

EXT. TENEMENT. MAUD'S HOUSE. BETHNAL GREEN. 1913. DAY.

MAUD, pale and drawn, pinches her cheeks. She holds the tiny wrapped birthday present addressed to GEORGE in her hand-

She raps hard on the door.

At last SONNY answers the door, smart in a suit-

MAUD

I just want to wish him Happy
Birthday.

SONNY nods, noticing the little parcel MAUD is holding.

MAUD (CONT'D)

At least let me do that.

MAUD peers beyond SONNY, pressing to see GEORGE, the door a little open-

SONNY

Not now.

MAUD

Sonny -
(sensing something)
Sonny?

MAUD desperately trying to push past SONNY with growing panic, seeing through the ajar front door-

SONNY

Don't-

MAUD, a rising panic threatening to consume her as she pushes past SONNY, knowing all is not well-

SONNY (CONT'D)

You're too late-

INT. FRONT ROOM. MAUD'S HOUSE. BETHNAL GREEN. 1913. DAY.

MAUD tearing into the room, wavering on seeing-

A COUPLE, in coats and hats, stand with GEORGE.

SONNY

This is Mr and Mrs Drayton.

MAUD looks to SONNY, eyes desperately searching for understanding.

SONNY (CONT'D)

They're taking George.

MAUD

What you talking about?

SONNY

Adopting him.

MAUD

Sonny-

MRS DRAYTON

We have a very nice home. With a garden and-

MRS DRAYTON looks at MAUD with obvious unease.

MRS DRAYTON (CONT'D)

..all that he'll need.

MAUD

(reaching for George)

No, George-

SONNY

I can't look after him. I can't be a mother to him.

MAUD

Sonny, please, just let me have him-

SONNY

We have no family Maud. No one to take him. I can't do it all. Mrs Garston won't take him, no one around here will. We've been cast out, Maud. We've been cast out.

SONNY barring MAUD's way, putting himself between MAUD and GEORGE, all clearly distressed.

MAUD

Please Sonny, let me...Please!
Georgie, come here!

MAUD reaches out for GEORGE, desperately clawing at SONNY to let her pass.

MAUD (CONT'D)

Come here...

GEORGE breaks free, running to MAUD. She grips him tight.

SONNY

Say your goodbyes and let him go.

MRS DRAYTON reaches for George's shoulder. MAUD shames her with a look, furiously batting her hand away.

SONNY looks away, hating himself. MAUD with desperate helpless realisation, sinks to the floor. GEORGE puts his hands on her face, trying to blot her falling tears.

MAUD, hand shaking, holds out the present-

MAUD

Open your present.

She helps him, struggling with the paper until-

She pulls out a tiny toy elephant, pushing it into his hand, down on her knees now, meeting him eye to eye-

MAUD (CONT'D)

Georgie. Your mother's name is Maud Watts. Don't forget that name, George, because I will be waiting for you to find me. Will you find me George?

Tears spilling, George nods.

MAUD (CONT'D)

Don't forget it.

MAUD desperately clinging as SONNY intervenes.

SONNY

Come on-

MAUD

No!

SONNY pulls a screaming GEORGE out of reach. MRS DRAYTON wavers, clearly distressed-

MRS DRAYTON

(to MAUD)

I'm sorry.

MR AND MRS DRAYTON leave, dragging GEORGE away.

GEORGE

(calling back)

Mama-

GEORGE's tears and screams dissolving-

MAUD

Sonny... Sonny.

GEORGE gone-

MAUD buckles, sinking to the floor, sobbing and torn apart, broken.

MAUD (CONT'D)

What have you done-

SONNY

It's for the best.

SONNY, overwhelmed, goes to touch her, hold her, fighting back his own mounting despair.

MAUD

What have you done?

MAUD hurls herself at SONNY, hitting him, slapping him, hard across the face. SONNY, reaches out, tries to hold her.

MAUD (CONT'D)

(screaming)

What have you done? What have you done?

She shoves him away howling like a broken animal. On SONNY, despairing, shame overwhelming him.

INT. MAUD'S ROOM.BEDSIT. BETHNAL GREEN. 1913. DUSK.

MAUD, still in her coat, seated on the bed. The sense that she has been there a long time.

SUDDENLY she inhales, as if she has almost been holding her breath, the shock suspending her-

INT. DISUSED CHURCH. BETHNAL GREEN. 1913. NIGHT.

On EDITH grinding powder.

HUGH

Can I help you with that?

EDITH brushes HUGH away-

EDITH

No. I can do it.

HUGH wavers, nods-

HUGH

So, Violet will not be joining us any more?

EDITH pauses.

EDITH

No, she questioned our strategy.