

Kobaniî



A Fastaval scenario by Signe Løndahl Hertel

Colophon

Idea and text Signe Løndahl Hertel

Layout Signe Løndahl Hertel

Editing Mette Finderup og Ann Kristine Eriksen

Translation Signe Løndahl Hertel, Jacob Lind and Mikkel Tscherning

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Introduction

The town of Kobanî in northern Syria is attacked and besieged by the militant group Daesh. The Kurdish population in the town is under pressure and many have fled across the border to Turkey. The freedom fighters of the Kurdish militia YPG are fighting to keep the enemy at bay but the frontlines and the battles are reaching further into the heart of Kobanî.

The players are four young Kurdish women who have volunteered to fight for YPG. They grew up in Kobanî, but now their home has been transformed into a battlefield. While they fight to liberate the town, glimpses of the past emerge. Every building, street and square holds memories of their lives before the war. As the town is demolished and transformed by the fight so is the self-images of the characters.

The scenario takes place before and during the siege of the town Kobanî and runs over five acts as well as a prologue and an epilogue. The written scenes take place primarily in Kobanî and every place can contain memories, which the players or you will set through flashbacks. The memories are from before the war and they show the persons the characters were then in comparison to whom they are becoming in the shadow of war.

Kobanî is a drama about people in war. It focuses on the sacrifices made in the fight for survival and the humanity that is lost on the battlefield. The scenario is about the dreams of the future, the memories of the past and the present that risks it all.

The story

Kobanî is about four women in the Kurdish militia – Bijara, Avan, Kaia and Sera. Through the scenario you will follow the development of the characters from before the war until they liberate the town of Kobanî. The story runs over five acts including a prologue and an epilogue.

Prologue: Short text that you will read aloud.

Act I: Takes place on Mistanour Hill southeast of the town in 2010 where the families have gathered on the final evening of the Ramadan to watch the sun set over Kobanî. The act contains only this one scene, which takes place before the Arabian spring and before the Syrian civil war. It shows the characters lives before the war.

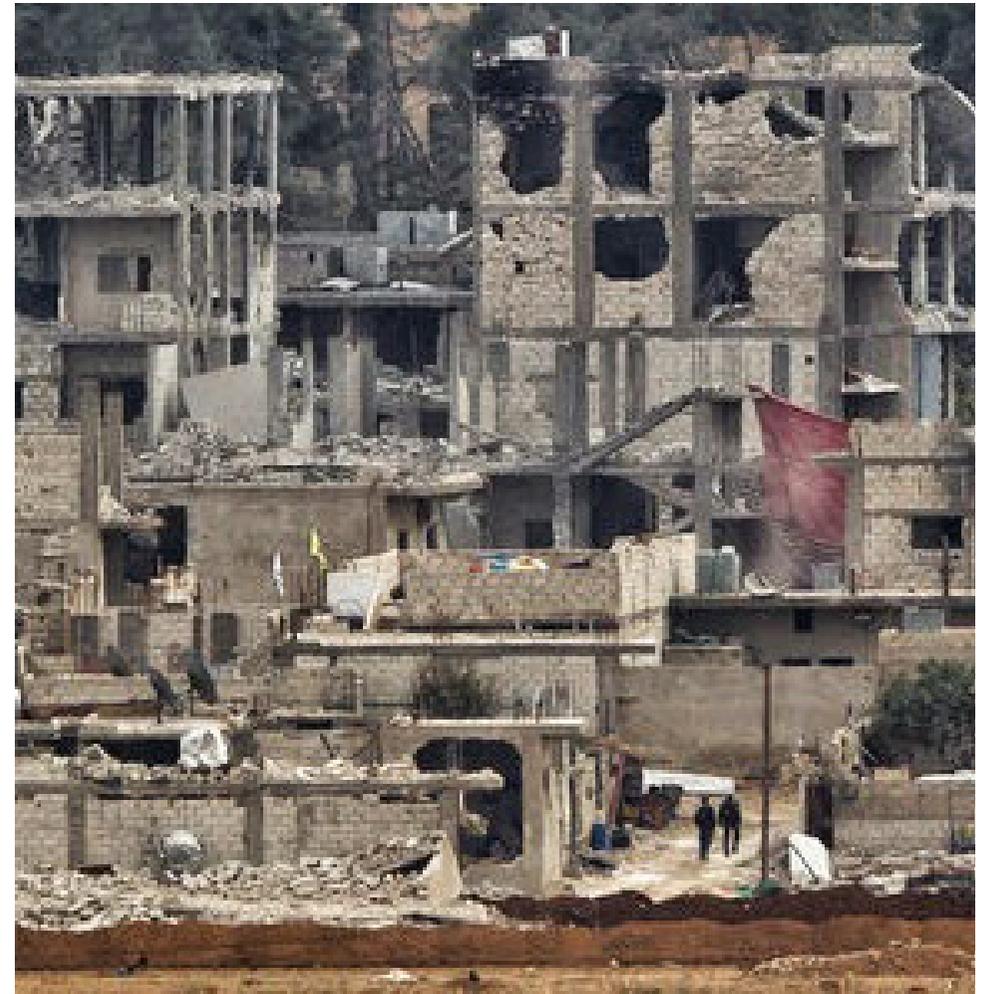
Act II: Spring 2014 where Daesh is moving towards Kobanî. The war becomes more present the lives of the characters and they volunteer to the Kurdish militia YPG.

Act III: The characters start their training as the enemy approaches the town. When it becomes clear that Daesh will reach Kobanî the characters must say goodbye to their parents and watch them flee.

Act IV: Daesh attacks Kobanî and YPG is pushed far into the town. The fighting proceeds from building to building and Kobanî is becoming weak.

Act V: The characters and YPG makes a desperate attempt to retake Mistanour Hill and control of the town. The act ends with the characters taking the hill and driving Daesh from Kobanî.

Epilogue: The scenario ends with a scene where the characters are sitting on Mistanour Hill as they were in the first act. They look out over Kobanî that now lies in ruins.



Characters

The players play four Kurdish women who were raised in the town of Kobanî and now volunteer in the Kurdish militia to defend the town against the militant group Daesh. The characters are all related, as they are the daughters of three sisters from Kobanî.

Bijara, 23 years old is the experienced one in the group. She is the older sister of Kaia and as the eldest in the group she has often been given responsibility for the others. After her marriage in Turkey fell apart she joined the Kurdish militia. Now she returns to Kobanî to defend the town.

Avan, 21 years old is the outsider of the group. She is an only child but has always spent time with her cousins. She doesn't always enjoy the things suggested by the others and doesn't mind going her own ways. She likes spending time at the workshop with her father and has great skills for everything relating to mechanics.

Kaia, 20 years old is sister to Bijara and has always dreamed of the life full of love and starting a family of her own. Her beauty and kindness make others think the best of her. She and Bijara were close growing up but after Bijara got married they haven't had much contact. Kaia only recently discovered that her sister joined the Kurdish militia.

Sera, 18 years old is the youngest in the group. She came to Kobanî after her father was killed in Iraq in the war against Saddam Hussein. She wasn't very old, and her cousins took her under their wings as Sera's mother was too burdened with grief to take proper care of her.



Supporting characters

Desmal, Sergul and Nemat are the characters' mothers and are sisters, they grew up in Kobanî. It is tradition for the families to gather at Mistanour Hill on the last evening of Ramadan to see the sun set. They keep to this tradition, even after they've had children.

Desmal and Daran – Parents to Bijara and Kaia

Their relationship is filled with love and respect, and they have created a safe and loving home for their children.

Sergul and Sahîn – Parents to Avan

Dad Sahîn has always been somewhat of a loner like his daughter. He has passed on his knowledge of mechanics to Avan and their relationship is good.

Nemat – Mother to Sera

After Sera's father was killed in the war against Saddam Hussein in 2003, Nemat brought her two children back to Kobanî. She has never fully recovered from the loss, and due to this hasn't been able to take care of Sera, as she should have. Sera's brother, Erdem has moved back to Iraq to study, which was hard on their mother even if she was proud of him.

Bayram – Bijara's husband

Bayram grew up in the town of Van in Turkey and after he and Bijara got married she moved there with him. He is a good man with respect for the people around him and his love for Bijara is sincere. His family is more traditional than that of Bijara's and this took a toll on their marriage. After she left him she joined the Kurdish militia.

Baz – Sera's best friend

Baz and Sera have been friends since Sera's family moved to Kobanî. Together they create stories and explore Kobanî. Baz gives her space to be who she is. Baz is going to volunteer for the town hospital when Daesh is getting closer.

Azî – Kaia's potential love

Azî is a young and attractive man who has caught Kaia's eye. He likes Kaia and treats her well. They are currently getting to know each other and trying to figure out if they could be the one for each other. He is going to volunteer for the militia shortly before Kaia, Avan and Sera does.



How to play the scenario

To play the scenario you need a room with a table and chairs to sit, the printed appendixes and a token for flashbacks with pictures of the town on each side. At Fastaval you will be handed the token as well as a map of Kobani in A3. The map and the token will lie on the table between you.

The scenario is played seated around the table and as a game master you will set and cut the written scenes and play supporting characters. The players will play their character and can also use descriptions to describe situations, places or their character's reaction.

The scenario consists of scenes and flashbacks. You set the scenes in chronological order from the scene catalogue, while the players and you set the flashbacks whenever you feel that it is right. The flashbacks are short and contain memories for one or several characters. They can either be played or be a description. You can set flashbacks whenever and several times during a scene.



Flashbacks

The flashbacks are not written beforehand. The players will create them during the scenario with your help. When the players or you set a flashback, you will use a simple technique.

During the entire scenario a token with two different sides is laying on the table. At Fastaval you will be handed out the token. The purple side of the token has a picture of Kobani in ruins and this side will be facing up during the scenes. It represents the present. When you or a player sets a flashback, you will flip the token so the green side with a picture of Kobani before the war is now facing up. The flashback can last from a few seconds to a couple of minutes. When the flashback ends the token is flipped again to symbolize that you have returned to the scene you just left.

The different types of flashbacks

A flashback can be played or be a description. If a player wishes to play a flashback with a supporting character they should tell you when flipping the token by saying; *"I would like to play the scene where my character tells X that..."* You will then play the supporting character.

When the flashback is a description there is no need for the player to frame the flashback. When the player flips the token, you know that this is a memory. The player can go straight to a description such as *"Sera was for the very first time standing in front of her Syrian family. She didn't know any of them and felt was feeling terrified and alone. Bijara was smiling at her with warmth..."*

It can be helpful to link the flashbacks to the location of the characters, in the current scene. As an example, the players could be about to aim a grenade at the mosque's minaret, because they suspect a sniper is sitting in it. The player of Bijara flips the token and says; *"I remember standing in the shadow of the mosque when Bayram kissed me for the first time. That moment I knew that I loved him."* Then the player flips the token back and the grenade explodes demolishing the tower.

The players can set flashbacks for their own character or each other's characters. The

flashbacks are preferably set by the players, but if they have a hard time setting them or for other reasons don't set flashbacks, you as a game master can set flashbacks for them. The player in question should still participate in creating the flashback. This can be done by flipping the token during a scene and asking the player; *"Doesn't Avan has a memory from this school?"* If you sense that the player needs more help to create the flashback you can give them more inspiration. You can also choose to involve the supporting characters and set a flashback between a supporting character and a character by the setting the flashback the same way the players would.

Flashbacks and the characters' development

When you set a flashback for a player you should attempt to set a flashback which you believe could be interesting for the characters development or inner conflict. This will of course depend on how your story has developed, but a rule of thumb could be to set a flashback of a similar situation as the one the character is in now. This way the player can either describe how the character reacts the same way as before to show that the character hasn't changed. They can furthermore describe how the character now does the exact opposite of before to show that the character has changed or maybe even lost that part of themselves.

The flashbacks are the players' and your tool to shape and influence the development and inner conflicts of the characters. You will create memories from the past of the characters in a way that the actions of the characters in the present are reflected in them. If you don't remember to set flashbacks, a great part of the characters inner life and development will be lost in the scenario.

Frequency

There isn't a maximum of the number of flashbacks you can set. Some player groups will find it natural to set flashbacks and enjoy using them while others will find it difficult and for that reason not set as many. Every character should however have at least two flashbacks and the flashbacks should be spread out somewhat equally across the scenario.

How to game master the scenario

You have several functions as a game master. As mentioned you will support the players in setting flashbacks and play supporting characters in some scenes and flashbacks if the players wish to involve the supporting characters in their flashbacks. You will also set and cut scenes from the scene catalogue.

You should consider that the players need time to set flashbacks when cutting the scenes. Other than that, you should cut the scenes quite sharp, so that they don't become too long.

In the first acts of the scenario – before Daesh attacks Kobanî – the scenes can become a bit long and slow because the actions in the scenes doesn't naturally create a fast pace. In this part you should focus on controlling and cutting the scenes to ensure that the pace doesn't become too lingering. The players might set many flashbacks in the first acts to try and fill out the scenes and because the characters have many unresolved feelings toward each other. Make sure that they don't set too many flashbacks and use up all the flashback material for the characters too soon. The characters should have the opportunity to evolve graduating during the entire scenario.

When Daesh attacks in act IV much of the action in the scenes becomes fighting. In these scenes plenty will happen, and this will naturally speed up the pace. In this part it is important that you make sure there is still room to set flashbacks so that the characters' inner lives still play a part in the story.

In the fighting scenes it is important that you frame the strategic goals of the characters in the scene description. The players shouldn't spend time and energy trying to plan how they will attack the enemy. If you tell them where they are going, they can focus on playing how they get there. If your player group still tends to role-play the planning, you should stop them and send them on their way.



Fighting and death in the scenario

There will be fighting scenes in the scenario where the characters fight Daesh. The characters' stories are the main part of the scenario. Therefore, the fighting will solely be described and role-played without the use of any game technique to decide the outcome of the battle. You as a game master will also not set traps for the characters or decide their fate. It is up to the players to develop the story they feel is strongest.

If the players wish, they can choose to let their character be wounded or killed in battle. Only the player of the character can decide their character's fate. If they don't decide for their character to be killed, all characters will make it through the battles and end on the top of Mistanour Hill looking over Kobani for the final scene.

If a player chooses to let their character be killed, the player will no longer be an active part of the scenario. The player can still participate in the creation of the story by setting flashbacks for the other characters. The players should know the basic outline of the structure of the story to be able to time their character's development accordingly. They don't need all the details but should know for instance, that the scenario ends with the Kurdish militia retaking Mistanour Hill and regaining the control of Kobani.

The following is background information on the Kurdish militia which the characters join, the enemy Daesh, Kurdistan and the geographical area in general. Brief the players on the essentials before you begin and use the rest as background information you can support the players with during the scenario. You will find the information summed up under the section "Run-through".

The Kurdish militia

There are several Kurdish militia groups in the different countries that extend over the area Kurdistan. In Syria the militia is called YPG and YPJ, which stands for People's Protection Unit and Women's Protection Unit. YPJ is the pure female fraction of YPG, while YPG is served by both male and female freedom fighters.

Because the scenario is set in northern Syria, and to not confuse the players too much, the scenario in general uses the definition YPG.

What the Kurdish militias throughout the different countries share is that they are all political and military units whose main purpose is to secure Kurdish independence within the different regions. They also share that they have all been directly involved in the war against Daesh.

The militias are built upon many of the original ideals and foundations of communism. Therefore, they call each other comrades and have a very flat hierarchical structure. Some people can of course have a higher rank than others, those who have a higher knowledge of strategical decisions or can make decisions for the groups and give orders. But the structure doesn't look like the ones we know from the military defense in Denmark or USA. The militias are built on the idea that the community pull together as comrades. For that reason, you and the players don't have to worry about proper military behavior, etiquette or the relations between officers and privates when playing the scenario. The characters are equal in worth and rights as the other militia soldiers.

The Kurdish militia is not a professional army with trained soldiers. Most freedom fighters have left their normal lives and volunteered to fight. Some of them only have a few weeks of training before their first combat. They fight in guerilla formations and their strength lies in speed and autonomy. The brigades get much freedom and therefore they can make quick decisions and changes in strategies on the battlefield. Their enemies are equipped with better and heavier weapons but are slower.

Therefore, you and the players also don't have to worry about correct strategic advances or whether the characters use the weapon completely as they should. The characters are soldiers who fight bravely, not because they were trained to but because they believe in the cause.

Women in war

YPJ - Women's Protection Unit - was established in 2012 as a female equivalent to YPG. It is a completely female fraction, which is built upon the same ideas of communism as YPG but as an addition has a special focus on women's rights.

The establishment of YPJ means that the Kurdish militia no longer fights only for Kurdish independence but also fights to create a society where men and women are equal. YPG and YPJ also focus on people being equal across different nations and religions. They wish to create a society where people can live side by side. Arabs, Kurds and volunteers from the West are among the people in YPG.

According to Kurdish media the presence of YPJ were of great significance during the siege of Kobani.



Daesh

'Daesh' is an acronym for the Arabic 'al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham' which means 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant'.

The word Daesh sounds like the Arabic words 'Daes', which means 'one who crushes something under foot' and Dahes, 'one who sows discord'.

To liberate the players from the western associations to the enemy in the scenario I have chosen to only use the word Daesh. The scenario focuses on the conflict between the group and the Kurdish population in northern Syria and tells a story about the battle where they fought each other for the town of Kobanî.

Even though it can feel easier to call the enemy the acronyms we have used in the West, you should try to only use the word Daesh.

The group Daesh fights to establish an Islamic state and their methods in the Arabic areas have mainly been to take and conquer land areas. To achieve this, they use violent and brutal methods against the population in the areas they take. Many civilians flee the areas, but those that didn't manage to run are either killed or forced into submitting to the Islamic state's way of life according to Daesh. Most players will probably have heard about several of Daesh's methods but there is no reason to describe them in detail during the scenario. Daesh is the enemy and what is important for the scenario is that the characters and YPG is going to beat them.

Instead of going into details of the methods of Daesh, you can emphasize the conflict between the goals of Daesh and the goals of the Kurds;

Daesh fight to create an Islamic state where everyone should convert to Islam and live accordingly to the Sharia law. It is a society where men and women are not equal and where women must live under the strict traditional rules.

Kurdistan



Kurdistan is an area that extends into Turkey, Iraq, Iran and some of Syria and Armenia. It is mainly populated by Kurds but also contains other nations.

Kurdish groups and organizations have for many years and particularly since the 1970s fought a political and military battle against suppression and for independency. This has never been fully achieved. Some areas are now controlled by Kurds though.

The Kurds speak Kurdish but as this language has been forbidden to teach in many areas, Kurds often speak Persian, Arabic or Turkish as a second language. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims but there are also smaller groups of Shia Muslims, Yezidis, Jews and Christians.

The Kurds in Iraq are in average higher educated than the Kurds in Turkey. This is because the Kurdish areas in Iraq are closer to the larger university cities while the Kurdish areas in Turkey are further in the countryside.

Run-through



Welcome and start

Begin by greeting the players welcome. Have a short conversation about their roleplaying experience and why they chose to sign up for the scenario. You can ask them how much they have been following the situation in Syria and the Middle East.

Briefing the players

The theme of the scenario

The players will play four Kurdish women who will join the Kurdish militia to defend their hometown Kobanî against the enemy Daesh.

Kobanî is a drama about people in war. It focuses on the sacrifices one makes in fighting to survive and on the humanity, which is lost on the battlefield. The scenario focus lies on the characters' personal story and development.

The structure of the scenario

The scenario is structured in five acts and a prologue and an epilogue. The story runs in scenes that you will set chronologically. Alongside the story about how the characters defend the town of Kobanî, the players will set flashbacks with memories from the lives of the characters before the war.

The characters

Shortly go through the four characters; Bijara, Avan, Kaia and Sera and their relationship with each other and to Kobanî. You can also mention the supporting characters and their relationship with the characters.

Flashbacks

The flashbacks are not written beforehand but are memories that the players will create for their characters during the scenario. When the players set a flashback, they flip the token on the table. A flashback can last from a few seconds to a couple of minutes and when it has finished, the token is flipped again.

The flashbacks can be descriptions or scenes, which are played. They can reflect the situation that the characters are currently in or it can be linked to the place the characters are in the scene.

Should a player wish to play a flashback with another player or with a supporting character, they should remember to frame the flashback and say who is in it.

The players can set flashbacks for their own character or for each other. Flashbacks can be set whenever during a scene. The flashbacks are the tool for the players to show and develop the inner life of their character.

You as a game master can choose to help the players by setting flashbacks for them.

Fighting and death

There will be fighting in some scenes, but the outcome of the battles will not be decided by game technical rules. It will be solely up to the players to create the story they feel is strongest.

Should the players wish to, they can choose to let their characters be wounded or even killed. One can only make this decision for one's own character. If the character dies, the player is no longer an active part of the scenario but can still affect the story by setting flashbacks for the other characters.

The Kurdish militia YPG

There are several Kurdish militias in the Middle East, but the Syrian units are called YPG and YPJ. They all fight for Kurdish independence and are built upon original ideals and foundations of communism. They call each other 'comrades' and have a flat hierarchical structure. Every brigade has a large amount freedom and autonomy. All Kurdish militias have been active in the war against Daesh.

The militia is not a professional army, and most are volunteers, both men and women, they have only had a few weeks training before their first battle. The players should worry about

knowing of proper military etiquette and strategy, as the militia doesn't use these.

YPG and YPJ fights for a society where the Kurds are free, and everyone are equal no matter gender, nation and religion.

The enemy Daesh

Daesh is an acronym for what translated means 'Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant'. Even though we usually call the group by a different name in the West, the group will only be called Daesh in the scenario.

The group is a militant fundamentalist group who fights for the establishment of an Islamic state and attempts to achieve this by taking land areas. They wish for a society with Sharia law where the rights of men and women are different and where women should live accordingly to strict traditional rules.

Kurdistan

Kurdistan is an area that stretches into Turkey, Iraq, Iran and parts of Syria and Armenia. It is mainly populated by Kurds and even though the Kurds have wanted independence since World War I this has never been granted.

The Kurds are mainly Sunni Muslims, but it is an individual matter how much religion takes part in people's everyday life – just as it is in Denmark.

The town of Kobanî is in northern Syria at the border to Turkey. The town is primarily inhabited by Kurds with smaller groups of Arabs, Turks and Armenians. Just before the civil war the town population was around 45.000 people.

The atmosphere of the scenario

It is a classic war story as we know them from films like Saving Private Ryan and Black Hawk Down. Like the movies the story of the war is disrupted by the story of the characters to dive into who they are and who they are becoming in the shadow of war.

The story

The story follows the characters from before the war starts and until they drive out Daesh from Kobanî.

The scenario begins with a prologue, which is a text you will read. After this the first of five acts begins. The first act only contains one scene, which is set in 2010 before the Arabic spring and the Syrian civil war. The characters are sitting on the top of Mistanour Hill and look down on Kobanî while talking about the future.

In the next act we forward to 2014. The civil war has lasted a couple of years and Daesh is closing in on Kobanî. Over the next four acts we follow the characters as they join the Kurdish militia, defend the town when Daesh attacks, fights them during the siege and finally in the fifth act attempt to fight through the lines of Daesh and retake Mistanour Hill and with this the control of Kobanî.

The scenario ends with an epilogue after the characters have driven out Daesh and are sitting on the top of Mistanour Hill looking over Kobanî.

When you have gone through the different parts of the scenario you can ask the players if they have any questions.

Warm-up

To help the players feel comfortable setting flashbacks you will briefly rehearse this before beginning. This will be done in two simple scenes.

Warm-up scene 1 – 2 players

The players play two friends who are having an argument. Friend #1 has got a partner whom Friend #2 doesn't like and therefore doesn't want to hang out with. Friend #1 is angry that Friend #2 will not give their partner a chance while Friend #2 doesn't like how Friend #1 has begun to change after the partner became a part of their life.

After some dialogue one player sets a flashback using the token on the table. It should be a flashback which is played, and the flashback is a memory of the two friends having a wonderful evening and promising each other that nothing will ever come between them. The player who flips the token will frame the flashback.

When the player who set the flashback wants to finish, the player flips the token again and they return to the scene of the fight. You cut the scene.

Warm-up scene 2 – 2 players

The players play a ten-year-old girl and her father. The girl is sad because her parents have gotten a divorce and she wants her father to move back in with them. Father tries to tell his daughter that he can't nor will move back because the relationship with her mother wasn't happy.

There will be a describing flashback a while into the scene. The girl or her father can flip the token and describe how they remember the time before the divorce. After the flashback you can choose to continue the scene to let the other player set a flashback and describe the time before the divorce from their point of view. You cut the scene.

Casting

When the players have understood what the scenario is about and how the flashbacks work it is time to give out the characters.

Use your sense of the group and your talk earlier to consider how best to divide the characters. You should take notice that the character of Avan is not given to a quiet and shy player. The character is an outsider and needs a player who can take initiative in the scenario.

When everyone is ready you can begin the scenario!

Scene catalogue



Prologue

0. Keystroke

Read aloud:

January 19th 2015 Kurdish militia fought their way up Mistanour Hill and retook the control of the besieged town Kobanî.

For four months the Kurds had been fighting Daesh in the streets and buildings of Kobanî. The enemy was finally pushed at bay but the town was left ad a ruin. People's homes where in rubbles. The mosque no longer cast its merciful shadow across the town square. And the once so lively streets of the bazar lay barren with the smell of death.

Kobanî was an open wound that had witnessed the lives that were lost between the houses.

Act I

1. Sunset over Kobanî I

Date: spring 2010. (Before the Arabic spring and the Syrian civil war)

Place: Mistanour Hill

Present: Bijara (19 yrs.), Avan (17 yrs.), Kaia (16 yrs.) and Sera (14 yrs.) as well as their families in the background

The families are gathered at Mistanour Hill to watch the sun set over the town on the final evening of Ramadan. Kobanî lies in front of them colored red and orange by the final beams of the sun.

Let the players describe how the town looks and what they can see from the hill.

The sun has disappeared behind the horizon and the girls sit on a blanket and eat. Bijara has recently got engaged to Bayram and the families have slowly begun to plan the wedding.

The characters talk to each other about the future.

Act II

2. Bad news

Date: March '14

Place: The schoolyard in Kobani

Present: Avan, Kaia and Sera

Since the civil war began in 2011 Kobani has been governed by the Kurdish militia YPG. Several years have passed and people are used to the situation. Avan, Kaia and Sera were all attending class when their teachers told them the news: Daesh has crossed river Euphrates 40 km south of the town and wishes to take control of Kobani. The fighting between Daesh and YPG groups has already started in the outer areas of the Canton.

Avan, Kaia and Sera sit in the schoolyard and talk about Daesh.

3. Homecoming

Date: May '14

Place: The square south of the bazar

Present: Avan, Kaia and Sera. Bijara enters halfway through the scene

Supporting characters: Crying child and mother

Avan, Kaia and Sera are on their way back from the bazar when they hear noise coming from the square. The attacks on the villages by Daesh has increased and sent thousands of refugees north. A large group of people are moving across the square with dragging feet. They are walking towards the border control to Turkey but have just been told that the border is closed. Turkey will not take more refugees at the moment. Some are carrying crying children in their arms. Other carry wounded people. The terror is painted across their faces. In the middle of the square in front of the girls is standing a crying child around the age of 10 yrs. It is calling for its mother.

You can describe the child to make the players feel more empathy. Let the players help the child for a while before they manage to find the worried mother who takes the child in her arms and thanks them.

YPG groups have arrived at the square to help the refugees. Some need to get to the hospital while others need food. In the middle of the crowd suddenly appears a woman in uniform who looks at the girls. Kaia squints her eyes in the bright sunlight but knows immediately that it is Bijara approaching them.

Let the players play the scene for a while but cut it before it gets too long.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of when Kaia and Bijara said their goodbyes after the wedding.

4. The camp of YPG

Date: July '14

Place: The camp of YPG in western Kobani

Present: All characters

Supporting characters: Azî

Avan, Kaia and Sera have gone to the camp to visit Bijara and she is showing them around the place. YPG has moved into several buildings in the older part of town. On a square between the buildings a group of people cook dinner. In a building nearby they have put up a radio station with a couple of soldiers to man the station at all time. The atmosphere is affected by the growing number of refugees who have come to Kobani over the duration of the last couple of weeks. When they come by a house where a group of new volunteers are getting their uniforms they bump into Azî who is among them.

Let Kaia and Azî play a short scene;

Azî has joined YPG and is starting his training soon. He looks at Kaia with tenderness. He knows that it is only a matter of time before Daesh will reach the town border and when they do, YPG will need all the people they can get. They can either choose to fight or to run.

Afterwards the characters sit in the shadow eating the food that was prepared at the square.

Let the characters talk for a while about YPG and about joining. If the characters don't start the conversation of joining you can lead them in that direction by for instance asking Avan or Sera if they are considering joining. Remember to still cut the scene before it gets too long.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory from the first time Sera saw her father in a uniform.

Act III

5. Weapon training

Date: Aug '14

Place: The football field

Present: All characters

Supporting characters: The instructor and Azî

Appendix: Weapon sheet

Avan, Kaia and Sera have volunteered for YPG and is about to begin their training. They have gathered on the football field north of Kobani to train with weapons for the first time. Azî is also there to train. A female soldier has come with them as their instructor. Bijara is watching the training and helping.

First play the instructor who goes through the weapons. Shortly explain how they are used;

- AK47 rifle is primarily used against soldiers. It is not precise on a distance over 300 m.
- LMG, light machine gun, can be carried by one person but has to be put up before use. Its shells penetrate steel and it is used against vehicles.
- RPG, rocket propelled grenade launcher, can be fired against buildings and vehicles. The grenade will cause an explosion when it detonates.

Let the characters try the different weapons and tell how it feels. The demonstration shouldn't take too long but give the players a foundation of knowledge about the weapons in order to feel comfortable using them in the future scenes.

When the weapons have been explained you ask the characters to dismantle and assemble the AK47. Now you can play Azî who is also there for training. Azî should not be as good as Avan but doesn't have to be the worst. You can let him flirt a bit with Kaia and make remarks on how weird it is to see her in uniform.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of when Avan dismantled a small engine for the first time and how proud her father looked at her.

6. Retreat

Date: Sept. '14

Place: Village 10 km south of Kobani

Present: All characters

The characters have gone to a village south of Kobani to bring supplies to a YPG group stationed there. They have only just arrived when they see dust towards the south. Five cars with black flags or headed towards the village. 300 m away they start firing at the YPG soldiers.

Let the characters defend the village for a short while. It is their first contact with the enemy.

One of the YPG soldiers shouts that more cars are coming. In the horizon they see 40 cars headed towards the village. Orders are given to retreat to Kobani.

The characters can continue to fire at Daesh for a short while but should retreat with the rest in the cars and drive north out of the village.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of when Bijara was teaching Kaia to drive a car and they drove around on the roads south of Kobani.

Memory of when Bijara wrote the letter to Bayram telling him she was leaving him.

7. Kobanî vacated

Date: Sept. '14

Places: A) Home of Bijara and Kaia. B) Workshop of Avan's dad. C) Sera and Baz' favorite place.

Present: A) Bijara and Kaia. B) Avan. C) Sera

Supporting characters: A) Desmal and Daran. B) Sahîn. C) Baz

It is only a matter of days before Daesh reaches Kobanî. Message has been given that all civilians shall vacate and cross the border into Turkey, which is open again.

7a. Bijara and Kaia have gone to their parents' house (mother Desmal and father Daran) to convince to leave. They are approaching the house.

Let the players describe their arrival at the house. Maybe the player of Bijara describes it as her first visit home since her return. Maybe she has already been to visit them. No matter which one her mother greets her with a warm and loving embrace.

Desmal will lead the word, so you can settle with describing how their father reacts unless the players talk directly to him.

The parents will feel sad by leaving their home behind, which contains so much love, but they will agree to go.

7b. Avan's parents have agreed to leave and she has gone with her father (Sahîn) to his workshop to help him pack some of the tools he will need.

Some of the tools have nostalgic value because Avan learned to fix things with them as a child. Father Sahîn will bring some with him while he gives some to his daughter.

7c. Sera has spoken with her mother and meets with Baz at their favorite place. She tells him about the conversation with her mother.

Baz has volunteered to help at the hospital and is staying in Kobanî like Sera. When the conversation turns to serious subjects and becomes difficult Baz will try to lighten the mood to cheer up Sera – like he has always done. It is not necessarily easy for him.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of the first time Bijara was told to look after the others and to make sure that no harm comes to them.

Memory of when Sera's brother (Erdem) told their mother that he would return to Iraq to study medicine.

Act IV

8. Kobanî besieged

Date: Oct. '14

Place: Building in Southern Kobanî

Present: All characters

The characters are sitting in a building in the south of Kobanî. They see dust rising in the horizon and wait. Out of the dust appear black flags on the cars.

Let the players tell what they are doing while they wait for Daesh to come closer.

When the cars are with reach they open fire. The line of Daesh is spread out to attack the town on a broad flank. Their machine guns on the back of the cars penetrate roofs and walls of many buildings.

Let the players return the fire. Describe how the battle develops from what the players are doing. It will however primarily be a line of cars against the line of YPG in the buildings.

After a while smoke appears from the top of Mistanour Hill. Daesh has taken the hill and are preparing to send in mortar grenades over the town. Suddenly the explosions are all around them. The buildings are trembling it over the radio someone shouts to pull back further into the town.

Let the players describe how they flee out through the back of the building. When they turn a corner they can see dead YPG soldiers lying in the street. There is smoke everywhere and the explosions are ear deafening.

When they reach the camp it is filled with injured soldiers. After the first attack Daesh has taken full control over the southern part of Kobanî and parts of the eastern part.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of when Avan's father taught her to use a telescope looking towards the horizon to the south of Kobanî and imagining the world out there.

9. Rescue

Date: Nov. '14

Place: School in Eastern Kobanî

Present: All characters

Supporting characters: Azî

A YPG group close by is under attack and needs reinforcements. The characters are called to help and runs to get there.

On the way there they are fired upon by a sniper sitting in a bird's nest somewhere ('bird's nest; a tower with a view to all directions). When the characters look around they see the minaret of the mosque, which would be a perfect location for a sniper.

If the characters open fire at the minaret it will crumble. They can also attempt to find a way around it. When they get passed it and arrive at the school where the other group is under attack. Azî is there and have been wounded. From the building the characters can see the Daesh group who is attacking them from further down the road. They are a handful men with pickup trucks that have a machine gun mounted on the back.

The characters can attempt to go around and attack the group from behind. They can also attempt to attack the group front on. Depending on the actions the players describe you describe what is happening around them. If there is an explosion close by you can describe how the shock wave pushes them back and so on. After fighting for a while the characters will either be successful in killing the enemy or pulling back into safety. Azî is wounded and needs to be taken to the hospital.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of Sera and Baz moving around in the streets and imagining the fable animals living underground by the school.

Memory of Bijara's first kiss with Bayram in the shadow of the minaret.

Memory of Azî telling Kaia that he will always look after her.

10. Rest

Date: Nov. '14

Place: The hospital and the YPG camp

Present: All characters

Supporting characters: Azi and Baz

Azi is in the hospital and Kaia has gone to see him. Sera is coming along to visit Baz.

Kaia is standing by the bed of Azi.

Azi is distanced towards Kaia. He finds it difficult being the weak one while she has only become stronger. He was meant to look after her but now he is in bed and can no longer fight nor look after her. What's worse is that maybe she no longer needs someone to look after her.

Sera has sought out Baz to hear how he is doing.

The death and agony in the hospital has begun to take its toll on Baz. He has lost count on how many wounded he has helped treat and he looks tired and older. If Sera tries to cheer him up as they used to with each other he will give her a tired smile but not react otherwise.

Bijara and Avan are sitting in the camp resting. Kaia and Sera join them when they get back from the hospital.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of Bijara laughing and teasing Kaia about how she makes it impossible for guys to concentrate.

11. At the front

Date: Dec. '14

Place: A building in Eastern Kobani

Present: All characters

The characters are on guard duty at one of the frontlines in Eastern Kobani. They sit on the roof hidden behind the top of the wall. In the building 50 m from them is sitting a Daesh group. The groups regularly open fire against each other to keep each other under pressure.

The scene must not be too long.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory from the night when the girls were waiting for the football team should come out of practice and Avan was complaining about the meaninglessness of the endeavor.

Act V

12. Hospital bombed

Date: Dec. '14

Place: YPG camp and the hospital

Present: All characters

The characters are in the YPG camp. Mortar grenades are once again flying over the town and their explosions shake the ground. Suddenly there is smoke towards the south and over the radio they can hear that the hospital has been hit. Everyone in the camp must hurry to help the wounded out of the building.

When the characters reach the hospital they can see that half of the building has collapsed. People are running in and out at the other end to get the wounded out that way. Everything is chaos.

Ask the player of Kaia how she finds Azi. The player will describe whether she finds him killed or alive.

The wounded are laid in rows and the volunteers of the hospital are doing what they can to help them. Sera runs over to find Baz.

Ask the player of Sera how she finds him.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of the first time Azi smiled at Kaia.

Memory from Sera's childhood in Iraq of when they brought home her father's body.

13. Advance

Date: Jan. '15

Place: Southern Kobani

Present: All characters

Since the siege Daesh has controlled Mistanour Hill and sent down mortar grenades over the town from there. YPG will attempt a wedge maneuver through the southern part of Kobani to retake the hill. If they control the hill Daesh will lose control of the town and has to redraw.

The Daesh groups are spread across the quarter. YPG must attempt to concentrate its force on a narrow part of the frontline and push through there. Afterwards they must move in a high tempo towards the hill to prevent other Daesh groups to close them off from the sides.

All YPG groups that can be spared at the frontlines move toward the chosen location. They skulk through the streets so Daesh doesn't see the large group moving towards them.

They now stand hiding in front of the chosen building with the Daesh front post. They are ready to attack.

Let the players describe what they do. If they haven't started the attack on the building after a short time you tell them that they are ordered to attack the building.

Daesh is surprised about the attack but soon answers the fire. The characters can use RPG grenade launchers to fire at the building or they can try to enter the building and kill the Daesh people there. Describe how the fighting evolves from the actions of the players. It is fine if they fighting feels a bit more difficult than the fights from previous scenes. They make it through the first building and continue south.

You can play several battles as the characters take one block at a time and the fighting continues. You should estimate how many battles you should play accordingly to how fast the players play through them.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of Avan's mother stroking her hair and telling her that she has all the possibilities in the world.

Memory of Kaia helping her father in the café and serves an older woman who tells her how sweet and kind she is.

14. Mistanour Hill

Date: Jan. '15

Place: Southern Kobanî and Mistanour Hill

Present: All characters

YPG has successfully fought their way to the southern part of the district. Only a few blocks are between them and the open land at the foot of Mistanour Hill. The advance has stopped in the final row of buildings in front of a square with Daesh groups waiting in the buildings on the other side. It is completely quiet as before the storm. A door opens in one of the buildings on the other side. Out steps a boy who looks the age of 9 or 10. He is wearing a uniform and holds an AK47 rifle. With hesitation he walks across the square toward YPG. He looks scared.

Let the players describe what they do.

If they shoot the boy, YPG and Daesh will open fire against one another.

If they don't shoot the boy, he will reach the YPG line 30 m to the right of the characters where he will detonate a bomb vest and kill a large group of YPG people. The explosion will go through the characters to the side. Hereafter the firefight between Daesh and YPG will begin.

It will be a tough fight where several YPG people are killed but finally YPG will kill the Daesh groups and continue south toward Mistanour Hill.

Retaking Mistanour Hill

YPG begins to run up the hill. They are unsheltered running in the open fields but the hill only holds a few Daesh groups.

Let the players describe how they retake the hill and what happens.

Inspiration for flashbacks:

Memory of a character helping a crying child who has lost their way.

Memory of Bijara comforting Sera when she had just arrived to Kobanî and missed her father.

Epilogue

15. Sunset over Kobanî II

Date: Jan. '15

Place: Mistanour Hill

Present: All characters

A few hours have passed since YPG retook Mistanour Hill. From the top the characters have been able to follow how the remaining Daesh groups have been driven from the town and now has pulled back south. Few shots are still fired around town but otherwise it's quiet.

The sun has started to set and is bathing Kobanî in a red and purple glow in front of the characters. They are sitting on the hill looking down on the town.

Let the players describe what they see and how the characters feel. If they wish to play for a while you can let them. When you feel the scene has come to an end you cut the scene and end the scenario.





Comrade Bijara - 23 yrs.

Bijara grew up in Kobani with her sister Kaia and their cousins Avan and Sera. She thought she knew what she wanted from life, but her plans took an unexpected turn. Now she is returning to Kobani to defend the town as part of the Kurdish militia.

Bijara's upbringing

Bijara was born in the town of Kobani. She and her sister grew up in a home filled with love and respect. Their mother, Desmal, had married their father out of love, and the love that they shared was still great. Bijara and her sister both had freedom to choose their futures and they were encouraged to go after their dreams, no matter what they were. Bijara took for granted that she would one day create a safe and loving family, where she could give her own children the same childhood she had been given.

Bijara's family

Bijara and her sister, Kaia, were very close. They talked to each other about everything; their dreams, their everyday lives, school and boys. When they talked about love, Kaia was always shy and embarrassed, which made Bijara laugh. Kaia was beautiful and possessed a certain sweetness that the boys couldn't resist. Bijara knew that many of them dreamt of her beloved sister in secret.

Bijara's mother, Desmal, has two sisters in Kobani. One sister, Sergul, is the mother of Avan, who is the same age as Kaia. The other sister, Nermal, originally lived in Iraq with her husband. After he was killed in the war against Saddam Hussein, she returned to Kobani with her two children; the daughter Sera and the son Erdem. Erdem is a few years older than Bijara and kept mostly to himself. The daughter, Sera, was young and it was clear that her mother was burdened by her sorrow, so Bijara, her sister and their cousin Avan looked after Sera.

The tradition

Bijara's mother and her sisters were brought up with a tradition in their family. Every year on the final evening of Ramadan, they go to the top of Mistanour Hill south-east of Kobanî, to watch the sun set over the town. It is an individual choice whether or not the members of the family fast during the Ramadan, but on this final evening they all gather to eat after sunset on the hill. It is a wonderful event, where the family feels united and safe.

Bijara's marriage

When Bijara met her future husband, Bayram, it was Kaia who first knew about him. Bayram was visiting the family from Van in Turkey. After the two had started talking in the town library, Bijara showed him Kobanî. The way he listened to her opinions and respected her views fascinated her. She showed him all her favorite places in the town; the fountain by the old square and the beautiful fig tree standing in the shadow of the mosque. Bijara felt seen and appreciated with Bayram, exactly like she felt in her own family. When they got married, Kaia helped Bijara get ready for the ceremony.

After the festivities, Bijara moved to Van in Turkey with Bayram. The town was in the mountains by the most beautiful lakes, but Bijara never felt at home. They moved in with Bayram's family, who turned out to be far more traditional than Bijara's own family. Every daily routine was executed as ceremonial rituals and it was clear that Bijara's mother-in-law wasn't pleased with Bijara's domestic skills. From the first day, she began reeducating her daughter-in-law and the problematic relationship between the two women affected Bijara's life with Bayram.

Bayram's deep respect for his mother made it difficult for him to understand Bijara's needs for another life than what he grew up with. The connection that they had built in Kobanî became more worn as the months passed. Bijara began to feel invisible. She felt less as a

person and more as an empty shell, who couldn't fill the role as wife. One day on a walk by the lake she sat down and began to cry. Bayram was a good man, but the life he offered her here in Van was far from how she had imagined her life. As she sat there, a woman came and talked to her.

Tara and Bijara became friends and her company lifted Bijara's spirit. Tara told Bijara in confidentiality, that she was a part of the Kurdish militia and because she had to leave Van and return to her camp in the mountains, she offered Bijara to come with her.

At first Bijara was shocked by the news. The thought of Tara leaving Van and Bijara alone with her family-in-law was difficult to bear, but the thought of going away with the Kurdish militia was terrifying. On top of that, Bijara felt a responsibility to the family she had married into. Even though she was miserable in Van, it had been her choice to marry Bayram. The love between them might have passed, but Bijara felt an incredible shame at the thought of leaving him.

Bijara and the Kurdish militia

Despite her feelings of shame and fear, Bijara chose to leave with Tara. She left a letter to Bayram without telling him where she had gone or with whom. She also sent a letter to Kaia saying she had joined the Kurdish militia, but to keep it secret for the safety of the family.

In the Kurdish militia, nobody condemned her for leaving her family. Like her, they had all had different plans for their lives once. For many years the Kurdish militia had fought for Kurdish liberation from the Turkish government, but the last couple of years the militant and fundamentalist group Daesh had demanded more of their attention. Daesh's advance in the Arabic world had created a great threat to Kurds several places and many freedoms fighters had travelled to frontlines in other countries to fight the organization.

The fight has given Bijara a new sense of purpose. There were both men and women in the camp and all were trained in the use of weapons. When Bijara held a rifle for the first time it was a scary feeling, but she soon became adept in using it.

Bijara's life

Bijara's first battle takes place in Iraqi Kurdistan. She feels a swelling pride to be part of a group of people helping each other as one and capable of putting pressure on the enemy on several frontlines simultaneously. Bijara will do everything for her comrades, just as she knows they will for her.

There are rumors that Daesh is moving further north in Syria and plans to attack Kobani. Bijara knows it is time to go home. Even if it is primarily to fight, there is a part of her who also longs for her family - particularly her sister Kaia.

Bijara's role in the group – She is the oldest of the four girls and therefore often gets the responsibility when they go off on their own. If they break an agreement, turn up late or actually get into trouble, Bijara is the one who takes the blame because she should know better.

Character relations

Kaia – Sister, 20 years old. She is incredibly beautiful and kind. Maybe that's why people always seem to think the best of her. She rarely makes trouble, but if she did, she could probably get away with most things.

Bijara and Kaia were always very close. They talked with each other about everything; their everyday lives, the future, love. It was like Kaia had cast a spell on the boys around her, which Bijara found incredibly funny. Bijara lost contact with her little sister after she married Bayram. Maybe because it was difficult to tell her sister how her marriage was anything but the dream they had always imagined together.

Sera – Cousin, 18 years old. She is the youngest of the girls in the group. Bijara, and especially the others, will occasionally accidentally treat her as such and tease and protect her a bit too much. She was only 7 years old, when she came to Kobani.

Sera is 5 years younger than Bijara, but she has a strength and a spark that Bijara admires. Her mother was so burdened with grief, that she couldn't offer Sera the safety and comfort Bijara was given during her childhood. Bijara hopes she can offer some of the comfort Sera needs.

Avan – Cousin, 21 years old. Avan doesn't let people push her around. Sometimes when the cousins are doing things together, it is impossible to get Avan to join if she is not interested. In return, she gladly takes them places she finds exciting and most of the time it is actually fun - with a few nerdy exceptions, of course.

Avan is particularly skilled with her hands and can take apart and assemble mechanical items. Bijara likes that Avan is so passionate about it.

Other relations

Bayram – Husband, 26 years old. The love for him grew strong in Kobani and Bijara was sure they would create a happy life together. But Bayram's family and their life in Van were very different from the life Bijara had dreamt of. Now he is in Turkey, with nothing but a letter saying she has left him. Her abandoning him is probably Bijara's biggest shame.

Desmal – Mother, in her 40's. Desmal's life with Bijara's father was what inspired Bijara's own dreams to create a family. While Bijara's mother has always supported her, Bijara still wonders if she can forgive her for turning her back on the life she chose.

Daran – Father, in his 50's. Bijara's father is a calm man, who has always treated Desmal and their daughters with love and respect. He has never raised his voice in anger and trusts his girls completely. His café in the bazaar has always been well visited by people and the town likes him.

Other supporting characters:

Azi – Boy, 22 years old. Kaia's friend, whom she might be falling in love with.

Baz – Boy, 18 years old. Sera's best friend since they were little.

Sahin – Avan's father, in his 50's. He is a mechanic.

The three sisters:

Desmal, mother to Bijara and Kaia

Sergul, mother to Avan

Nemal, mother to Sera



Comrade Sera - 18 yrs.

Sera was born in northern Iraq, but after the death of her father, the family moved back to Kobani where her mother is from. She was only 7 years old and her older cousins Bijara, Kaia and Avan looked after her a lot of the time. Now she is almost grown up, but the loss of her father is still great. The war is closing in on Kobani and the people of the militia are wearing the same uniform as her father did the last time she saw him.

Sera's upbringing

Sera is the youngest of two children. She was born in Iraqi Kurdistan in northern Iraq. She remembers the country mostly for the serious looks in the faces of the adults and for the name Saddam Hussein. The day that hope found its way back to people's eyes, was the same day Sera's family lost it. Sera was only 7 years old, when the war that was to defeat Saddam Hussein began. Her father went with the Kurdish militia to pressure the troops of the dictator from the north. Saddam was defeated, but Sera's father was killed when the Kurds took Kirkuk the 10th of April 2003. Sera remembers him still, the final time she saw him. He was wearing his uniform, swinging her around in the air. That was the day the happiness in her mother's eyes died.

Suddenly there were foreign soldiers everywhere and the conflicts didn't end, even after Saddam had fallen. Sera's mother, Nemat, took the children back to Kobani in Syria. She left to get away from the war and to be near her family but Sera remembers crying all the way there. She didn't want to leave Iraq, maybe because she was too young to understand that her father was never coming home.

Today Sera still feels as if she abandoned her father leaving Iraq. It is as if all the memories of the good life with dad were left behind when they escaped. Even with the years passing and the small family settling in in Kobani, it is clear that the memory of her father is still painful for Nemat. She has aged before time and sorrow lies within every wrinkle in her face. To spare her, the family doesn't talk about him. Because of this, Sera

has never had the opportunity to get to know who he was. It is as if he is only a dream. A wonderful dream in a uniform swinging her around and around for goodbye.

Sera's family

It was the right thing for Nermal to return to Kobanî. Even though the sorrow still has its grip on her, she clearly feels better near her sisters, Sergul and Desmal. Sera is happy having gotten to know her cousins. Sergul's daughter Avan is an only child. Desmal has two daughters, Bijara and Kaia. Even though they are all older than Sera, they have been kind enough to include her when the family moved to town.

Sera's brother, Erdem, is quite a few years older than her, and therefore they have never been close. He has moved back to Iraq to study medicine. Though Nermal is incredible proud of her son, Sera can see in her mother's face how painful it is for her every time the family is split up.

The tradition

Sera's mother and her sisters were brought up with a tradition in their family. Every year on the final evening of Ramadan, they go to the top of Mistanour Hill south-east of Kobanî, to watch the sun set over the town. It is an individual choice whether or not the members of the family fast during the Ramadan, but on this final evening they all gather to eat after sunset on the hill. The first time Sera experienced it was the first time she saw her mother smile after her father's death. That was the moment she felt they belonged in Kobanî.

Sera's friendship with Baz

In Kobanî, Sera became friends with the boy Baz. He was her age and even though she was a girl and he a boy, no one disapproved of them playing with each other. They explored the town and made up stories about the animals and mythical creatures with

human features living in their fantasy world beneath the town. Sera and Baz could spend days exploring small cracks and forgotten places in Kobanî that they would include in their stories. They got to know the town better than most and remember where all the little paths lead.

Once in a while they talk about things. Sera can talk to Baz about her father. But not for long because then it becomes too serious. Luckily, Baz can sense when it becomes too much for Sera and is good at changing the subject and cheering her up. They have created their own balance between talking about difficult things and then quickly shifting to a new story about the whereabouts of the underground creatures under the town.

When Sera is with Baz everything feels a bit lighter and more fun. The seriousness and sadness hanging in the air at home can have its outlet and its peace when the two of them roam the streets of Kobanî.

Sera's life

Sera goes to school a few classes under Kaia and Avan, but she is not sure about what she wants to do when school is over. When she is exploring with Baz, it makes her feel like travelling the world and discovering places. But the memory of how difficult it was to leave Iraq makes her think that it might be too painful to leave Kobanî. In addition, she knows how difficult it would be for her mother to see the family become even more spread out. It is obvious for Sera that one needs one's family. Especially when life is difficult. Some times Sera wonders what would have become of her mother if they hadn't returned to Kobanî after her father died.

Then there are Sera's cousins. They have a tendency to treat her as a child from time to time, tease her or convince her to do stupid things. But against everyone else they protect her and take her with them. Sera knows that she can trust them, but it would be nice if they learned to take her more seriously.

Bijara got married a few years back and moved to the town of Van in Turkey with her new husband. After that, they rarely heard from her and it was obvious that Kaia missed her a lot. About a year ago, Kaia's family received word that Bijara had left her family in Turkey. Shortly after Kaia, received a letter from Bijara, which she showed to Avan and Sera. It didn't say a lot, only that she had left Van and joined the Kurdish militia. Kaia wasn't supposed to show it to anyone because it could give the family troubles, so the girls kept it a secret.

Sera's role in the group – She is the youngest of the girls in the group. Bijara, and especially the others, will occasionally accidentally treat her as such and tease and protect her a bit too much. She was only 7 years old, when she came to Kobanî.

Character relations

Bijara – Cousin, 23 years old. She is the oldest of the four girls and therefore often gets the responsibility when they go off on their own. If they break an agreement, turn up late or actually get into trouble, Bijara is the one who takes the blame because she should know better.

When Sera met her cousins for the first time, Bijara was the one who looked out for her in particular. She made sure to invite her along, ask if there was anything specific she liked to do and all in all cared whether Sera was adjusting in Kobanî. Bijara has given Sera some of the comfort and attention that Nermal, her mother, couldn't.

Avan – Cousin, 21 years old. Avan doesn't let people push her around. Sometimes when the cousins are doing things together, it is impossible to get Avan to join if she is not interested. In return, she gladly takes them places she finds exciting and most of the time it is actually fun - with a few nerdy exceptions, of course.

Avan has a special relationship to her father, who is a blacksmith and a mechanic. Avan often spends time in the workshop with him and Sera is always welcome to drop by. Seeing them together makes Sera wonder about the relationship she never got to have with her own father.

Kaia – Cousin, 20 years old. She is incredibly beautiful and kind. Maybe that's why people always seem to think the best of her. She rarely makes trouble, but if she did, she could probably get away with most things.

Boys in Kobanî treat Kaia different than most girls. When she is around, it seems as if they forget everything else and only want to talk to her. Sera can be envious of some of the attention, but at the same time it is weird how people change their behavior around Kaia. It would certainly be weird if Baz were ever to behave like that towards Sera.

Other relations

Baz – Best friend, 18 years old. He has always treated Sera as his equal and she can relax around him. The friendship they have built around their stories in Kobanî has become a tight bond, which Sera values deeply.

Nermal – Mother, in her 40's. Her fragility after the death of Sera's father have made it difficult for Sera to find comfort and safety with her mother. Sera is focused on keeping her mother as safe and carefree as possible.

Erdem – Brother, 26 years old. Sera's brother has moved back to Iraq to study medicine. It was hard for their mother to see him go even though she is very proud of her son.

Other supporting characters:

Sahin – Avan's father, in his 50s. He is a mechanic.

Azi – Boy, 22 years old. Kaia's friend whom she might be falling in love with.

Bayram – 26 years old. Bijara's husband from Turkey.

The three sisters:

Sergul, mother to Avan

Desmal, mother to Bijara and Kaia

Nermal, mother to Sera



Comrade Avan - 21 yrs.

Avan grew up in Kobani with her cousins, Bijara, Kaia and Sera. As the outsider of the groups she has always liked being at the workshop with her father and dreams of working with mechanics in the future. Now it is war and the thoughts of a normal future become more distant as Daesh closes in on Kobani.

Avan's upbringing

Avan was born in the town of Kobani as the only child in the family. Her parents got married, even though her grandparents didn't approve much of Avan's father, Sahin. But their daughter Sergul was in love with him and convinced them to agree to the marriage.

Sahin is a calm and cheerful person. He fiddles with his blacksmithing and mechanic work and returns home dirty with a great smile on his lips. He always has time for Avan. He brings her to the workshop, shows her the mechanical parts, how to change oil or weld. Avan likes learning the practical skills and has become quite good at it. She can change tires on a car and knows how to assemble mechanical parts after they have been dismantled. Her father always listens to her when they talk. He gives Avan space to examine things and find out for herself what she wants to do. The two of them can talk about everything.

Avan's mother, Sergul loves her daughter but shows her love in a different way. She is determined about Avan's future and hopes for her only child to become something great. She is open to Avan's interest for mechanics and wants Avan to study engineering at the university.

Avan cares deeply for her mother and wishes to make her proud, but she is not sure that the academic approach is right for her. Like her father, she likes handling mechanics and she is fine with getting a bit dirty.

Avan's family

Avan's mother, Sergul, has two sisters in Kobanî. One sister, Desmal, has two daughters, Bijara and Kaia. The other sister, Nermal, originally lived in Iraq with her husband. After he was killed in the war against Saddam Hussein, she returned to Kobanî with her two children; the daughter Sera and the son Erdem. Erdem was a few years older than Bijara and kept mostly to himself. The daughter Sera was only 7 years old when they arrived and Avan and her cousins looked out for her.

Nemals sisters also had difficulties understanding Avan's father, but were still nice to him. Sometimes Avan feels it is the same between her and her cousins. She feels different. When they are doing things together, the suggestions that the others come up with can be quite boring. Avan doesn't enjoy spending an entire afternoon at the bazar looking at jewelry or clothes. She would rather be at the workshop, and like her father, she doesn't care if the others don't understand that. Luckily, the cousins can be sweet enough to go along with Avan's suggestions every once in a while, whether they are watching a movie, playing a game or something else... even if it still difficult to get them to look at mechanical spare parts with Avan.

The tradition

Avan's mother and her sisters were brought up with a tradition in their family. Every year on the final evening of Ramadan, they go to the top of Mistanour Hill south-east of Kobanî, to watch the sun set over the town. It is an individual choice whether or not the members of the family fast during the Ramadan, but on this final evening they all gather to eat after sunset on the hill. Avan likes this tradition very much. Maybe because it is something they all share an interest in. And because it feels like everyone is an equal part of the family on this day, including her father.

Avan and mechanics

Avan achieves an incredible calm when she dismantles and assembles mechanics. Sometimes she feels that mechanics are far easier to understand than people. She likes telling her cousins about the things she has built or improved on. She often forgets that they don't have the same knowledge that she does and she can be halfway through an explanation before she looks around and realizes that they have no clue about what she is talking about.

Avan's life

Avan goes to school in Kobanî with Kaia and Sera is only a few classes under them. She has agreed to study engineering, because she knows how much it means to her mother. The day she told her, Sergul lit up from happiness and immediately called her sisters to tell them the news. It is clear to Avan that she should do this to make her mother proud. Even so she hasn't set her mind to a university yet and she actually prefers to postpone it for as long as possible.

Most of the time Avan is either at the workshop with her father or spending time with the cousins in Kobanî. They hang out and talk about life. Bijara got married a few years back and moved to the town of Van in Turkey with her new husband. After that, they rarely heard from her and it was obvious that Kaia missed her a lot. Avan and Sera tried to cheer her up and Avan even began joining them when going to the bazar to make Kaia feel less lonely.

About a year ago, Kaia's family received word that Bijara had left the family in Turkey. Shortly after, Kaia received a letter from Bijara, which she showed to Avan and Sera. It didn't say a lot, only that she had left Van and joined the Kurdish militia. Kaia wasn't supposed to show it to anyone because it could give the family troubles, so the girls kept it a secret.

Avan's role in the group - Avan doesn't let people push her around. Sometimes when the cousins are doing things together, it is impossible to get Avan to join if she is not interested. In return, she gladly takes them places she finds exciting and most of the time it is actually fun - with a few nerdy exceptions, of course.

Character relations

Sera – Cousin, 18 years old. She is the youngest of the girls in the group. Bijara, and especially the others, will occasionally accidentally treat her as such and tease and protect her a bit too much. She was only 7 years old, when she came to Kobani.

Avan feels sorry for Sera having never gotten to know her father. When Avan thinks of her own relationship with Sahin, she knows how much she would feel alone without him. Sera's mother isn't very good to talk to her daughter about her father either.

Kaia – Cousin, 20 years old. She is incredibly beautiful and kind. Maybe that's why people always seem to think the best of her. She rarely makes trouble, but if she did, she could probably get away with most things.

Like Avan, Kaia now needs to decide what she wants to do next. But unlike Avan, who has been interested in mechanics all her life, Kaia has mostly been interested in starting a family of her own. Kaia was so happy for her sister when Bijara was getting married. But now that Bijara has left her new family without any of them knowing why, it seems to have made Kaia confused about her own future.

Bijara – Cousin, 23 years old. She is the oldest of the four girls and therefore often gets the responsibility when they go off on their own. If they break an agreement, turn up late or actually get into trouble, Bijara is the one who takes the blame because she should know better.

Avan has always seen a strength in Bijara that she liked. Even if she didn't agree with her decision to move all the way to Van in Turkey for love, at least it seemed that Bijara was certain in her decision. Now Bijara has run away and none of them understands why. Avan doesn't understand how Bijara could change her mind so radically.

Other relations

Sahin – Father, in his 50's. Avan has always felt at ease around her father. Like her, he is an outsider and has always had the strength to be himself, even when those around him didn't understand him.

Sergul – Mother, in her 40's. Avan's mother loves her, but her dreams for Avan doesn't resemble the dreams Avan has. Avan will, however, do what she can to make her mother proud. She just hopes it doesn't require her to lose herself along the way.

Other supporting characters:

Azi – Boy, 22 years old. Kaia's friend, whom she might be falling in love with.

Baz – Boy, 18 years old. Sera's best friend since they were little.

Bayram – 26 years old. Bijara's husband from Turkey.

The three sisters:

Sergul, mother to Avan

Desmal, mother to Bijara and Kaia

Nemal, mother to Sera



Comrade Kaia - 20 yrs.

Kaia grew up in Kobanî with her sister, Bijara, and their cousins Avan and Sera. Kaia and her sister have always dreamed of love and starting families of their own. Now love might be right in front of Kaia, but the war is approaching and Kaia's sister has left her marriage to fight as a part of the Kurdish militia.

Kaia's upbringing

Kaia was born in the town of Kobanî with her older sister, Bijara. Their childhood home was safe and warm. They grew up loved by both of their parents and with equal freedom and responsibility as important values.

Kaia is a good daughter. She does well at school, is intelligent and kind. She has her parents' complete trust and can always go to them if she has something to tell. Kaia knows she is beautiful, but gets embarrassed when people remind her, especially her sister, Bijara, who used to laugh at how the boys in the town behave around Kaia. Even though Kaia will not admit it, she secretly enjoys the attention. To Kaia the world is a place filled with love and happiness for those open to it.

Kaia's family

Kaia's mother, Desmal, has two sisters in Kobanî. One sister, Sergul, has the daughter Avan who is the same age as Kaia. The other sister, Nermal, originally lived in Iraq with her husband. After he was killed in the war against Saddam Hussein, she returned to Kobanî with her two children; the daughter Sera and the son Erdem. Erdem is a few years older than them and kept mostly to himself. The daughter Sera was young and it was clear that her mother was burdened by her sorrow so Kaia, her sister and their cousin Avan looked after Sera.

The tradition

Kaia's mother and her sisters were brought up with a tradition in their family. Every year on the final evening of Ramadan, they go to the top of Mistanour Hill south-east of Kobanî, to watch the sun set over the town. It is an individual choice whether or not the members of the family fast during the Ramadan, but on this final evening they all gather to eat after sunset on the hill. It is a nice experience where the family feels united and safe.

Kaia loves sitting on the hill with her family, watching the final rays of the sun disappear behind the horizon. She knows she will some day sit on that very same hill with her own family and watch the sun set over Kobanî.

Kaia and love

Kaia and her sister, Bijara, used to share a special bond growing up. They talked about the future, about boys and about love. They both dreamed about starting families of their own like the one they grew up in.

Kaia was the first person to know of her sister's feelings towards Bayram and when Bijara was finally getting married, Kaia helped her get ready for the ceremony. After the wedding Bijara had to move to the town of Van in Turkey with her new husband. It felt lonely and empty being so far away from a sister who used to be so close.

Kaia has begun talking to a boy named Azî. He is only a few years older than her and is incredibly beautiful. His eyes are dark and Kaia can secretly lose all sense of time and place when she stares into them. One day on a walk, he took her hand and compared her to a desert flower – fragile in appearance, but so beautiful that no one would dare harm it. Kaia wishes Bijara could be here, so she could tell her about her feelings.

One day, Kaia's family received word that Bijara had left her new Turkish family. Nobody knew why or where she had gone to. It was a shock to Kaia and her parents were clearly worried. A short while after, Kaia received a letter from Bijara. She wrote that she had left her life in Van and gone to join the Kurdish militia. The letter was short and offered no explanation and it made Kaia even more confused than she already was. She had hoped that Bijara was on her way home, but the letter didn't say where she was or for how long she would be gone. It did say that Kaia couldn't tell anyone.

Kaia still showed it to Avan and Sera. She needed to talk to someone about it and she trusted that they would keep it a secret.

Bijara's escape from her marriage has made Kaia doubt. The two of them always dreamed of lives with families and love. A life Kaia is now wondering if she can have with Azî. Bijara already had this life. Now she has chosen to leave it and Kaia doesn't know why.

Kaia's life

Kaia goes to school with Avan and their cousin Sera is only a few classes under them. To Kaia, school was always easy and she didn't have to put much effort into it. She has always known that she would start a family just as Bijara had done. But now that Kaia and Avan need to decide about life after school and Bijara has suddenly changed directions, Kaia is no longer sure of what she wants to do.

Most days she spends with Sera, and sometimes Avan, when she is not at the workshop with her father. Since Bijara moved to Turkey, Avan has been hanging out more with them. Spending time with Azî has also begun to take out more of her time. Her mother has met him briefly and she smiled at Kaia with warmth and approval when she saw him.

Kaia's role in the group - She is incredibly beautiful and kind. Maybe that's why people always seem to think the best of her. She rarely makes trouble, but if she did, she could probably get away with most things.

Character relations

Bijara – Sister, 23 years old. She is the oldest of the four girls and therefore often gets the responsibility when they go off on their own. If they break an agreement, turn up late or actually get into trouble, Bijara is the one who takes the blame because she should know better.

Kaia misses her immensely. It was always Bijara whom she talked to and without her, Kaia no longer knows what she wants. Avan and Sera has been trying to cheer her up, but without Bijara, Kaia feels torn. Now that Bijara has chosen a path Kaia doesn't understand, she feels more alone than ever.

Avan – Cousin, 21 years old. Avan doesn't let people push her around. Sometimes when the cousins are doing things together, it is impossible to get Avan to join if she is not interested. In return, she gladly takes them places she finds exciting and most of the time it is actually fun - with a few nerdy exceptions, of course.

It would have been natural for Kaia to talk to Avan about her feelings for Azî, but Kaia has somehow gotten the feeling that Avan doesn't really care for those things. Avan's mother wants her to become an engineer and this reminds Kaia that she has to decide what she is going to do next.

Sera – Cousin, 18 years old. . She is the youngest of the girls in the group. Bijara, and especially the others, will occasionally accidentally treat her as such and tease and protect her a bit too much. She was only 7 years old, when she came to Kobani.

She was so young and fragile, and her mother was so burdened with grief, that she didn't have the strength to be there for Sera. It made Kaia sad thinking of the children in the world who has to grow up without a parent. She is glad she and her cousins could offer Sera some support.

Other relations

Azî – Potential love, 22 years old. Even though Kaia has always received special treatment, Azî is the first person that makes her feel like something special. He is sweet and beautiful and Kaia believes he might be the one she wants to share her life with.

Desmal – Mother, in her 40's. Kaia's parents have always shown great love and respect for one another. Kaia's mother is loving and kind and many says Kaia got her beauty from her. When Kaia watches her mother she feels that it is possible to live a life filled with love.

Daran – Father, in his 50's. Kaia's father is a calm man who has always treated Desmal and his daughters with love and respect. He has never raised his voice in anger and trusts his girls completely. His café in the bazar has always been well visited by people and the town likes him.

Other supporting characters:

Bayram – 26 years old. Bijara's husband from Turkey.

Baz – Boy, 18 years old. Sera's best friend since they were little.

Sahin – Avan's father, in his 50s. He is a mechanic.

The three sisters:

Sergul, mother to Avan

Desmal, mother to Bijara and Kaia

Nemal, mother to Sera

Scene overview

PROLOGUE

0. Keystroke (read aloud)

January 19th 2015 Kurdish militia fought their way up Mistanour Hill and retook the control of the besieged town Kobani.

For four months the Kurds had been fighting Daesh in the streets and buildings of Kobani. The enemy was finally pushed at bay but the town was left a ruin. People's homes were in rubble. The mosque no longer cast its merciful shadow across the town square. And the once so lively streets of the bazaar lay barren with the smell of death.

Kobani was an open wound that had witnessed the lives that were lost between the houses.

ACT I

1. Sunset over Kobani I

The families are gathered on Mistanour Hill to watch the sun set over Kobani on the final evening of Ramadan.

ACT II

2. Bad news

Avan, Kaia and Sera are sitting in the schoolyard after they just heard of the advance of Daesh against Kobani.

3. Homecoming

Daesh's attacks in the south have sent thousands to escape north. They have arrived at Kobani. In the middle of the crowd Bijara suddenly appears.

4. The camp of YPG

Avan, Kaia and Sera visit Bijara in the camp of YPG. Azi has joined the militia.

ACT III

5. Weapon training

Avan, Kaia and Sera have volunteered for the militia. They have all gone to train with weapons for the first time.

6. Retreat

The characters have gone to a village south of Kobani with supplies for a YPG group. The village is attacked and the must retreat to Kobani.

7. Kobani vacated

It is a matter of time before Daesh attacks and the characters have gone home to convince their parents to leave town.

ACT IV

8. Kobani besieged

The characters are in Southern Kobani when Daesh attacks. Daesh manage to take Mistanour Hill and a rain of mortar grenades hit the town.

9. Rescue

A group nearby is under attack and the characters run to their rescue.

10. Rest

Azi is in the hospital and Kaia has gone to see him. Sera visits Baz while Bijara and Avan rest in the camp.

11. At the front

The characters sit on a roof at the frontline keeping an eye on the Daesh group on their front line.

ACT V

12. Hospital bombed

The hospital is hit by mortar grenades and the characters run to help get the wounded out of the building.

13. Advance

YPG makes a wedge manoeuvre to retake Mistanour Hill.

14. Mistanour Hill

YPG has stopped in front of a square where Daesh waits at the other side. Out comes a boy wearing a uniform with an AK47 in his hands.

YPG retakes Mistanour Hill.

EPILOGUE

15. Sunset over Kobani II

The characters sit on Mistanour Hill watching the sun set over Kobani that lies in ruins.

Token for flashbacks

Past



Present



Weapon sheet



AK-47 / Rifle, semi-automatic

The rifle is not accurate at distances over 300 m. It is used against soldiers. All characters carry their own AK47 everywhere.



LMG / Light machine gun

The machine gun can be carried by only one person but has to be set up before use. The shells penetrate steel and is used against vehicles.



RPG / Grenade launcher

The grenade launcher is shot as a rifle and the grenade causes an explosion when it detonates. The RPG is used against buildings, vehicles and larger groups of people.





Kobani

The aftermath of Kobanî and YPG



What happened to Kobanî after the YPG retook Mistanour Hill? If the players wish to know, you can tell a little about the further destiny of the Kurds and Kobanî when the scenario ends.

Kobanî now

Kobanî liberated

January 19th 2015 the Kurds managed to retake Mistanour Hill and January 26th YPG once more had the full control of Kobanî. During spring Daesh was successfully pushed completely out of the Kobanî Canton.

June 25th a Daesh group disguised as Kurdish militia detonated three car bombs in Kobanî near the Turkish border control after having shot several civilians in the town. The attack was one of the largest massacres of civilian people by Daesh in northern Syria.

Rebuilding Kobanî

After Kobanî was liberated many Kurds returned to rebuild the town. The siege of Kobanî had resulted in almost 70% of the town being in ruins. The fighting had destroyed all three hospitals and Daesh had sabotaged the town's water and electricity supplies. Several countries wanted to help with the rebuilding of Kobanî. This was however made difficult by the strict border control of Turkey who would only let through few materials and supplies being transported in to the Kurds. Despite of this the reconstructions were well on its way in May 2016 and after 8 months without water the towns water pumps were finally restored. In October the hospital also opened again but much of the town was still in ruins.

The final defeat of Daesh

In October 2017 the world media declared the defeat of Daesh after among others, Kurdish militia had taken the city of Raqqa in Syria. Raqqa had for several years served as the capital of Daesh. Four months of fighting over the city ended when Kurdish militia supported by USA finally conquered Daesh and took the city.

Operation Olive Branch and the Turkish offensive in Syria

January 2018 Turkish troops and allied militias crossed the border into northern Syria and began pushing Kurdish troops away from the Turkish border.

Turkey has long been at war with the Turkish-Kurdish militia PKK because they are fighting for Kurdish independence in Turkey. Due to this, Turkey considers the military build-up of Kurdish militia south of the Turkish border to be a threat against Turkey. They have therefore initiated a Turkish offensive in the country called 'Operation Olive Branch'.

While the last sentences of this scenario are being written the Turkish offensive continues in Syria. Their goal is to push the Kurdish militia 30 km south of the border and hereby create a buffer zone to Turkey. The Kurds have so far begged the Syrian government and the UN for help, but without any reactions.

The aftermath of war

The war against Daesh is over and once more the major powers of the world fight over the aftermath. The Assad regime is supported by the Russians who is also an ally to Turkey. Turkey is an ally to USA who has supplied the Kurds with weapons during the war against Daesh. Europe pays incredible amounts to Turkey to keep the refugees from European highways and only dares limited criticism against the Turkish government.

In the middle of all this are the Kurdish people. Like when the borders through Kurdistan were drawn by the western entente powers after World War I, the Kurds once more find themselves waiting for the major powers to decide their destiny.

Thank you for game mastering the scenario!
With love, Signe