The play is set in mainly in Margate, summer 1999 to spring 2000

Cast

Hannah  aged 16, lives in Margate with her Nan, who she looks after; left school.

Hanna (Xhevahinja) aged 16, an ethnic Albanian asylum-seeker, arrived from Kosovo.

All other characters played by Hannah and Hanna

Joe  aged 22, her brother, a new policeman, lives on the floor above.

Nan  aged 75, she has brought up Hannah and Joe for the last seven years.

‘Bullfrog’ aged 18, Hannah’s bloke, unemployed.

Albin  aged 19, her brother, an engineering student from Kosovo.

Flora  aged 38, her mother, a recent widow, a doctor in Kosovo.
Act One

Scene One

(The two actresses each have five pictures that they show in turn. They stand side-by-side; talking directly to the audience. It is as though they cannot hear each other.)

Hannah
That’s Margate from my window

Hanna
That’s Pristina, from the window of my old house
Pristina is the capital city of Kosovo

Hannah
That’s me on the beach/
You can’t see me because it’s packed

Hanna
That’s me in a truck going from Kosovo to Dover
You can’t see me because I am hiding in the truck

Hannah
That’s the block of flats I live in with my Nan

Hanna
That’s the window of the room which I share with my mother and my brother in the Hotel Bellevue in Margate

Hannah
That’s my brother Joe/ He’s 22 and he’s already a policeman/
Ugly, ain’t he?

Hanna
This is my mother
She sits all day looking at the sea from our window

Hannah
And that’s my bloke, everyone calls him Bullfrog/
Well, Bull to his face

Hanna
And this is my brother Albin/
He walks around all the day with the other young Kosovan guys
They have nothing to do/
Handsome, isn’t he?

Hannah
My name is Hannah
I’m sixteen
I’ve lived in Margate all my life
Margate …
What a town/
I hate it!

Hanna
My name is Hanna
I’m sixteen
I’ve lived in Margate for three days
Margate …
What a town/
I love it!

Hannah  
Summer in Margate  
July was crap  
August is scorching hot

Hanna  
This is my new home  
I fear nothing

Hannah  
The beaches are full of bodies  
So are the hotels, four or five to a room

Hanna  
Only thing I fear is leaving Margate  
Going home

Hannah  
But it’s not like the old days  
The people on the beaches ain’t the same as the people in the hotels/

Hanna  
Three months of hiding in the mountains  
Three days in a lorry to England/  
It is so nice to sleep in a bed

Hannah  
Bullfrog said ‘It’s a bloody invasion  
Kosovo arrived here in the night’/  
That pretty much sums up the feeling locally

Hanna  
My family lost everything  
Except our freedom  
When I arrived in Dover  
I kissed the ground  
Free  
At last

Scene Two

(Hannah sets up karaoke machine, talking to the audience as she does so.)

Hannah  
Picture this/  
I’m down on the sea-front  
With Bull and all his mates  
Doing what I do best  
On a hot summer night

(Hannah is singing to a backing tape of ‘I Should be so Lucky’ by Kylie Minogue played on her karaoke machine with ‘HANNAH’ written on it in large capitals. All the style and gesture is precisely reproduced. Hannah ad-libs so the audience see that she is performing for an on-stage ‘audience’ of her friends and peers with whom she interacts either to insult or to flirt or to show off in response to their (unheard) taunts. We see Hanna moving toward and watching her performance, either on-stage or through the audience. We see Hannah spot Hanna. Hannah continues to sing, until, with the tape still playing and herself still moving to the music she speaks to Hanna.)
Hannah and Hanna

Hannah       Are you another one of them?

(Hanna blank.)

Yeah, thought you were somehow, something in the air/

(Hannah sniffs.)

What can it be?
It’s a sort of foreign smell – maybe it ain’t you
Maybe it’s just the scum that comes up with the tide

(She sings again, breaks off.)

Still standing there?
Where you from then?
Outer Mongolia?

(Hanna blank.)

Timbucbloodytoo

(Hannah switches off tape.)

I spy with my little eye someone beginning with ‘K’

(Hannah gets a laugh for this.)

(Hanna still blank.)

(Hanna looks down as if ashamed.)

Ain’t you got a tongue in your head?

(Hannah takes in her friends laughing at her.)

(Hanna silent.)

Well, come on then Kosovan Spice, say something or die.

(Hanna silent.)

(Hannah walks over to her and puts the microphone to Hanna’s mouth.)

OK, What’s your name then?

Hanna       Hanna, my name is Hanna

(To Bull and mates and audience.)

Hannah       That ain’t her real name/
They’re all bloody liars
Don’t you know that much?  
Yeah, it’s so funny/  
Oh you can all sod off

*(She exits with a clatter, taking her tape recorder with her and leaving her friends behind.)*

**Hanna**  
*(To the audience.)*  
My real name is Xhevahinja  
But no one can pronounce it here  
My middle name is Hanna  
So here in Margate my mother names me again Hanna/ because of all our sorrows  
And because it would help me to make friends in England/  
I didn’t mean to take her name

**Scene Three**

**Hannah**  
*(To the audience.)*  
Cliftonville is a mile up from Margate  
It’s all posh hotels and lawns  
Looking over the sea/  
There’s a bowling green there  
It’s where Bull and I always go  
When it’s hot and it’s dark  
But I just wasn’t in the mood/  
I was bloody furious  
It’s MY name and I am not sharing it with an asylum-seeker/  

*(As Bull.)*  
‘Bloody Kosovans  
Come over to Dover  
Nick yer house/ your car/ your girlfriend/  
Fill their trolleys to the brim  
And get a hundred pound a week/  
For what?  
To have a lovely seaside holiday – for a year!  
We should be so lucky  
That Kosovitch  
I’d tell her straight/  
Go back home  
’n’ give her a slap next time.’

*(As Hannah.)*  
That’s my boy/  
I’m the only Hannah round here aren’t I?

*(Hannah reacts as though Bull moves towards her, looking up at him.)*  
Come here Bull where would I be without you?

*(Squeals and exits.)*
Hannah and Hanna

Hanna
(To the audience.)
I go home and I am upset because the English don’t like me/
Mother is crying in our room
The sun is shining and she is crying/
My brother won’t stay in our room
He does not like her crying
He walks out on the street all the day
He walks in a gang to be safe
Kosovan gang/ English gang/ very bad/
I don’t like this English girl

(Pause.)
But I like how she sings/
I sing too
I know all the songs as well as her
All of us in Pristina knows English music
I like Britney Spears/ All Saints/ Westlife/ Steps

(She sings ‘Tragedy’ by Steps for a full minute, voice and gesture perfect, no accompaniment.)

Some people here are stupid
They don’t like us but they don’t know us/
But Joe the policeman who protects our hotel
He is smiling and he makes jokes
He makes us feel safe

Scene Four

(Hanna sets up the counter at Aldi’s supermarket.)

Hannah
Aldi’s/ it’s where I work on a Saturday and Thursday nights
Everyone goes there
It’s the cheapest shop in Margate
Last Thursday I’m standing behind the counter
There’s a massive queue
It’s one of our busiest nights
And guess who holding everyone up?

(To Hanna.)
Got an Aldi’s card?

Hanna
No

Hannah
Cashback?

Hanna
No

(She holds out a voucher.)

(Hannah peers at Hanna’s full basket.)

Hannah
You can only spend ten pounds with one of them you know
Can’t buy the whole shop
Hannah: I have vouchers for myself, my mother and my brother
   That’s thirty pounds

Hannah: Your mother and your brother here are they?

Hanna: No they are at home

Hannah: Where’s that then?

Hanna: Here, in Margate
   I live here you know

Hannah: I thought your home was in Kosovo
   Margate’s my home not yours
   You people just don’t seem to realize that
   However many times you’re told it
   Do you?

Hanna: I came here to buy food not listen again to you
   Please stop your talking

Hannah: One voucher buys ten pounds of shopping
   No change
   One person one voucher for one week
   You’ll have to put it back
   Or bring the rest of the family in
   Call them on your mobile

Hanna: I have not got a mobile

Hannah: You’ve all got mobiles

Hanna: I have no phone I have no money
   I take
   the bread, the butter, the jam, the coffee, the sugar, the apples, the oranges, the
   toothpaste the shampoo, the oil that’s £7 and 5 pence the washing powder, the
   banana, the coca cola. That’s £9 and 57p

Hanna: No change

Hanna: The baked beans

Hannah: £9 and 80p, get some matches and start a fire

Hanna: You have the money, why don’t you set fire to yourself

(Hannah and Hanna turn to the audience. They talk to the audience rather than each other.)

Hanna: She has no right to talk to me like that
Hannah: You’d think she owned the bloody place the way she carries on.

Hanna: A lady in the queue said at least I stood up for myself.

Hanna: Next time I won’t give her the chance.

Scene Five

(Hannah sings ‘Baby One More Time’ by Britney Spears with the karaoke player to the same crowd that she did ‘I should be so lucky’ for; she starts with the identical patter that she used before the first song.

Hanna, facing the audience, joins in and sings the same song until Hannah can stand it no longer.

The karaoke continues playing.)

Hannah: Shut up! I don’t want to sing with you, I don’t want to talk to you
(To Hanna.)
Or live in the same bloody town as you/
I don’t even want to breathe the same air as you people
So piss off and stop stalking me around
You freaky foreign person/
I don’t want to see you again/
Right?

(Hanna continues to stare out to the audience, away from Hannah.)

Don’t stand there pretending you’re a human
You’re Kosovan, that’s a foreign word, means scum.

(Hanna looks over at Hannah, turns and leaves. Hannah turns and speaks to her on-stage audience of friends.)

Well what are you all staring at?
No surrender
Like you said, ay, Bull?

(The karaoke machine is still playing. Hannah sits down and stares, then exits. Hanna speaks to the audience. During this speech, she ‘becomes’ her mother whenever she quotes her words.)

Hanna: I am in England and I’m crying/
I tell my mother what happened/
She holds me in her arms
And then she makes me sit down and she talks to me
She sits upright in her chair, like this/
It’s very hot so she’s fanning herself
‘The manager still hasn’t fixed the window’

(To the audience.)
She talks to me a bit like a doctor talking to a patient
That’s what she is in Pristina, a doctor/
This is what she says to me
In our language/ in Albanian/

(As her Mother.)
‘As you know, your father loved the English language
But most of all he loved the English people/
That was his life and his work/
When the Serbs sacked him
He only had one student left/
You/ his darling girl/

But there is one thing you must not forget/
Your father could talk all day about England
Westminster, Brighton Pier, FA Cup, Tony Blair

But he never came to England
He never left Kosovo!
Unlike you, he never saw the sea/
Only mountains/
You see what I’m saying, don’t you/
Kosovo was invaded and crushed for ten years/
He used to say ‘The *English* would never let this happen to *England!*’
He imagined the English to be so good,
So honourable, so courageous, so decent/
Well, of course/
There never was a people like that anywhere …
I don’t like the English who call us names
And if your father was alive and in Margate/
Neither would he’

*(As herself, to the audience.)*
It’s no use listening to my mother
She thinks in Kosovan/
What am I supposed to do?
Stay in all day?

*(Hanna exits.)*

*(Hannah enters.)*

**Hannah**
*I go home*
*(To the audience.)*
I’m churned up
Just who does she think she is?
I’d never been as hard as that before on anyone …
I had this sickly feeling in my gut/

*(Hannah acts out the following account and conversation with Nan. She has simple props – a bag and piles of books. She speaks the dialogue to Nan, the rest to the audience. When she speaks Nan’s half of the conversation, she ‘becomes’ Nan.)*

I stop off at the library and get Nan’s books
I live with Nan because me mum ain’t around
I pick up the washing from the laundrette
Almost forgot her paper
Climb eleven floors with the washing and the books
Cos the lift’s still ain’t fixed

Hello Nan
Course it’s me/ who else is it gonna be?

*(To audience.)*
Nan’s sitting in her chair
Curtains drawn as usual

The room smells of – I dunno –
But it smells
I give her her paper

(To Nan.) 'Nan you’ve got to start going out again

It’s beautiful outside
You look like a ghost’
Tell you the truth
I can’t stand being in the place with her
But Joe’s too busy and if I don’t do the necessaries
She’d fade away in her chair
Robbers/ drivers/ robbers/ ’n’ dogwalkers, refugees, prampushers
She’s afraid of them all

(As Nan.) ‘Hannah!
They’ve put my letter in the paper
The one about pensioners
The Margate Gazette is a good paper you know
They’ve put my letter near the top
By a picture of the Home Secretary
“Is he listening to Margate?” it says’

(As Hannah.) Yeah, lovely Nan
But don’t you think it’s more important that you go out?
She’s about to lecture me about why she lives indoors all the time
But instead
My brother Joe makes a visit
Looking very smart in his uniform/
As usual, he says

(As Joe.) ‘Don’t go up to Cliftonville tonight, Hannah, I’m telling you
There’ll be trouble up there and I don’t want you involved/
Right?’

(As Hannah.) Right you are, Joe, never trust me, do you?

(To the audience. ) Course I’ll be there
It’s Saturday night
Keep me head low from Joe/
He can smell smoke on me breath at fifty paces/
But in this town trouble’s a magnet
What else is there to look for in Margate?
It’s a year-round rumble for having to live in the place/
And now we can hit Kosovans
Stead of each other/
I wanna go there
So I’ll end up there
Joe or no Joe/
Magnetic, see?