

The Edge

By Douglas Rintoul for Transport

'Emigration, forced or chosen, across national frontiers or from village to metropolis, is the quintessential experience of our time.' John Berger

Cast

The Daughter
The Son

Scenes

1. Interconnectedness
2. The Crossing
3. The First Memories
4. The Loss
5. The Storm/The Sundari Tree
6. The Retreat/The City
7. The Raft/The Letter
8. The Crossing 2
9. Acclimitisation/The Thick Border
10. The Encounter
11. Contact
12. Time
13. Kinship Tie
14. The Train
15. First Memories 2.
16. The Process
17. The Parents
18. The Arrival
19. Origins 2

1. Interconnectedness

Two actors appear on stage. One is female, the other is male. Individually they map the story of their lives starting with tonight's performance, back through their family history, right back as far as they can go. They use the stage as map, creating a world map for themselves. The positioning of the places is relatively geographically correct.

The first actor starts. After five movements the next starts and they overlapped but they listen to each other and acknowledge and play where there is a connection.

Balvinder:

My name is Balvinder Sopal.

I've been asked to map out my journey, reaching as far back as I can go.

This evening I am in **(insert name of the venue being performed in)**.

I came here a few days back on the train from London.

I am currently living in Hackney in London.

I haven't always lived in London. Originally, I'm from Gillingham, in Kent.

I was born in Chatham and lived most of my life in Gillingham with my family. There are 6 of us in total. My dad – Jugmohan Singh Sopal. My Mum – Nirmal Sopal. My two brothers – Hardeep and Jasbir Sopal and Sister – Manjeet Griffiths.

I moved back to Gillingham/

Tim: My name is Tim Lewis.

I've been asked to map out my journey reaching as far back as I can go.

This evening I am in **(insert name of the venue being performed in)**.

I came here a few days back on the train from London.

I have lived in London for 13 years.

I moved here in 2002 to study and work from Bristol.

Before that I moved to Southern Africa for a year to explore.

And before that I lived just outside of Bristol for the first 18 years of my life.

I lived there with my Mother Wendy Barbara Barnsdall and Father David Barnsdall.

They moved there for political and social reasons from Pretoria, South Africa.

They met in Johannesburg at a small engineering firm where they both worked.

My Father had lived in Southern Africa for 12 years.

He moved there for work from Nottingham where he was born in 1945.

He grew up in a town just outside Nottingham called Calverton.

In his early twenties he travelled in Europe for the purposes of fun.

He went twice, for four months at a time.

And in 1968, when he was 24, he got the boat to South Africa.

Based in Johannesburg, he worked for a small engineering firm on projects across South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Angola.

My Mother was born in Pretoria in 1944.

She lived there for the first 21 years of her life, apart from a year spent in Hampshire when she was 15.

In 1966, when she was 22, she moved to London to work, and have fun.

A few years later she moved to Boston to study at the University of Massachusetts.

A year into her studies she returned to South Africa to care for her mother who was very ill.

It was during this time that she got a job as a secretary at that small engineering firm in Johannesburg.

My Father's father, Eric Barnsdall was from Nottingham, he repaired watches and clocks.

My Father's mother Eleanor Routledge was from Northumberland, near Hexham.

She had two sisters, Mary and Isobel.

Her father, George Routledge worked as head groundskeeper at Blenkinsop Hall, a large stately home nearby.

Balvinder: In 2014 after having lived and worked in Huddersfield. I moved to Huddersfield in 1998 to study. And I ended up staying in Huddersfield for 14 years, for work friends and romance. I used to come to London from Huddersfield for work. Now I do the Gillingham to London circuit.

My mum comes from India, Derha Dunn and is one of 6 children.

One of my Uncles – Jagjeet Singh Soi, lives in Delhi. He has three children who all live and work out of India.

His eldest daughter Timpsey Soi, married a man in IT, became Timsy Kathayal and moved to California, where she lives with her two children. His second daughter Shilpy, became Shilpy Bhattia and moved to Amsterdam with her husband who works for Heineken and they also have two children.

And his youngest son Anshul Soi – moved to Dubai and has a very promising career in Hospitality/Hotel Management.

Mum came to England in December 1976 after marrying my dad in April of the same year. She had a BA in Art and a Masters in Politics but when she came to the UK she worked as a dressmaker.

My dad has a Brother – Kuldip Singh Sopal and he came to England in 1964 to work. He goes back briefly in 1969 to marry my aunt – Sunita Sopal who comes back to the United Kingdom with him. My dad comes to England in 1974 and starts work with British Airways in London as a Store Keeper in the Catering Department. He goes back to India, briefly, to marry my mum in 1976.

My dad was born in Africa 12th September 1948 in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania. My Uncle, who is also known as Tippi, was born in Mombassa. 9th September 1943.

My Grandfather - Bant Singh, born, raised and married in India. Shifts his whole family from India to East Africa in the 1930's to work. The journey took 14 days by Steam Boat, which, included a three day and three night train journey from Ludhiana to Mumbai. He works as a Locomotive Fitter for the East African Railway and Harbour Company in Mombassa.

Other voices start to appear and they too tell their stories.

Mum and dad came to England, London in the 1970's.
Before that they both lived in India.

My grandfather – Bant Singh is said to have taken his wife Sham Kaur, his two brothers and three sisters to Africa in the 1930's to work.

Bant Singh used to work as a Locomotive Fitter for the East African Railway and Harbour Company in Mombassa. My uncle Kuldip Singh Sopal was born in Mombassa on the 9th of September 1943. My dad however was born in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania 12th September 1948. Not sure why Tanzania but maybe they all moved to Tanzania.

Then, they all decided to move back to India in 1964.
The journey took 14 days by steam boat.

This included a three-day and three-night journey by train from Mumbai (Bombay at the time) to Ludhiana, Punjab. My dad was 18 at the time and my aunt was born.

My Uncle, who is known as Tippi, stayed in India only ten months before he'd decided he had enough and would come to London in search of work. England was calling people over at the time and there was work a plenty.

He came back in 1969 to marry my aunt Sunita Sopa and she moved to the UK 9 months later from a very small village in Sabadhi.

My dad followed suit ten years later. He had, in that time fallen in love with my mum and had asked for hand in marriage.

The proposal was rejected by my mum's dad Mr Rallah Singh Soi, an Architect, on the grounds that my dad was a waste of space; he had no job long hair. In 1974 my dad moved to join the British Airways Team, in London as a Store Keeper for the Catering Department. They asked him to cut his hair. He continued to work hard, still holding the torch for my mum. In 1976 he went back to India. My nanji had passed away and my naniji – mums mum Preetham Kaur agreed to their marriage. They married in April 21st 1976 Mum joined dad in London Hounslow the December. My mum had a BA in Art and after her father passed away she gained a Masters in Politics. However when she came to the UK, she did a typical/secretarial course but ended up working as a dress maker.

Mum and dad then moved Gillingham where they set up home. They bought their first house in 1978 for just Eight Thousand pounds!!!!

My mother's Father, Evan Lewis, was born in Johannesburg in 1913. He worked as a Gentlemen's outfitter in the family business in Pretoria.

My mother's mother, Margaret (Peggy) Vaux Briggs, was born in London (?) and grew up in Hampshire. She had four sisters: Joan, Tansy, Barbara and Jenny.

She met my Grandfather in London, where he had moved briefly for the purposes of work. They returned to South Africa to start a family.

The two actors reach a point where they have met in the same position on the stage – preferably downstage centre. Then a recording of their voices takes over the retelling of their stories They lip-synch for a few sentences then they let their stories go. They listen to the cacophony of all the stories of the world and disappear into the background.

2. Crossing the Channel.

Tim: Yesterday evening she was in a B&B in Dover. This morning at 1am she got the all clear. She packs her swim-suit, goggles, regulation swim cap and two light sticks.

She's seven hours in. No one's allowed to tell her that she's half way there. In just over four hours the tide will turn. If she's still swimming, she'll be pulled down the English Channel out away from the shore. That would mean another four hours.

Fewer people have swum the English Channel than have climbed Everest.

To see her walking down the street you wouldn't give her a second glance. If you did, you'd see a quiet, plain woman. Nothing remarkable. Not tall or athletic. If you'd told her teenage self that one day she'd swim the English Channel she'd have thought the idea ridiculous. But it's not about being fast and smooth and beautiful, swimming the Channel is about being single-minded, self-contained, driven and stubborn: It's about facing head-on every mental weakness that you have.

She's cold, her arms and legs hurt. She looks at her hands they're white, swollen and numb.

She thinks about giving up.

Channel swimmers talk about getting into 'a parallel zone', to shut out the pain. Some rewalk the streets of their hometown, some go through their book collection alphabetically.

She begins to tell herself the story of her life.

Balvinder: This morning he was in a detention centre by Heathrow. He's now half an hour into a ten-hour flight.

From the outside you might be mistaken for thinking it's a normal commercial flight, but if you looked closely enough at him you'd notice his weathered skin, dandruff caking the collars, and the whiff of unwashed socks and then some of the passenger are in their pajamas – they didn't get the opportunity to prepare, and there's a dozen guards. The soft chinking of handcuffs that can sometimes be heard amid the roar of the jet engines.

A T.V. screen on the back of the chair in front of him, charts the 5,000 mile journey home. Altitude 28,000 feet. Speed 500 mph. Remaining journey time 9 hours 30 mins. It took him two years to travel that distance.

What will he tell his family? He feels that he's failed them. He's not even sure his mother is alive.

It's his first time on a plane – if you had told him when he was a teenager that he would fly on an airplane he would never had believed it. He peers out of the plane window, the Channel is thousands of feet below.

It's like a dream, like being in a dream dreamt by another. He thinks 'how does a fisherman's son end up being a deportee?' 'How does a fisherman's son end up on a plane?' He begins to piece together the story of his life.

3. Home.

The Son: His father's boat.

The Daughter: Piled into her dad's white van

The deck is made out of plywood strips torn from discarded tea-crates, the hood awning at the rear of the boat, of thatch and bent spokes of bamboo.

They'd left early, to catch the high tide.

The Daughter: They arrive home after a family outing, her grandmother's birthday maybe, she can't remember. She remembers cake though, when she visited her grandmother there was always cake.

She had sat on her Mum's knee

The Son: They didn't tell his mother, she'll be furious.

The Daughter: She can still smell her Mum's perfume. It must be on her clothes.

The Son: He should be at school. He's happy here.

His father stands with one hand on the tiller, wearing only a cloth around his waist,

The Daughter: There's nothing she enjoys more than watching her Mum put on her make up, perfume and brush her hair.

The Son: the other hand shading his eyes as they head down the main river into the sun.

The Daughter: They spill out onto the path and bask in the last of the sun. She heads to the beach. 'Mum' she says 'watch me'. Her Mum props herself up on sea wall smoking a cigarette, and looks at her but not at her, more like through her. Her Mum had been quiet most of the day.

The Son: Hours pass. They turn off into another river, and then another, through creeks and inlets, deeper and deeper into the forest.

The Daughter: She sees the spray of the waves. White sea foam. All she we wants to do is to run and catch it as it recedes.

She takes off her shoes and socks, rolls up her trousers – and hurtles towards them. The tide's out...

The Son: 'The goddess Ganga's decent from the heavens would have split the earth had Lord Shiva not tamed her torrent by tying it to his ash-smearred locks'

The Father V/O: /The river is a heavenly braid, an immense rope of water, unfurling through a wide and thirsty plain...

The Son: There is a point at which the braid comes undone, where the Lord's matted hair is washed apart into a vast, knotted tangle. Once past that point the river throws off it's bindings and separates into thousands of tangled strands. It is a sight to behold, thousands of small islands hidden and revealed by the tides.

The Daughter: there are holes in the sand. She stands in one of the holes and looks down. The water is warm but the day itself is getting cold. Grey skies loom in the distance.

The Son: The islands are the trailing threads of the country's fabric, the ragged hem of her dress.'

His father knows where to go.

The fishing was good. The weather and water calm. He learnt to prep the nets, haul in the crabs and the fish.

In the hold at the front of the boat, the catch now flops around on mangrove branches and sea grass.

The Daughter: There are small creatures flitting about in the puddle. And she is mesmerised. There are tiny, tiny crabs. She just keeps looking. Waiting to see if one will crawl out of the water and onto the sand.

Her aunt shouts, 'come back', 'come back!' She looks up and they're beckoning her to come back.

The Son: The day's work is long, but there's just the two of them and the hum of the forest, it teems with life. The lapping of the waves broken only by the flick of a dolphin's fin.

The Daughter: As she turns round to look at the sea a wave comes crashing down, up the back of her thighs. Cold spray. It feels exciting. She looks to her mum to see if she saw.

The Son: The sun begins to set. It's too late to return they'd struggle against the retreating tide.

The Daughter: She's soaked from her thighs down. And the wave recedes she feels the sand beneath her feet disappear.

The Son: They take shelter in a small creek lined with mangrove trees, his father drops the anchor and draws in the oars. It's not the first time his father has taken shelter over night, but this is *his* first time. Stories of tigers spin around in his head:

The Daughter: She loses her balance and falls bum first into the puddle

The Son: A school friend had lost her father to a tiger. It had stalked her father, brother and herself when they had been out here catching crabs. The tiger had launched itself onto the boat, it clasped her father in its mouth, and dragged him off into the water. The last things she saw of her was the tiger landing on the bank of the island and disappearing off into the jungle with him in its jaws.

The Daughter: Her aunt's laughing and clapping and she rushes down to her before another wave comes. It crashes into both of them and her aunt tumbles down with her. They lay there holding each other, giggling with delight. She looks to her mum to see if she's seen

The Son: By the light of candle, they eat, the forest it alive with noise, then they settle down under the awning. His father lies close to him, he can feel his breathing.

The Daughter: but she's headed back up to the house.

The Son: He wishes his fretful heart would quieten.

The Daughter: She strips off to her knickers...

The Son: His father sleeps deeply and *he* breathes with him – in – out – letting sleep inch its way in, and the tigers in his head disappear.

The Daughter: And she dives into the sea.

4. The Loss

The Son: He's hungry. In the silence they observe the concrete ruins by the water's edge – a village – their home – marked out by depressions in the sand, grooves filling with water as the tide comes in.

Hundreds of thousands of red bricks are strewn along the shore. In front, a fence of beaten bamboo sticks. Sand bags, open, tossed about.

The Daughter: She's called to the headmistresses' office. She's told to go home immediately. She's not told why.

She thinks, 'Something awful has happened.'

The deputy headmistress drives her home, and on the way she sees a dead seagull in the road. As soon as she sees that she knows. 'Mum's dead,' she thinks.

The Son: He remembers when the first storms had come, they'd breached the bank. He watched his father rebuild it with the others.

The Daughter: Her aunt is in the hallway with a neighbour. She says, 'go and see your father, he's in the kitchen'

The Son: But three years later the storms came again. This time they tore away the bank and inundated some of the island.

The Daughter: In she goes and her Dad is there. He stands by the window, looking out - workers have begun building the new sea wall.

The Son: The government came and they rebuilt the bank out of brick and concrete and moved the village inland. He remembers his father grumbling about corruption and poor workmanship.

The Daughter: Her dad tells her, she tries to scream, but he puts his hand over her mouth. She gets the message.

The Son: His mother clasps his hand and they wend their way over the upturned, cascading bricks - they stretch far below them – it's like a war zone.

The Son: They reach the water's edge, there are stumps of dead palms marooned in the silt. His mother stands looks out across the wide river scanning the horizon.

The Daughter: Her aunt comes in and says, 'how about we head into town and head to the fair?'

The Son: It's been a week since they last saw his father. He'd left early to reach the southern most tips of the forest. There are no more fish here. The trawlers have taken everything.

The Daughter: She looks at her and thinks 'How can you say that?'

The Son: He'd stayed out overnight. That's when the cyclone came.

He could have been with his father. His mother had made him to stay.

The Daughter: Here I am, my world has just fallen apart - why would I want to go to the fair? How could that possibly make any difference?'

The Son: Their village is being moved. Their paddy fields are dead, filled with salt. They say nothing will grow here for years.

Tomorrow on the early tide they'll leave, him, his mother and the rest of the village. They'll head few kilometres up the river, further inland to another island, it will be safer but they'll have no land of their own to farm.

His mother drops her gaze and looks to him.

The Daughter: She's silent. She looks past her dad to the sea.

The Son: He thinks his father is dead.

The Daughter: There's a high tide. Images of her mum in the water fill her head. She flinches and turns away from the view.

The Son: *He's* the head of the family now. He gently tugs at his mother's hand, and walks her back up over the brick and back up to their shelter.

5. The Storm/ The Sundari Tree

The Daughter: She's sitting in the armchair, in the living room on the second floor. She wants a cup of tea but the electricity's off.

The Son: He's in his old headmaster's office. He feels like a child again, but this time there's tea, brought to him by the headmaster's secretary.

The Daughter: It's quiet. She moved the living room here when her dad had died. It used to be her parent's room. You get a view of the sea.

The Son: Last time he was here he'd been given a whack on both of his palms with a stick

The Daughter: She'd stayed, she never thought about leaving, she wasn't that kind.

The Son: - he'd punched a boy.

The Daughter: Most of her school friends had left. Left for work. She didn't blame them there's not much to do here. But where would *she* have gone? Ashford? London? It was too expensive. She could barely afford to live here.

The boy lived on the only brick road on the island, he had taunted him for living on the bank, for being poor.

The Daughter: They'd built the sea wall when she was a teenager, after the first of the storms, just before her mum's death. It took months to build, there was a lot of fuss. Angry neighbours complained to the council that 'it chopped up their view of the sky', lowered the value of their properties. There had been petitions, council meetings.

The Son: Books, files, papers fill the room, piled everywhere, they probably date back to when the headmaster had come. He had come as young trainee student from the city, for a few months. He had stayed.

The Daughter: She came up here last night to wait for the storm. She couldn't help herself.

The Son: A girl had been sent to fetch him. He'd been refilling stock in his quayside shack: cigarettes, cough sweets, eggs, pan.

The Daughter: It's the second this winter. The last had beaten all the records a 'weather bomb'. They didn't expect this one to be any worse.

The Son: Children play in the grounds outside.

The Daughter: It had come in the night: first the sound of the wind rattling the windows, roaring through the chimneys, and whistling through the eaves, and then came the waves.

The Son: The headmaster looks to him and says abruptly 'it's about time he left, 'he should head to the city'. He says he'd 'educated him to leave'. 'There are more opportunities in Kolkata. There's nothing for him here'. 'The river's slowly eating away at the island.' 'Ten years ago my house was a kilometre away from the river but now it is on the river side'.

The Daughter: This time they breached the wall in a few places and the road had begun to fill with water, like a soup dish.

He'd wanted to be a fisherman like his father.

The Daughter: Then, in the early hours, a wall of water came clean over the top, pounding down, carrying with it small boats, garden fences, trees, armchairs and a shed.

The Son: He looks at the old man and knows he means well.

The Daughter: She was already on the second floor so she was safe, her neighbours had to move up onto the rooftops of their bungalows where they now sat shivering in their nightclothes.

The Son: He looks much the same as the first time he had met him. The headmaster had welcomed them to the island, he'd ushered them off the boat and into the school buildings. He had housed and fed the whole village until they rebuilt their homes again.

The Daughter: Others sat on window sills, their legs dangling in freezing water, helplessly as wave after wave rolled in from the sea and flood-water overwhelmed their homes.

His mother and the headmaster had become friends. He thought they might marry but now he knows it had just been a fondness. They were too different.

He remembers the pleasure on the headmaster's face when his mother had asked him to join the family by kinship tie, in honour of this generosity.

There had been a feast, his family and the headmaster's friends had attended. They exchanged new sets of clothes and he had summoned the sun and the moon as witnesses.

He had sang the lament of Dukai from the story of Bon Bibbi.

The Daughter: An old woman died in her bed, she'd been oblivious to the cries of her neighbours.

The Son: The headmaster tells him he can give him some money, enough to get him to the city and see him through a few weeks.

He can't go, he must stay here with his mother. The headmaster says 'he will keep an eye on her'.

The Daughter: It's quiet now, nearly dawn.

The Son: He leads him outside, stopping just short of a tree in the grounds of the school... the children stop playing and gleefully run up to join them. It's a Sundari tree. 'Look' he says. He looks, and he knows. The tree is dying from the top down. It's the same all over the islands it had started a few years back. Salt is seeping up into the land. The seas are rising.

The Daughter: The wind has ceased howling, the waves have gone.

The Son: He looks at the children around him. Most of their parents had gone, to Canning or Kolkata. There was little work here. Salt in the river water had killed their fish.

The Daughter: All that's left is the flood-water...

The Son: Swathes of land had had disappeared into the sea.

The Daughter: ...bright in the reflection of a full moon.

The Son: Only children and the very old are left. The old look after the young.

6. The Managed Retreat/The City

The Son: Evening. A simple room in the city. A ceiling fan whirs and through the window he can hear gridlocked traffic and the monsoon rains teeming down – the monsoon had come a few days ago, it had come late and its rains are poor.

The walls are damp, there are mattresses on the floor, a strip light, a broken red plastic chair by a sink. He has his mobile in his hand.

He's been here a year. It's hard finding good work. The city's full to the brim with new arrivals, many from his home, thousands from the villages fleeing droughts and tens of thousands of migrants from Bangladesh escaping the floods.

They are too many people. Old animosities have flared up. There are water shortages and power cuts. There are outbreaks of violence. Not only here but also at the borders.

He'd secured temporary work at a construction factory, shoveling sand into trucks. When there was no work shoveling sand, he carries fish.

Each morning trawlers arrive with the previous night's catch and dock bedside canning factories on the river. His job is to trudge through the riverside silt carrying crates of fish from the boats to the waiting factories.

He'd wanted to be a fisherman.

It's hard and unreliable. Sometimes he works for a month, and then he spends the next month without work. First sand, then fish, then sand again. This is how his life goes. He's going in round circles and getting tired.

He earns just enough to share this rented room with several others, but never enough to send much money back.

The hardest part of the day is the evening. He wants to go home.

He's speaks to his mother.

She's very ill. She needs medication. He promises he will earn more money.

The Daughter: The town hall. It's busy. She struggles to find a seat. There's a few at the back. As she's about to sit she notices a painting, it catches her eye, it's an old painting, showing dozens of wooden boats full of people arriving into the town's harbour.

They look tired, grey and drawn. They clamber onto the quayside and are welcomed by the town's dignitaries, Florence Nightingale-like nurses and the townspeople. A mother and her two children offer food. She reads an inscription: 'commissioned by the refugee committee honouring the town's Mayor and the community, who offered shelter to Belgian refugees fleeing the destruction of their homeland at the beginning of the First World War.'

The head of the council calls for quiet and the meeting begins.

'We're moving people out of danger zones'. The sea's risen and is still rising. They reckon it will be to a metre higher by the end of the century.

They talk about the history of the town's sea defense, 'it dates back 100 years... hundreds of years of experience to drawn upon', environmental officials talk of 'managing a retreat' – demolishing the walls and letting nature take over.

'There's no point 'holding the line' throwing money at it. It's a hard decision but decisions like these have been taken for the last two decades up and down the country... it's time to let the town go. We can't hold back the sea.

People start to heckle the officials. They try to regain order.

'It's not feasible or affordable to protect every household now or in the long term, especially given sea level rise.'

Then things really kick off.

'The government's dumping these costs on individual households and vulnerable communities'.

'Last time the storms came, people were evacuated from their homes and given a biscuit in the church hall'.

'Compensation is a matter of social justice'.

'Money's thrown at protecting nuclear power stations. Londoners sleep easy protected by the new Thames Barrier and all we get is a biscuit'.

The town's MP chips in:

'The government is not legally bound to compensate for property lost or damaged due to coastal change'.

And the arguing carries on. She thinks this the whole thing's pointless and leaves.

She walks through the town. It's been battered already – first, cheap flights took the holidaymakers, then out-of-town shops took customers away:

Most of the shops had closed. There's no baker's, grocer's or butcher's, even the fried chicken takeaways have gone. Letters have fallen off business names – the N in bingo, the P in Primark – as if the effort of clinging on was too much. The missing T-A-I-L off of Cocktail Lounge makes her laugh.

Last week she saw a group of teenage students walking around with clipboards, marking off closed shops as part of their geography coursework.

And now this.

She arrives at her house and takes a good look. It's worth nothing now. It hadn't been worth much before. What was she going to do?

7. The Raft/The Letter

The Daughter: She's sitting on the kitchen floor. 70's lino – a geometric pattern of greens, yellows and browns – she played hopscotch on it as a child. Around her a water-mark on the walls two meters above her head. She never got round to redecorating.

The Son: It's dark. He's far out to sea. He can't see his neighbours but he can hear them scream. It's partly his fault as he's on top of them. His limbs dig into theirs. They would like him to move, and so would he. But he can't – several people are on top of him, and there's possibly another layer above them.

The Daughter: The council offered her £4,000 in removal costs, a council flat or a 'planning advantage'- as if she's lucky enough to have the money to build a new home!

The Son: Dozens are crammed into this wooden dinghy. If anyone tries to shift, a trafficker kicks them back into place. They don't want the crammed boat to overbalance, and then sink.

The Daughter: She has a bin liner in her hand. A large cardboard box sits in front of her. It's full to the brim. She's sorting through the house. Throwing things out.

The Son: It is perhaps 11 o'clock at night, but he can't be certain. He's losing track of time, and of place. Earlier in the evening, on a beach in Turkey, he'd been herded into this little boat. No one knows where they are, the boat bobs along in the dark, lurching in the waves.

The Daughter: When she'd moved the living room into her parent's bedroom she'd gathered their things together and put them in the loft. She didn't look at anything.

The Son: He paid \$9,000 for the journey from Kolkata to here – the headmaster had wired him the money – he's taken out a loan. He'll pay it back when he gets work in England. He has an uncle there.

The Daughter: Now she begins to sort. Well more like throw everything out.

The Son: A colleague at the canning factory had given him a contact.

The Daughter: Old gas, telephone, internet, TV bills.

The Son They'd met in a café.

The Daughter: Some old passport photographs.

The Son He'd handed over the cash.

The Daughter: Solicitor's letters. Receipts. Deeds

The Son The contact arranged everything by text.

The Daughter: And a letter, written in her mum's hand.

She reads.

'I was pregnant when I was fifteen and was made to have a termination. I know you will be angry that I didn't tell you this before but I was too ashamed'.

The Son: He traveled by train to the border,

The Daughter: 'I came out of that a shell'.

'But then I met you and I was determined to be with you'.

The Son: from there he was packed into a lorry.

The Daughter: And then we had our baby.

The Son: He'd been hidden in the middle of crates of tomatoes

The Daughter: She remembers the day she'd been sent back from school by the headmistress.

The Son: Once across the border he was passed from one trafficker to another - through Pakistan and Iran to the border with Turkey.

The Daughter: 'She was my baby, she was inside me and no one was going to hurt her. She was mine. But when she was born, I felt nothing.

The Son: He'd crossed a mountain range by foot. It had been so cold he thought he would never be warm again.

The Daughter: I thought something would come – but it never did.

The Son: An hour passes. They reach a second boat, a bigger one, and then a third, bigger still.

The Daughter: I see others cuddling children with love in their eyes and I can't. My eyes are like a shark's – when our daughter comes up to me, I look straight through her. When our daughter jumps into my arms I feel nothing.

The Son: At each new vessel, the traffickers toss them over the side like they're bags of potatoes.

The Daughter: I dropped some books off at the library yesterday, I left our daughter there, and I don't remember anything about it. I remember coming round at home and thinking 'oh no.'

The Son: Now he has a bit more space, but he's soaked.

The Daughter: I cannot forgive myself.'

The Son: As a child he had imagined a life on the sea but not this.

The Daughter: She puts the letter in the bin liner and carries on.

9. LSDA/The Fence

The Daughter: She's on a train, heading home. It's almost empty save for a few policemen searching through the carriages – they even check the toilets. She thinks they're looking for migrants.

She saw one once. A young guy in his teens. Weathered skin. Leather jacket. Thick hair and dandruff caked on his collar. He'd approached her in the street, spoke a few words of English - asked for the station. She'd pointed him in the right direction. She was pretty certain he'd get picked up on the way. The whole place is full of police.

The train shoots into the tunnel cutting through the white cliffs. She has a notebook in her hand.

The Son: Night. He's crouched in the darkness, 500 metres from the border. There's a group of them and they whisper about how they should cross.

The Daughter: She's just come from a social club in Dover. She flicks through her notes. She can't quite believe it.

The Son: A few miles back, they'd switched off their phones. Then they'd picked up sticks to protect them from local gangsters.

The Daughter: She hadn't done anything all day, she'd been so nervous.

She'd stood outside on the dark quiet street, looking through the window into the club – all the people seemed to know each other, that's what she thought, she'd had to summon all of her courage to go inside.

The Son: They organize themselves into pairs: going two-by-two means they might not trigger the heat sensors on the border. One of them absent-mindedly lights a cigarette.

The Son: "Put it out!" another of the men says. Some were jailed by the police after a previous attempt.

The Daughter: She thought they would stare at her, that she would feel out of place.

They all looked surprisingly normal. Some were fit but some were quite tubby, plain. Some were in their forties.

If you saw them on the street you probably wouldn't even give them a second look.

The Son: The last border had been simple.

The Daughter: She sat there with £4,000 in an envelope in her trouser pocket. She'd never had so much money on her in her life.

The Son: But this is difficult.

The Daughter: The president had been a rather bossy and officious woman in her fifties called Jean. She welcomed them, outlined the aims of the organisation recommended membership, and then she talked through the swim.

'Swimming this distance is no easy feat - only one in five succeeds'.

The Son: And it's not going to get any easier.

The Daughter: 'Fewer people have swum the Channel than have climbed Mount Everest'

The Son: There are rumours that borders are being strengthened across Europe.

The Daughter: 'The sea temperature will range from 10 to 20 degrees centigrade – you'll need to swim in temperatures not above 14 degrees, for short periods of time, slowly building up your resilience'.

The Son: At home there had been no border.

The Daughter: 'The swimming distance is actually about 40 miles because of the push and pull of the tides'.

'The fastest record is currently at six hours 57 minutes, and the slowest 28 hours and 44 minutes'.

'Most swimmers are violently sick after swallowing lots of sea water and inhaling all of the fumes from the passing boats'.

The Son: No fence at least.

The Daughter: 'After just a few hours, every joint will start to ache and your body will start to swell with the absorption of all of the water.

The mental strength required for the swim is the hardest thing of all.

She went through the rules:

'No swimming aids'.

'Costume must NOT be of a material offering thermal protection or buoyancy'.

The Son: He'd stood on the bank with his father, looking across the river, to another island, it was identical to his.

The Daughter: 'No physical contact, with any person.'

'On completion you must clear the water's edge unassisted'

The Son: There was nothing to distinguish them apart.

The Daughter: The meeting ended, the others swimmers started to circulate and chat. One looked as if they were about to approach her but she darted over to the secretary who was seated behind a trestle table – there were badges, tea towels, mugs, swimming caps and membership forms.

The Son: 'That's another country' he father had said.

The Daughter: She completed a form and then took out the £4,000, popped it onto the table and asked to reserve a boat and a pilot for next year.

The Son: When the first storm had hit, they had come with food, water, and materials for building shelters, not their own government. They'd crossed by boat unhindered.

The Daughter: The secretary was surprised - he explained that she could do it all online.

She insisted on paying then.

The Son: They were from different countries but it had been the most natural thing to do.

The Daughter: She thinks about the swim - she wonders if she's done the right thing – maybe she's having an early mid-life crisis. She puts the notebook back in her bag.

The Son: They take a look at the fence in front of them,

The Daughter: The train pulls in. Before she would have walked through the town and headed to the shore. Now she heads to the outskirts.

Hers is a small flat in a modern block overlooking a retail park.

The Son: They rush forward in pairs and begin to climb.

9. The Thick Border/Acclimatisation

The Daughter: Spring. Nine a.m. She's in a greasy spoon by the harbour. There are people in t-shirts and shorts, she's in a puffer jacket with a hood and a blanket wrapped around her, she's nursing a cup of hot chocolate. She looks like she's escaped from a mental institute. There's a whole group of them.

This is it. Every Saturday and Sunday.

She's been in. Her first swim. A freezing twenty-minute lap around the harbour – then out and into the café.

She's been training all year. Inside. Nothing had prepared her for this. The sea's ten degrees. Her teeth are still chattering. The chocolate dribbles down her chin.

The Son: The dunes. He comes here every morning. The tide's receding.

When he looks at the sea here, it reminds him of the sea back home. He can't say it's the same and he can't say it's different. It's the sea. The sea is always the same; it's the surroundings that are different.

At home the water would fall away to reveal mangrove trees and their tangled roots. Stilt-like roots at the fore of the bank, lifting their parent plants above the water even at high tide.

Then further up the bank shorter, vertical roots, stick up from deep within the mud, when the tide drops, they breathe for the trees. He used to think he could almost hear them.

Here the tide reveals long sweeping shallow beaches of fine sand, there's no vegetation. The sand is free to be picked up by the wind.

He turns away looks back at the camp. His 'home' is nestled in the fringes of thousands of other shelters that have been erected here, close to the motorway and the harbour. In his periphery he can see queues holiday makers pour out of the ferries in cars, caravans and shoot up the motorway.

When he first came here couldn't believe a place like this existed, It's like a forgotten place. Everyone is dirty, cold and frustrated because [all they want to do is move on](#). But his life here has taken on a kind of 'routine'.

His 'home' is a square frame of pine nailed together and pinned with sections of plywood from tea chests, thin grey plastic, strapped down against the wind. He built the shelter himself. Two days' work. Not bad.

He's been here three months.

It's impossible to get onto to the lorries, checks are stringent.

He's made fifteen visits to the tunnel. His one successful breach of the fence saw him get on to a moving freight train, which was then stopped before he was ejected.

The police had put him in a van, driven him two hours out of the town and then just dumped him there. He'd had to make his own way home on foot in the dark.

He's stuck, isolated, knowing nothing of the news in his homeland. He's had no contact. What would he say? He wouldn't want his family to know that he's living in a place like this.

Some borders are thin. You barely notice them when you pass through. Some are thick; you can sense them miles before you get near.

The Daughter: She finishes. Walks out of the café and back onto the beach. She's got to do five laps today. Swim, café, swim, café, swim, café, swim, café, swim, café, home. It seems like an impossibility. The skies are blue but the sea is grey. Will she ever feel warm again?

The Son: He looks back to the Channel. Lit by the early morning sun the cliffs on the other side don't look far.

The Daughter: She stumbles down the shingle and launches herself back into the water.

The Son: He's started to think about swimming.

The Daughter: She's surprised. This time the water's not so bad.

8. The Crossing 2

Bal: Altitude 32,000 feet. Speed 600 mph. Remaining journey time 1 hours 20 mins.

The seatbelt sign pings and the plane lurches mid-air.

Up here the air flows like a horizontal snaking river. The river is a few miles wide and a few miles deep and thousands of miles long. Just like a fast-flowing river swirling against the riverbank, the edge of this jet stream snags on slower moving air. He's in the edge of this turbulent river.

He looks out the window, his country is thousands of feet below. A year ago he'd crossed it by train. It had taken three days.

He will never see his country in the same way as he did before he left.

He has seen things that they have not. How can he explain what he has seen? What should he tell and what should he not? He has seen too much. He will never be the same.

The Son: She treads water, waiting for it to pass.

She takes the opportunity to take on food and to have a pee.

The pee is warm between her legs. That's good. She can still feel. She musn't stay still for long – the cold will settle in.

The adjudicator on board asks her for her Mother's maiden name. She answers – correct - they have to check that she's not suffering from dizziness or confusion.

The boat passes and she continues. She crests high on the waves left in the wake of the boat. They raise her five meters up into the air and then back down again. It breaks the monotony of the swim. It's exhilarating.

V/O

10. The Encounter

11. Contact

12. The Weeks

13. Kinship Tie

The Son: A Hindu sage called Dokkhin Rai, who would meditate in the forest. Over time humans, coming into the forest to take wood and honey, interrupted these meditations. One day, in a fit of rage, Dokkhin Rai ate a human. To do this he used his powers to take on the form of a tiger. As these killings continued, he began to justify them as a 'tax' on the products humans took from his forest. He had a deep hatred towards mankind, as well as an insatiable desire for human flesh. With time he became a demon and master of all beings and spirits that live in the forest.

All trust between human beings and tigers was now shattered.

God saw what the land of the eighteen tides had become and didn't like it. He called upon Bon Bibi and her twin brother Shah Jangoli from the Holy Islamic city of Medina. He sent them to the tide country to make it fit for human habitation.

On their rival an incensed Dokkhin Tai and his hordes set upon the trespassers into his realm.

But the twin's powers were too much and the tiger demon and his spirits were overwhelmed.

Bon Bibi was merciful in victory and decided to split the tide country in half. One half would remain a wilderness, this was left to Dokkhin Rai and his hordes. The rest Bon Bibi claimed for herself, and under her rule it was made safe for human habitation.

Thus order had been brought to the land of the eighteen tides, with its two halves, wild and sown, being held in careful balance.

All was well until human greed disrupted the order of things.

On the edge of the tide country lived a greedy man called Dhona, who had put together a large fleet of seven ships in the hope of making his fortune in the jungle. They were all set to leave when he realised they were on crewmember short. The only person at hand was a young boy called Dukhey, a name meaning sorrowful, which was apt because he had long been cursed with misfortune, he had lost his father when he was young and now lives in great poverty with his elderly mother. With a great deal of persuasion she let him go, not before offering him some advice first: if he was ever to find himself in trouble he should call on Bon Bibi, she is the great protector of the poor and would rescue him.

The expedition set off and it soon became clear that Dhona was taking the sailors to an island they didn't know. An island that fell within Dokkhin Rai's territory. The demon king knew of their arrival and had set up a series of traps for them. When they headed into the forest they would see a hive bulging with honey, only for it to disappear as they approached and reappear further away. This went on for a while and frustrated the greedy Dhona. They decided to set up camp for the night and rest. In a dream Dokkhin Rai appeared to Dhona and proposed an agreement to satisfy each other's desires. Dokkhin Rai would give Dhona wealth beyond his wildest dreams by filling up all his boats with as much honey and wax as they could carry. He asked in return that Dhona give him the boy he's brought with him, Dukhey. It had been an age since he had satisfied his appetite for human beings. The greedy Dhona agreed and woke to find his boats already being laden with goods by the creatures of the forest, even the bees helped out. Soon the boats were full and Dhona was ready to set off, but he had to keep his part of the bargain. He told Dukhey to go into the forest to fetch some firewood. The boy obeyed, but returned to find the ships had gone. Standing alone on the riverbank his eye was caught by a flash of black and gold from the forest. A tiger was stalking him; Dokkhin Rai was in disguise and chasing down his prey. The demon pounced and let out an almighty roar that paralysed Dukhey's soul. Just as he was about to be eaten he recalled his mother's parting words and mustered the strength to call out "Bon Bibi".

Bon Bibi was far away but she arrived in an instant. Shah Jangoli took on the other demon and overwhelmed him once more. Bon Bibi revived the young Dukhey, nursed him back to health and sent him back to his mother with a boat full of honey and wax.

Thus Bon Bibi showed the law of the forest that greed would be punished. All humans must enter the forest with empty hands and an open heart.

14. Caught/The Loss 2

The Son: He's thirty miles outside of the town, he wonders whether he can leave the toilet yet. He went there to escape the police, but that was ten minutes ago.

The Daughter: The old library. She's holding some food.

The Son: He hadn't planned for this. He had hoped this was going to be the easy bit.

A group of policemen entered at the first station. They had stopped the train. They're looking for people like him. He'd ducked into the toilet just in time.

He must get to London and find his uncle. With police officers pacing the corridor outside, he might not get there.

He waits it out. He thinks that's all he needs to do: wait till they leave. He waits. He thinks.

He reasons with himself. They won't check everyone – just the people who look out of place. Eventually they'll get bored and leave.

The Daughter: He's gone.

The Son: Minutes pass. The train doesn't move. He thinks surely the police are in another carriage by now? He decides they must have left. It's been too long.

He thumbs the lock, takes a deep breath, opens the door, and leaves the toilet.

He re-enters the carriage. He looks up. There, blocking the aisle ahead of him, is a police officer.

He thinks about turning around, but that'll make him stand out. Whereas if he strides forward with purpose, he might get away with it. The police officer isn't checking everyone. And if you don't look too hard at his clothes, don't notice the dandruff caking his collar, or the whiff of unwashed socks, perhaps, just perhaps, he could be from here.

That's what he hopes and he puts his head down and marches down the aisle.

The police officer looks up. He nods at him.

The officer asks him his name.

The Daughter: She's hurt... and frightened for him.

15. The First Memories 2

The Daughter: It's summer. She's about eight. She's on the beach with her mum. It's crowded. She goes for a swim.

The Son: He's seven or eight. There's an air of excitement in the village. It's morning and they're waiting for the boats to return.

The Daughter: She loves to swim. Her mum calls her the mermaid because she says it's impossible to get her out of the water.

The Son: The day before there had been a special service in the village temple, followed by a parade to the jetty. He'd jumped up and down, playing tag with the other children on the bank. His father and the other fishermen put the final touches to their boats – they painted a red triangle on the tip of their bows for good luck.

The Daughter: She swims far out, further than she has ever gone before, she's hoping her mum hasn't seen. She looks out to the horizon and she can see France. The chalk cliffs are bright in the late

afternoon sun. They look so close.

The Son: Everyone clapped as a pole with a green flag – the village's fishing colors – was passed from the volunteers to the owners of the boats.

The Daughter: But when she turns and looks back at the beach from where she's swum, it looks far away.

She gets confused and starts to think that her beach is France. She thinks about swimming the other way.

The Son: They'd from England, after the first storms to help repair the boats. He remembers them well. He had asked if could touch the arm of one of them. He wanted to feel if their skin felt different.

The Daughter: Luckily she heads back to her beach.

The Son: The boats had set out at dusk on the high-tide.

The Daughter: But when she gets closer she hears voices in the crowds

The Son: They can hear calls from the men coming from down the river,

The Daughter: and she's convinced they're French.

The Son: They can barely see them because of a thick mist.

The Daughter: She's convinced she's swum to France.

The Son: The boats meet the jetty and the women gather around as the nets are brought out.

The Daughter: As she walks up the beach she recognises it, and there's her mum.

The Son: He helps his father heave his net out onto the bank. His mother begins sorting and cleaning the fish.

The Daughter: She launches herself into her arms.

16. The Process

The Son: The judge calls for the next case.

The Daughter: She's at the door of her new council flat.

The Son: He's never been detained before, he asks himself, 'what crime have I committed to be held like this?'

The Daughter: The police have just left.

The Son: His name and the details of the case are read out.

'Entered the territory illegally. Arrested whilst in transit.' he's asked if he acknowledges the charges?

The Daughter: They told her that a neighbour had reported seeing her on the beach with an illegal immigrant. She denies it.

The Son: Everything is quietly translated into his language. He nods.

The Daughter: They say that they'd picked up an illegal immigrant yesterday, whilst he was leaving the town on a train – he matched the description in the neighbour's report.

The Son: The Judge responds with 'while parts of his own country undoubtedly face challenges, he does not, if returned face 'serious harm'.

The Daughter: They ask her whether she gave him clothes, food, accomodation?

She says no.

The Son: His lawyer speaks. 'May I point out that my client left his own country due to significant environmental degradation.'

The Daughter: They say he was very well dressed for an immigrant.

The Son: He didn't know that he was the first to have crossed the channel alone. His case has attracted attention.

The Daughter: They ask her whether she realises that it's illegal to assist migrants in this country?

The Son: His lawyer's pushing for refugee status.

'The health of a society can be judged by how well it cares for the most vulnerable'.

The Daughter: She says yes she does.

The Son: 'Globally, disasters have affected millions of people. Most migrate internally, but many move abroad as their lives become impossible. This man's two year journey to earn money to support his family is indicative of this.'

The Daughter: They say she could face up to seven years imprisonment.

The Son: 'We should think about people fleeing climate-linked disasters in the same way we think about people fleeing persecution'.

The Daughter: She could lose her flat. They asked her if she understands this? She said yes.

The Son: The judge replies 'We can not open the flood gates to all those who may suffer hardship because of the impacts of climate change'.

'Environmental degradation could never create a pathway into the Refugee Convention.'

The Daughter: They warn her if she's caught helping a migrant again they *will* press charges.

The Son: He drifts off, all he can think about is the disappointment on his mother's . He's not even sure she is still alive. He hasn't called. He's too ashamed.

The Daughter: She should have stood up to them.

17. Their Parents

The Daughter: Her Mum's looking out to sea – there's a full moon. The tide is stronger. A spring tide. The moon's also at its closest point to the earth. A once every 28 day occurrence. The tide is stronger. A perigean tide.

Cool air gently pushes downwards on the oceans creating clear skies and a smooth breathless sea.

The Son: His father's looking out to sea. There's a full moon. A twice-monthly event. The tide is stronger. A spring tide.

The moon's at its closest point to the earth. A once every 28 day occurrence. The tide is stronger. A perigean tide.

The sea is unusually warm. Hot damp air rises rapidly from the sea meeting cold air above producing clouds and rain, and strong winds. Driven by the spin of the earth they twist round and round, shooting violently upwards rotating in a vortex a thousand metres across. Cold air rushes in below becoming warm, warm and moist and it shoots up, and so on, and so on.

The Daughter: Her Mum can just make out France on the horizon. Lights twinkle on it's coast. It looks so close. A hand, its wrist tattooed with her partner's name John, reaches to the floor clutching pebbles.

To hold a pebble in one's hand is to hold the whole history of the earth. Countless stories are packed tightly within it –tales of the birth - and explosive death - of stars and galaxies, of the upheaval of planetary formations, and the violent convulsions of the earth.

One pocketful and then another.

And then she steps into the water. It's 16 degrees, that's about as warm as it will get this year. Perfect conditions for Channel swimmers.

She walks into the dark water, that much of her, then that much, then that. Up to her navel, then her chest, shoulders, head and over. Stepping out and down, weighted to the sea bed.

The Son:

The tide should have been low when his father's fishing boat reached the island. Instead it was higher than he had ever seen it before. The wind no longer sounded like the wind but like a deep, ear splitting rumble, as if the earth itself had begun to move. The light was as dim as it might be at twilight, but it was morning. He moves deeper into the island, deep amongst the mangroves, that much further, then that, looking for somewhere high to perch. Then a noise.

Over the rumbling din of the gale he hears a sound like a cascading waterfall. He turns, a wall of water, hurtling towards him, its crest rears high above, dwarfing everything in sight. There's no time for terror or time to absorb the reality of the storm. He climbs up the nearest mangrove tree up and up. That much further and then that. He takes a deep breath, as deep as he can and then the dam brakes over his head.

The seven stages of drowning.

16. The Arrival.

Tim: She sees the shore in front of her. The official on the boat starts to shout and applaud. Her feet hit the rocks and she tries to gain a footing. She's so exhausted. She's been horizontal for 14 hours. Standing now seems impossible.

She must clear the water by a few meters.

She looks up. Her aunt is there - on the beach charging towards her. She shouts at her. 'Don't touch me!' 'You mustn't touch me!' She staggers up the beach.

She clears the water's edge. The adjudicator shouts 'You've done it' and she falls into her aunts arms.

She looks back to England the white cliffs are there. They look so close.

Bal: He's twenty minutes from landing. The plane has turned out to sea and circles back round towards Kolkata. It flies over his homeland. He'd never imagined he would see his homeland from the sky.

He can see what's left.

The islands of his childhood have gone.

His mother's island is still there Not long ago it would have been 30 miles up stream, now it teeters on a knife's edge: where land meets sea.

With his finger on the window he traces the inlets and rivers.

'The goddess Ganga's decent from the heavens would have split the earth had Lord Shiva not tamed her torrent by tying it to his ash-smearred locks'

The Father V/O: /The river is a heavenly braid, an immense rope of water, unfurling through a wide and thirsty plain...

Bal: There is a point at which the braid comes undone, where the Lord's matted hair is washed apart into a vast, knotted tangle. Once past that point the river throws off it's bindings and separates into thousands of tangled strands. It is a sight to behold, thousands of small islands hidden and revealed by the tides.

A fisherman's son on an airplane! He has changed faster than his own homeland.

The sound of an airplane landing.

17. Origins 2.

My Great Grandfather, Lewis Albert Moses, was born in Glamorgan, Wales, in 1881. He moved to South Africa for work and set up a Gentlemen's outfitter business in Pretoria.

My Great Grandmother, Mary Catherine (?) was born in Pembrokeshire, Wales in (?).

She moved to South Africa for purposes of (?).

They met at a Welsh Club in Pretoria in (?)

My other Great Grandfather, Ernest Briggs, married my Great Grandmother Olive Cripps in the UK.

Tim: Seventeen thousand years ago, on the north coast of what we now know as France, the sea level was 120 meters lower than it is today, there was no English Channel, my ancestors walked from there to here. Ten thousand years later as the last of the water is released from melting glaciers at the end of the last ice age, this promontory is sealed off from the rest of the world by the encroaching seas. It becomes an island.

Bal: Seventy thousand years ago as water was locked up in glaciers and sea levels sank, the mouth of the Red Sea between Africa and Arabia would only have been a few miles wide. Using primitive watercraft, a group of hunter-gatherers, perhaps just a few hundred strong, crossed barely without

getting their feet wet. Some 200,000 years later their six and a half billion descendants are spread across the Earth

Tim: At some point in the prehistoric mists of time, somewhere on 372,000 miles of the world's coastline, a brave fish crawls laboriously out of the water and onto dry uninhabited land, the first wave of an invasion that leads directly to dinosaurs, mammals, and to us.

17. Epilogue

Bangladeshi Prime Minister v/o: It is projected that by the middle of this millennium or a little later, 20 million people, by time the population has increased it will be more, will become displaced. Their areas will go under water or under salinity in such a way that living will become very difficult. We are asking all of our development partners that the natural right of the natural person to migrate should be allowed. We can help in the sense of giving them, some training, you know, making them fit for an existence in some other country, but they have to be allowed, we can't accommodate all these people, we're one of the densest countries in the world, what we are suggesting is much better, managed migration is much better.

Interviewer: Are there any sympathetic ears?

Is Britain sympathetic?

Bangladeshi Prime Minister v/o: Not exactly.

He sits picks up a copy of a magazine lying on the table. The cover cartoon shows something like a young Kate Winslet rising out of a boat of migrants. "Un Titanic par semaine," it says. "A Titanic every week." He doesn't get it. He doesn't know who she is. Who on earth is that woman? But he smiles, regardless. It's about people like him.

She remembers about migrants swimming the channel. Around the same time as her mother two bodies were found. She remmebres reading about if in a newspaper.

Thick border thin end.

On the concourse, he looks up at the departures board. It reads like hieroglyphics.

"The sea was easy!" Hashem smiles, only half-joking. "It was direct to Italy. No changes, no police, no stations. No fingerprints."

swelling ranks of the unemployed in the city

The headmaster had sent him. He refuse to go until it became too bad.

I don't want my friends and family to see that I'm living in a place like this. They hoped I would have a better life

The weather today. Environment outside.

The Kinship tie headmaster.

Seagull colony on the top of the detention centre. Seagulls retreating into the interior.

The body and water, percentages of water salt etc.

The first passports

Father was a fisherman.

Surf wave as ship goes by.

Crawling onto the shore.

Look at he'd gone 12 rounds, badly sunburnt.

Peeing and it's warm.

She didn't ask the story of her origin.

The Mother v/o: Beneath her drifting body, lay deep scars on the seabed, remnants of an unimaginable discharge of water that broke through a land ridge that once connected England with France. 200,000 years ago, there had been a great lake, in a place now submerged by North sea, filled to its brim, an increase from glacial melt creates a tipping point and the lake crashed through the land ridge - releasing several million litres of water per second over several months.

It would have been spectacular.

A tumultuous crash of waves.

The Father:

Force 12. Cyclone. The air is filled with foam and spray; sea completely white visibility very seriously affected. Wind speed 64 knots and over. Sea state phenomenal. Wave height 20 metres or more.

Greater details in mangroves function – biodiversity

He goes home, on the ferry stories of how bad, planted mangrove,

She is no genealogist. But even with a little investigation, it is obvious that she has ancestors from several generations who have left, or fled, one country and settled in another. We are all the sum of yesterday's refugees.

contract, ruled by fear and old habits of thought that insist: 'there's not enough to go round'

Why do we believe that some people have the right to forbid others from moving from one country to another? 'Asylum seekers' is perhaps the wrong term. 'Staying alive' seekers might be better.

We are all the sum of yesterday's refugees.

The health of a society can be judged by how well it cares for its most vulnerable citizens.

All populations are historically transient. Humans are a migrant race full stop.

One day the human beings of planet Earth will look back at our era and think of us, those who claim to love freedom but who live in societies that legalize migrant detention and deportation, with the same puzzlement that we think of those who lived in societies that legalized slavery.

I saw barbed wire and police all around. The faces of the policemen seemed frozen to me, without expression.

Argument over the island between Bangladesh and india

They are too many of them trying to get in. When the first Pacific islands had disappeared there had been sympathy and international aid, but when the rest of the worlds droughts and floods had come, people only spoke of numbers. Those who have decided not to care will not be moved.

Ends both standing on chairs.