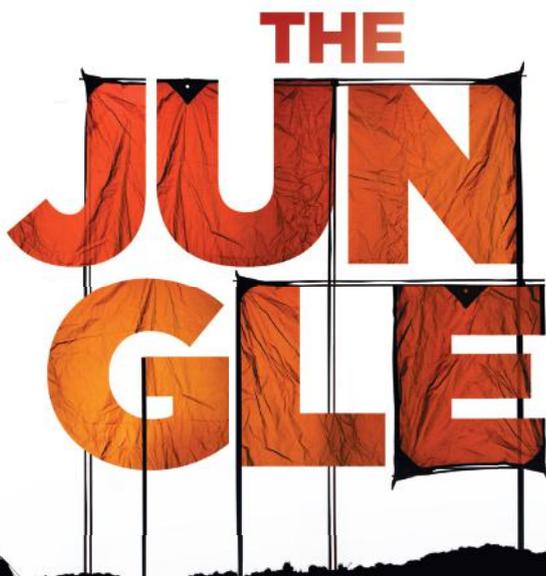
## BACKGROUND TO THE PRODUCTION

*'We want this to be a play that doesn't try to preach or teach but does provoke debate because it is one we need to have...the question of how do we live together is as vital now as it was when we first arrived in Calais'*

Joe Murphy, The Guardian 2018

In the summer of 2015, as what became known as the 'migrant crisis' was peaking in Europe, playwrights Joe Murphy and Joe Robertson arrived in Calais and established Good Chance Theatre. The temporary theatre space was intended to bring together people from many different countries that were living in the camp in terrible conditions to create music, theatre, art and dance as a means of expressing themselves and their creativity and culture; ultimately to 'provide a platform' (J.Robertson, Huck 2017). After seven months, and following the eviction of the southern part of the camp, they began to bring together some of the voices and stories that they had encountered into a full-length play.

Good Chance, working in collaboration with the Young Vic, and the National Theatre, have created an immersive theatre experience which brings to life their time in the camp, and also draws attention to complex and thought-provoking issues, from challenging misconceptions about the camp and its occupants, to the cultural and ethical consequences of well-meaning volunteers attempting to provide help.



## THE CALAIS JUNGLE

### **'WHEN DOES A PLACE BECOME A PLACE? ...WHEN DOES A PLACE BECOME A HOME?'**

Safi, Scene 5

Situated close to the port of Calais in France, the refugee and migrant camp that became known as 'The Jungle' was occupied by between 5000-8000 people by summer 2015 (Help Refugees 2016/The Guardian 2016) but the total figure is disputed and unknown.

The camp sprawled across several acres of unoccupied land, in woods which had provided some shelter once the Sangatte reception centre run by the French Red Cross had become overcrowded. The eviction seen in the play is based on the actual eviction of the southern part of the camp that took place in February 2016 following legal action by the French government. Following further evictions and increasing unrest, the camp was officially demolished in October 2016.

Despite the French government's continued assertion that there will be no further encampments allowed, the BBC reported that as recently as February 2018, approximately 800 refugees and migrants were living in temporary shelters or the woods in Calais.



## THE MIGRANT CRISIS

### **'IT'S ONLY A CRISIS BECAUSE WE'RE CALLING IT THAT'**

Paula, Scene 6

Following a combination of the escalating war in Syria, ongoing violence and unrest in Afghanistan and Iraq, human rights abuses and persecution in Eritrea, and poverty in countries such as Kosovo, over a million migrants and refugees entered Europe in 2015. This mass movement of people, the largest since the Second World War, triggered what became known as a 'crisis' as governments struggled to control their borders and accommodate the influx of people.

However, as Paula suggests, the true facts and figures of the movement became somewhat distorted by the press, and the dramatic images of large convoys of people arriving on beaches and walking along roads, were seized upon by right-wing groups keen to capitalise on the situation. Whilst the Calais Jungle did become a focal point of much attention, the vast majority of migrants and refugees headed to Germany and Hungary, and many remained in Greece.

**Further information about the statistics can be found by following links in the reference section.**

## PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION AND THINKING POINTS:

- o What do you know about the refugee and migrant camp that became known as 'The Jungle'?
- o Can you think back to where these thoughts and impressions have come from?
- o What images and expectations does the name 'jungle' conjure up?
- o Looking at the quotation at the beginning of this pack (Safi, Scene 2), how might you expect this production, exploring life in 'The Jungle', to challenge or develop your understanding of life in the camp?

## POST-VISIT DISCUSSION AND THINKING POINTS:

- o What were your feelings and thoughts at the end of the performance?
- o In what ways has the production surprised or interested you?
- o What did you feel was the most interesting or significant moment?
- o What have been your reflections since seeing the performance? Have your views about any aspect of the content changed?

### 'GOOD CHANCE IS THE DREAM'

Safi, Scene 2

### 'GREAT IS THE HOPE THAT MAKES MEN CROSS BORDERS'

Safi, Scene 7

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## THEMES AND ISSUES TO EXPLORE

### HOPE AND HOPELESSNESS

The characters in the play have very different levels of expectation and hope for the future. Early in the timeline of the play, most are optimistic about their chances of reaching the United Kingdom, and either reuniting with relatives or creating a new life for themselves. As the action progresses however, frustrations increase and tensions overflow. The phrase 'good chance' is part of Jungle slang which means that, due to either the conditions or traffic, it is felt there is a good chance of making it through the controls and to the UK on that day or night, and "dreams may happen". In reality, very few seem to be successful despite Safi saying "So many try, so many succeed", and we see characters caught and returned to the camp, or hear of the volunteers' frustrations at the responses of U.K. government.

- ① What do you think continues to give some of the characters hope?
- ② Who do you feel were the most hopeful characters in the play and why? Was their hope well-placed or naïve?
- ③ Two of the youngest characters, Beth and Sam, arguably have the sharpest decline from hope to hopelessness – would you agree with this statement and if so, why do you think this is?
- ④ During the eviction, Derek says that "we have to rehumanise this situation". To what extent do you feel that the occupants of the camp have lost their individual identities, compared to those in the world outside of the camp?
- ⑤ At the end of the play, how do you feel? Were you surprised after all the events of the play to hear Safi say "We are alone in this world. Strangers to each other. We can save only ourselves." What do you think of Henri saying to Sam "You can't have thought it would last forever?"
- ⑥ What do you know about the refugee and migrant situation now? Why do you think the situation is no longer in the news?

# 'I HAVE BEEN WAITING TO BECOME A PERSON AGAIN'

Safi, Scene 7

## IDENTITY

The camp and the play bring together people who are inherently different, from all over the world, and yet they are joined together in their shared desire to gain entry to the UK, and in their shared current situation in the camp. The play explores how the characters have been through what they have seen, what they have left behind, experienced on their journey and in the camp, and how all these have shaped who they are. Safi perhaps surprisingly says that if you cut him open you'd find Calais "*engraved upon my heart*" because the experience has become part of his identity.

① In the play we see or hear about tensions turning into conflict, the fight in Beth's school for example. As Mohammed says, "*There are tensions between our people. Before, we lived separately, now, we must live together.*" **Do you think that conflict is inevitable when people with different national or cultural identities are brought together?**

② For many, and particularly Salar, there is a strong sense of national identity and pride. We see the Afghan flag and hear the national anthem, as well as Salar talking about past conflict and referring to Norullah as a warrior. **Do you think that national pride is important? What role does nationality play in your identity? How does this become complicated when resettling into another country and culture?**

③ The night of the Paris bombing in November 2015 is described as the second turning point in the play. Its significance is felt by all in the camp. The play suggests (and Safi reflects) that, "*the refugee, terror, the jungle and me, were bound together*" – the events and horrors surrounding him have become part of his identity.



**How do you think wider events such as the Paris bombing affected the lives of those in the camp?**

④ During the eviction, Derek says that "*we have to rehumanise this situation*".

**To what extent do you feel that the occupants of the camp have lost their individual identities, compared to those in the world outside the camp?**

⑤ The play explores the juxtaposition of living in a situation that is simultaneously fixed and yet makeshift, permanent and temporary. **Do you think that aspects of identity become more fixed and important when your circumstances are less established and secure?**

## Drama based opportunity

○ Create a mind map of all the different elements that you feel constitute your identity – this might include age, race, nationality, religion, political views, hobbies and interests. **Can you put the elements into a rank order of significance? Can you identify one element which you think is the defining part of your identity?**

○ Write a short monologue script based on the defining element you chose, and then either prepare to perform it yourself or direct someone else in your group to perform it. You may wish to choose a piece of music to play, or project an image or photograph to accompany the piece.



## COMMUNITY

The camp is positioned on unoccupied land and woods near the motorway leading to the port, and initially occupants are all housed in makeshift shelters and tents. Different people of different ages from many different countries find themselves “forced from many places into one”. In the play, we see the occupants of the camp quickly establish several communal spaces, such as churches, mosques, shops and a restaurant - as the population swells these become the centre-point of the play’s action.

- ① What do these communal spaces offer and represent?
- ② How do they bring people together in a way that is different to personal spaces?
- ③ Do you think that such spaces have a greater purpose in times of difficulty or need?
- ④ Derek seems to find comfort in aspects of what he finds in the camp saying, “Community. I’ve found things here that have all but disappeared in Britain”. Do you think he is romanticising the camp, or has community diminished in the UK?
- ⑤ How do you see, or are you aware of, similar spaces - churches, youth centres, restaurants, theatres - operating in your own community?

## ‘AND PEOPLE FROM MANY COUNTRIES LIVING TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME IN PEACE’

Safi, Scene 2



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- ⑥ How is a restaurant different from a church? Why do you think that the play is set and staged in the restaurant? Consider Safi’s line from Scene 2: “People meet and laugh and eat together. Share stories of great journeys, with excitement like I have never heard.” How does this description fit with your expectations of life in the camp?
- ⑦ Safi comments that “It takes pain to live side by side” - having watched the play, what do you think he meant by this comment?



### Drama based opportunity

- In its opening, the play features the stage direction, “Everything happens quickly in the Jungle, all at once, and everyone on top of each other, always present”. Working in a large group, attempt to create a sequence that suggests a community similar to that seen in the play - a multitude of different characters, a sense of both order and chaos, and a sense of overlapping voices and sounds.
- Consider some of the rituals and traditions associated with food in your culture and share your different experiences across the group. Create a short sequence of actions that explores this ritual - Shabbat, Christmas, Birthdays, Eid, Ramadan - what atmosphere would be appropriate, what kind of movements, speech, or song would you associate with this scene?

## RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Following the publication online and in print of a photograph of Alan Kurdi, a young Syrian boy who had drowned and washed up on a beach whilst making the crossing to Europe, there was a surge in public interest in the refugee and migrant situation across Europe. The camps in Calais saw an influx of volunteers from the UK, some with experience in aid situations and many without, eager to help the residents. Beth, Boxer, Derek, Paula and Sam all arrive in the camp from very different backgrounds, all with the wish to 'help', but with Boxer claiming that they are *"all running from something...all refugees"*. In the absence of many of the usual aid agencies, these informal relationships between the occupants of the camp and the volunteers raise one of the key questions in the play: did their presence help or hinder?

- ① **Do you remember, or were you aware of, the Alan Kurdi photograph? Why do you think that it was so pivotal and heavily reported?**
- ② **Having watched the play, do you think the presence of the volunteers and their attempts to 'help' and develop the infrastructure of the camp, took on some of the responsibility that should have been assumed by governments and wider agencies?**
- ③ **In your view, did voluntary involvement prolong and complicate life in the camp? Should the volunteers have stayed away? As Joe Murphy himself reflects *"did the fact that loads of people went over and set up these places to help - did that preserve this jungle? Did it in a way not help?"* Huck 2017**
- ④ **To what extent do you agree with Ali telling Beth that, *"You are trying to understand. But you can't"*, and Salar telling Sam, *"You know nothing of our struggle"*. **What responsibility do we have to try and understand or is it a futile task?****
- ⑤ **You may want to look back at the playwright's presentation of the different**

roles and intentions of the volunteers. Paula, who appears experienced in this kind of situation, is keen to focus on protecting the children and their rights and is angry, determined to hold agencies and governments to account: *"this is how we will fight, peacefully and legally"*. Whereas Sam is naïve, young and believes that the best thing he can do is build houses and build something out of what he initially describes as *"Glastonbury. Without the toilets"*.

- ⑥ **What is your response to Beth's actions to assist Okot with his attempt to cross to the UK? Similarly, how do you respond to the actions of Boxer with Little Amal at the end of the play, as he appears to try and smuggle her into the UK?**
- ⑦ **Teresa May is referenced several times in the play as the then Home Secretary for neglecting her responsibility to enforce and co-operate with laws connected to unaccompanied minors. In February 2016, she also suggested that most people attempting to come to the UK were African economic migrants and not genuine refugees and asylum seekers. In Boxer's Christmas song he suggests *"Teresa May, look across the water"*. **How do you feel about the UK government's response then and now? You may wish to research this issue further as the UK's departure from the European Union now affects the country's position and responsibilities.****
- ⑧ **In Scene 6, Beth outlines the meaning of the phrase 'virtue signalling' – the idea that sharing hashtags or signing petitions is just signalling your virtuous nature, rather than actually doing anything. You may wish to discuss and consider the following questions: **Do you feel that this term is appropriate? Is it something you feel you've witnessed or been part of? What is the alternative? Is there value in virtue signalling?****
- ⑨ **Beth goes on to say that passing laws but not then acting on them, makes governments and institutions like the UN guilty of the same 'virtue signalling' – **Do you agree with her views? What more could or should be done?****



## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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Imaging the jungles of Calais: Media visuality and the refugee camp.

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