



Consider...

Ashma and her three young children, a refugee camp in Europe

Ashma wakes very early her first morning in the refugee camp. It is already noisy and the canvas walls of the tent she shares with her three children provide no buffer to the noise of families all around them. The familiar sounds of families starting their day provide some comfort, after seven weeks of constant traveling and living in fear. At 23 years of age, Ashma is a widow and now the sole support to her young children. Out of desperation, she joined the thousands of others abandoning their wartorn country to seek safety and a better life for her children. Driven by her dream of a new life in Europe, she spent every cent and risked their very lives to board an overcrowded boat and cross the rough and freezing channel to a new life. She looks at the three sleeping children, Mohannad, 6 years old and already trying to be “the man” of the household, Sela, 3 years old, shy and cautious, and baby Ammar, at 14 months he has only every known war and hardship. She wonders if she has done the right thing. Things were bad – terrifying - at home, but now her children are separated from their grandparents, extended family and friends and have spent weeks of exhausted travel with no real end in sight. Her “dream” has landed them in an over-crowded, muddy refugee camp and her optimism about their chances of ever leaving is fading fast. For the hundredth time over the past weeks she tells herself, “You are the parent and these children are your greatest gift. So, we will make this a good day.” Ashma opens the door to her tent and prepares to meet her new neighbors.