

BLITZ

Written by

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PRE-LAP: The distant sound of humming begins, gradually getting louder.

TITLE CARD:

For eight months between September 1940 and May 1941, Nazi Germany undertook an intense bombing campaign against the United Kingdom.

Dubbed 'The Blitz,' the term originated from the German 'blitzkrieg' meaning lightning war.

In response, the British government initiated the evacuation of more than 1.5 million people from urban target areas.

800,000 of those evacuated were children.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: LONDON, SEPTEMBER 10TH 1940

1 EXT. LONDON - NIGHT

1

Black crosses litter the sky, a sky full of German bombers. The hum of the engines is deafening now.

We are inside the cockpit of one of the bombers. A photograph of the pilot's sweetheart is stuck on the side window. The scrambling sound of radio waves take over our aural attention. The GERMAN PILOT reaches out with his leather glove and turns a dial. The high frequency settles on a pinched BBC newsreader's voice.

BBC NEWSREADER

*Insert BBC news coverage of London bombings and UK's position in WWII.
We hear it over a bomb dropping and hitting a street. (It will be clear we're in the first few days of bombings early Sep 1940)*

We see the bottom of the plane open as it prepares to make a drop.

We hear a faint whistle.

A BOMB falls towards London. Streams of ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE pelt the sky. The deafening whistle now turns into a scream as the incendiary accelerates nearing its target and explodes on impact as it hits a row of houses creating a firestorm.

All hell breaks loose as makeshift FIREFIGHTERS arrive at the scene, bells ringing. They work together unloading their equipment. They look no match for the giant pillars of fire.

Explosions are heard all around as more bombs are unleashed from the sky. The distant rattle of anti-aircraft fire cries out in angry retaliation.

SEARCH LIGHTS slice through the dark skies hunting for the assailants.

We are now just above the bombers out of the chaos. We see puffs of smoke and flames as bombs hit their targets.

More FIRE ENGINES arrive, their bells ringing. There appears to be a large number of firefighters scrambling at the scene. The whole street is now turning into an inferno.

On the ground, a Fireman hurries his colleagues to take hold of the fire hose. He braces himself at the nozzle.

Not knowing there are not enough hands to brace the force, another colleague twists on the squeaky water tap. Water rapidly inflates the hose and viciously jets out, knocking the Fireman backwards off his feet. It thrashes around violently, lifting itself like an angry spitting serpent. It swipes at an oncoming fireman, striking him hard against his temple with its heavy brass nozzle, knocking him out cold on the soaking wet ground.

Bombs continue to fall on nearby houses. The chaos persists.

Firemen wrestle with the hose, tackling it like a thrashing alligator and finally getting it under submission, refocusing the gushing stream up into the burning building in front of them. It feels futile, as if shooting a water pistol at a bonfire. Others attend to their fallen colleague.

The team is joined by four other hoses spaced out along the street.

The sound throughout all of this is unrelenting. More bombs are dropped and the devastation is overwhelming. The teams of firefighters plough on, risking their lives. It seems they are battling a ginormous fire-breathing dragon with primitive tools.

We hear an almighty explosion as a building collapses. We see firemen, their faces already dirty from the noxious atmosphere, scurry like ants as a brick wall crumbles on top of them.

In the near distance, a RED BRICK CLOCK-TOWER is illuminated by flames.

Miraculously, the only damage it has suffered is to the short hand which has been blown in half, as well as a small shattering of the clock face.

In the distance we see the unscathed dome of ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

2 INT. HANWAY HOUSE - BEDROOM - CLIFFORD LANE, EAST LONDON - 2
EARLY MORNING

We are in a small bedroom with two windows, curtains drawn, neat with wooden cupboards, a chest of drawers, a small bookshelf cluttered with books and children's magazines.

A round mirror reflects RITA (white, 27) and GEORGE (biracial, 10) lying sound asleep, semi-dressed, on top of the made bed. On their faces, traces of grime and dirt from the rough night before. A cat is curled asleep beside George. From the ground floor below, the sound of a piano playing *Pack Up Your Troubles*.

3 INT. FRONT ROOM, HANWAY HOUSE - MORNING

3

GERALD HANWAY, 50's, Rita's dad and George's grandfather, at the upright piano, humming along. There's a happy-go-lucky quality to him but he wears scars from his past on his face. He gazes up at a photograph of a young woman, his beloved wife, who has since died. Rita and George are his solace, and music is his refuge in life.

4 INT. BEDROOM, HANWAY HOUSE - MORNING

4

Rita opens her eyes. Sees a small packed leather suitcase on the floor. A tear seeps from the corner of her eye, trails down into her ear. George stirs in his sleep. She kisses him on the back of the head, sings softly and sweetly along to the piano music.

RITA

*What's the use of worrying
It never was worth while.
So pack up your troubles in your
old kit-bag and smile, smile,
smile.*

George buries his head in the fur of the purring cat. In Rita's eyes, a look of despair.

5 INT. HANWAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING 5

Gerald whistles as he cooks breakfast at the stove.

6 INT. HANWAY HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING 6

George is dressing in his best. Grey shorts, white shirt and jacket. Rita at the bookcase selects a couple of magazines.

RITA
These two?

Head bent fastening his shirt buttons, George doesn't look up, doesn't respond.

She puts the magazines in the suitcase and snaps it closed.

RITA (CONT'D)
(glancing at George)
Your buttons are all skewy.

She bends to re-button his shirt, tucks a handkerchief in a pocket.

GEORGE
Why can't you come with me?

RITA
Sweetheart, it's an adventure for children only. Grownups not allowed. It's going to be great, you'll make new friends-

GEORGE
- My friends are here-

RITA
- you'll play games in the countryside, there'll be cows and horses and sheep...

GEORGE
But they smell. I want to stay with you.

She looks at him. She wants exactly the same thing.

RITA
It's only until all this is over.

Her voice breaks.

RITA (CONT'D)
The schools will open again and
life will get back to normal.

GEORGE
(low, pitiful)
Please Mum, don't send me away.

Tears threaten to spill. She reaches up, unclasps the St Christopher medallion chain from her neck. She puts it around his neck, secures the clasp.

RITA
Your dad would want you to have it.

GEORGE
How do you know?

RITA
Because that's the kind of man he
was. Because you're his son, and
this belongs to you now. It will
keep you safe from harm.

She kisses the medallion, tucks it inside his shirt.

RITA (CONT'D)
Find your cap and come downstairs.

She picks up the suitcase and walks out.

7 EXT. LANDING - MORNING

7

Rita stands on the landing, suitcase in hand, pausing to compose herself. She touches her neck where the chain used to hang, and swipes at tears.

8 INT. HANWAY HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

8

Gerald serves up bacon and eggs from a frying pan.

Rita comes in. Gerald gets a glimpse of the tracks of her tears.

GERALD
We don't have a choice love. Look
what happened last night.

She nods. He opens the kitchen door, shouts up for George.

GERALD (CONT'D)
 Breakfast! Hurry up, it's getting
 cold!

We hear the sound of George's feet descending the stairs.

9 EXT. HANWAY HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

9

George comes out with Rita and Gerald. The cat follows on behind. Rita is holding the suitcase. Next door neighbour firefighter JACK is returning home. His clothes are grimy and ripped, his face and hands covered in soot, his eyes red-rimmed from smoke and exhaustion.

Jack is a man whose physicality belies him. He is introverted and shy, but a brave and fearless fireman and highly respected by his peers. He's the kind of person you want in your team when Armageddon hits.

He greets Rita and Gerald.

GERALD
 Do you want some breakfast?

JACK
 No thanks Gerald. I need to clean
 up and catch thirty winks. I'm back
 on duty in a few hours.

GERALD
 I'm going to help out on Maple
 Street today.

JACK
 There's a lot of damage. The houses
 are very unstable. Be careful.

GERALD
 Always.

Jack bends to George. For the first time, we reveal that he has a mild stutter.

JACK
 You're off then, are you George?
 Give us a shh...shh...shake before
 you go, little man.

He extends an arm, pumps George's hand in his.

JACK (CONT'D)
 God sp...sp...Godspeed, and good
 luck.

RITA
Say thank you George.

GEORGE
(low)
Thank you.

He bends to stroke the cat curled around his feet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Goodbye Olly. You be a good boy.

Jack looks at Rita, taking in her distress.

JACK
(out of ear-shot of
George)
Are you alright?

RITA
Not really.

JACK
Do you want co...co...company?

RITA
You need your kip, Jack. We'll be
fine.

JACK
Alright then.

He glances back at her as he takes his leave.

Gerald bends to George.

GERALD
Look after yourself, my boy, and
don't forget: be brave and stand up
to bullies. What do we say about
them?

GEORGE
(low)
All mouth and no trousers.

GERALD
I beg your pardon, I didn't hear
what you said. Speak up please.

GEORGE
(louder)
All mouth and no trousers.

GERALD
Correct! Come here.

He scoops George up in his arms, envelopes him in a bear-hug. George teary in his embrace, Rita has to look away.

Gerald lowers George to the ground.

GERALD (CONT'D)
This is for emergencies.

He winks and puts a coin in George's blazer pocket.

GEORGE
Thank you, Grandad.

RITA
Dad, don't do anything heroic on
Maple Street.

GERALD
I'll do my best.

He watches as Rita and George set off walking down the street. George turns to wave at Gerald, Gerald holding Olly waves back.

Rita and George and a handful of other mothers with children make their way up the street towards a bus stop, passing George's friend ARTHUR (10, white) watching at the front door of a terraced house. As George passes, Arthur sticks 2 fingers in the air, laughing and waving. George responds in kind, sticking his tongue out. Arthur's mother pulls him inside, glares at George and Rita, slams the door.

A RAG-AND-BONE MAN (late 60's) with an old weary horse and cart passes by. The clip-clop of the horse's hooves and the rattle of the carriage echo as the rag-and-bone man yells.

RAG-AND-BONE MAN
Any'ol'ron! (Any old iron!)

He has said the phrase so many times that his mouth has become lazy, the three words amalgamate to a sound.

The RED BRICK CLOCK-TOWER is nearby, standing tall, dominating the landscape. The clock strikes the hour. (At this point we realize the bombing at the beginning of the film was on this street but is yet to happen).

The scene is one of chaos and pandemonium, the sound is deafening as desperate parents throng to put their children on the train.

REGISTRARS and ASSISTANTS dotted along the concourse, clipboards in hand, trying to assert some order. Trains stationary at various platforms, steam from their engines roar, billowing smoke rises.

Hordes of CHILDREN holding suitcases with name tags attached to their coats; some crying, some faces full of fear, some pumped up with excitement at the adventure ahead. Parents, mainly mothers, or grandparents, look fearful and upset.

All the children are white. George is the only black child in sight.

Rita scribbles George's name on a tag and places the string around his neck. A REGISTRAR with a clipboard approaches her.

REGISTRAR
Where is the child's mother?

RITA
I'm his mother.

He looks from Rita to George. You can tell what he's thinking.

RITA (CONT'D)
(firmly)
His name is George Hanway. He's my boy.

The Registrar ticks his clipboard.

REGISTRAR
You're late. They're already boarding. Make your way to platform number 3.

11

INT. ST. PANCRAS STATION - PLATFORM - MORNING

11

Children are boarding the train. Rita holds George tightly by the hand. At the next carriage, Rita's fellow worker and acquaintance AGNES, late 20's, escorts her two young children onto the train. She waves at Rita, Rita waves back.

RITA
(bending to George)
Don't forget to be a good boy and
don't wipe your nose on your
sleeve, use your hanky-

GEORGE
I hate you.

She reels back in shock.

He pulls his hand out of hers, pushes his way through the throng.

RITA
(loud)
Wait! George! George, come back!

Others, children and parents, including Agnes, are alerted to Rita's shout. A few of the children snigger. George doesn't look back.

Agnes crosses over to Rita.

AGNES
Rita, calm yourself.

RITA
I've changed my mind, I want him back!

She screams George's name, over and over. Rita runs after George, Agnes behind her in close pursuit.

AGNES
Rita, stop!

George ignores Rita's screams and boards the carriage.

12 INT. TRAIN - MORNING

12

George slumps in a window seat, looks straight ahead.

13 INT. PLATFORM - MORNING

13

Rita tries to board the train. A STEWARD intercepts her.

A loud gush of steam escapes from the train's engine as Rita's gaze is partly obscured.

STEWARD
He'll be alright love, some nice family will be taking care of him, don't you worry -

He holds her back. Agnes arrives and tries to comfort her as steam loudly rises from the train as it begins to pull away from the platform.

14

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

14

George stubbornly keeps his gaze locked forward and pretends not to hear as a heartbroken Rita screaming his name is lost from view.

15

EXT. MUNITIONS FACTORY, EAST END - MORNING

15

A BBC Outside Broadcast truck and other BBC vehicles are parked outside. Technicians snake cabling into the factory, Assistants scurry about with clipboards, broadcast equipment is wheeled on carts inside. The ubiquitous English tea and sweets cart is set up nearby.

16

INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - MORNING

16

Cabling is tacked to the floor, a BBC sound cart is wheeled through the vast, cavernous interior. The sound is deafening, the atmosphere thick with toxic chemicals. Sparks fly. A large assembly line of mostly women snakes around the factory floor. They work in repetitive motions.

In the sea of boiler-suits we pick out Rita, TILDA (27) and DORIS (26), Rita's close friends. Their hair is tied up in a scarf, sleeves rolled up to their elbows. Rita's head is bent to her task.

Agnes walks past.

AGNES
(at Rita)
Alright?

Rita looks up, blank.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I know it's bloody hard. Keep your chin up Rita.

She walks on to her work station down the line.

TILDA
Come on love cheer up. Look on the bright side, you get to be on your own. You can enjoy yourself!

DORIS
He'll be well looked after otherwise they wouldn't have evacuated them. He has all those terrors to play with. It will be like going to Blackpool. Better!

Rita doesn't react and continues with her work.

DORIS (CONT'D)

I guess you're saving your voice
for later eh? I imagine you're a
bit nervous, I would be. Are you
sure you're up to it?

TILDA

(dismissively)

Of course she is, it will cheer you
up, and everyone else. We're all
looking forward to it.

DORIS

It's her decision. Everyone in the
country will be listening. She
doesn't have to do anything that
she doesn't want to do.

Through this bickering back and forth, Rita is bent over the assembly line, her mind a thousand miles away.

We stay on her face as she remembers the events of the previous night.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

17 EXT. CLIFFORD LANE, EAST LONDON - THE PREVIOUS NIGHT 17

The sound of the AIR-RAID SIREN is loud and disorientating.

Gerald, George and Rita, hurry out of the house with bundles and bags. George carries Olly in a cat carrier, the handle squeaking with every jolt.

18 EXT. BOTTOM OF THE ROAD - THE PREVIOUS NIGHT 18

They hurry towards two elongated igloo-like bomb shelters, surrounded by sandbags. A large crowd gathered, others converging, everyone desperate to take shelter inside.

All this in the midst of nearby explosions and distant heavy anti-aircraft fire.

A family turns away from one of the shelters, trailed by an elderly woman.

WOMAN

(at the queue)

Don't bother! There's no more
bleedin' room in there!

The earth shudders as a nearby explosion erupts.

People in the queue fall flat on their stomachs, hands on their heads, they know the drill. We hear the sound of screams. Rita lifts her head up from the ground.

RITA
(to Gerald)
Where are we going to go?

19

EXT. UNDERGROUND STATION - THE PREVIOUS NIGHT

19

A line of ARMED SOLDIERS, bayonets at the ready, guard the closed gates to the station. Rita, Gerald and George join a large crowd clamoring to be let in.

CAPTAIN
Move back! This station is not an authorized air raid shelter.

MAN IN CROWD
The shelters are full! Where are we supposed to go?

CAPTAIN
If you have shelters at home, you can take cover there.

WOMAN IN CROWD
A sheet of corrugated iron to put in your garden if you've got one. You're having a laugh!

The crowd heaves forward. Rita tries to shield George from the crush. The soldiers are pushed back onto the metal scissor barricades.

CAPTAIN
Move back or someone is going to get hurt!

CROWD MEMBER
The only one who's going to get hurt mate is you if you don't let us in.

We hear the sound of bombs exploding nearby.

CROWD
(chanting)
Open the gates! Open the gates!

Rita sees a mother and child shoved to the ground by the increasing hordes of frightened people. Desperation has taken over from any form of order.

RITA
For God's sake, open the gates!

Fearing a major incident, the Captain shouts out an order.

CAPTAIN
(at the soldiers)
Lower your arms!

The crowd cheers as the soldiers lower their arms.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
(at the STATION INSPECTOR)
Open the gates.

STATION INSPECTOR
Captain, it's against the law!

CROWD
Open the gates! Open the gates!

CAPTAIN
These people are hopelessly exposed. I'm ordering you one last time: unlock the gates.

The Inspector nods at a COLLEAGUE who removes a large bunch of keys from his pocket. In his panic, he drops them, scrambles to pick them up from the ground.

The gates are unlocked and dragged apart. The crowd floods through.

20 INT. UNDERGROUND STATION - NIGHT

20

The crowd funnels down slippery steps to safety, Rita, Gerald and George in their midst. A YOUNG GIRL, an OLD MAN, others, are knocked over in the crush. Others not breaking their stride step over them in their blind panic to reach safety.

21 INT. PLATFORM, UNDERGROUND STATION NIGHT

21

There's a scramble to find space to bed down for the night.

Rita, George and Gerald find a position towards the end of the platform. Rita lays out blankets, takes out a box of biscuits and a thermos.

George props the cat carrier on the ground beside him. He lifts Olly out, holds him and pets him, whispering words of reassurance and comfort.

GEORGE

(low)

It's going to be alright Olly. I won't leave you, you're safe with me. We'll be home in the morning...

GERALD

(out of earshot)

It's not fair on him Rita. You've got to let go.

Rita, reluctant, nods in agreement.

END FLASHBACK.

22

INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - MORNING

22

Factory Foreman CLIVE, 39, faux Clarke Gable look, right down to the trimmed mustache and razor-sharp side parting, inspects the line.

CLIVE

Ladies, can we stop the chit-chat and get on with it please.

A pointed look at Doris and Tilda.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

There are boys out there, our boys, relying on you, God help them!.

He walks on. Behind his back, Tilda lifts her jumper to reveal a 1940's over-shoulder boulder-holder brassiere. She shakes her boobs at him.

Gasps, giggles and shouts of laughter from the women nearby.

Clive stops in his tracks and whirls around. Everyone bent to their tasks, lips compressed together to stop the laughter. Tilda is particularly demure-looking. He glares at her and walks on.

The sound of the vast manufacturing process comes to the fore.

We follow its assembly in detail to the end result - a bomb. It's then stockpiled and driven away.

23

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - MORNING

23

Children of all ages crammed in the seats. A STEWARD walks through, inspecting the carriage.

STEWARD
No feet on the seats, boys and girls.

A boy is curled up in the overhead luggage rack.

STEWARD (CONT'D)
Get down from there immediately, son. It's not safe.

The boy scrambles down. The Steward walks through to the next compartment.

George looks out of the window as the train rapidly gathers speed, looking out as an unfamiliar landscape flies past.

For the first time in his life he is completely alone.

A BOY in the seat behind leans over and touches George's hair. George slaps his hand away.

BOY ONE
Temper, temper.

Another boy leans in.

BOY TWO
You look like a dog. Where's your tail?

Other children laugh, crane in their seats to stare at George.

A RED-HEADED GIRL with socks down by her ankles is sitting across from George.

RED-HEADED GIRL
(at the boys)
Leave him alone.

George is visibly upset.

BOY ONE
Aww he's crying?

BOY TWO
Missing mummy are you?

RED-HEADED GIRL
Leave him alone would ya!

BOY ONE
What's it to you? Is he your fella?

Boy One and Two laugh.

RED-HEADED GIRL
Shut up!

The Steward enters the compartment on his rounds again.

STEWARD
That's enough!

He points a finger at George.

STEWARD (CONT'D)
If I hear another word from you or
anyone else you'll be sitting in
the guard's compartment for the
rest of the journey. Understood?

Close on George. Anger and upset stirs inside of him.

24 INT. BBC RADIO STUDIO, BROADCASTING HOUSE - MORNING 24

A smartly dressed bespectacled man sits behind a large BBC microphone, briefing papers in hand. He speaks with a cut glass received pronunciation English accent.

PRESENTER
Now over to The East London
Munitions factory where Godfrey
Basely is waiting to introduce the
show.

The sound of instruments striking up takes us to...

CUT TO:

25 INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - MORNING 25

The factory has been transformed into a kind of make-shift studio and the place is packed to the rafters with WORKERS gathered wherever they can find space. Some perch on work benches, others on crates. There are happy, excited smiles all around, everyone welcoming the distraction.

Space has been cleared for instruments and radio equipment. The meters of thick black cabling snake around the factory floor to the transmission van parked outside.

Microphone stands, with BBC proudly emblazoned on the front, are placed in preparation. An officious looking radio producer, head set on, oversees proceedings.

RADIO PRODUCER
(to factory workers)
Right you are ladies and gentlemen,
we're going live to the nation in
5,4..

He mouths and mimes with his hands - 3,2,1 - nodding to the CONDUCTOR.

A 20-strong BRASS BAND, dressed in military style uniform, play a rousing tune. There are trumpets, trombones and big wheel sized drums all keeping time to the baton wielding conductor.

As the band comes to its final crescendo, the factory workers explode into raucous cheering and applause. Rita stands in a corner, nervous.

GODFREY BASELY (50, dressed in a pin-stripe double-breasted suit, clean-shaven, a middle-aged Rex Harrison lookalike) steps up to a microphone.

GODFREY
Well that was the Work's Brass
Band, under its conductor William
Laughton, playing *Trumpeter Bob*. It
opens our contribution to Works
Wonder from this factory in East
London. As you know, we travel the
length and breadth of Britain to
find factory workers with talent
who can help cheer up the nation.
Today we will feature munitions
worker, Miss...
(checks his notes)
Miss Rita Hanway!

Rita, cheered on by Doris and Tilda and others, steps up to the microphone. There's a moment of silence and anticipation, all eyes on her.

TILDA
Go on Rita! Go on girl! Give it
some!

Clive glares at her.

RITA

This is for all the parents whose
children have been evacuated, and
for my boy George.

Silence descends all around.

CLOSE ON AGNES

Her eyes fill with tears.

The introduction to a familiar melody begins. Rita opens her mouth and for the first few lines of the song her voice can't seem to grab hold of the melody. Tilda and Doris exchange a concerned look. Then suddenly Rita's voice comes into sync.

RITA (CONT'D)

*Grab your coat,
Don't forget your hat
But leave your worries
Leave 'em on the doorstep...*

Her voice soars as she gains in confidence and loses herself in the rhythm and the words. Her timing is impeccable; she hits every note. Tilda and Doris share a thumbs-up and a grin.

RITA (CONT'D)

*Just direct your feet
To the sunny side of the street...*

Radio crew and factory workers alike transfixed in the moment, fingers clicking, feet tapping along.

We see a group of five women factory workers, led by Agnes, inconspicuously weaving their way to the front.

RITA (CONT'D)

*... and if I never had a cent,
I'd be rich as Rockefeller,
With gold dust at my feet..*

Our vantage point is right at the back of this surreal colliding of a war factory, missiles at the ready, and cheerful song.

RITA (CONT'D)

*... On the sunny side of the
street.*

The crowd applauds and whistles, on their feet. Suddenly, Agnes and the other four women mount the stage. Agnes takes the microphone from Rita.

AGNES
We need shelters! Open up the underground!

The chant is taken up.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(mouths to Rita)
Sorry.

Rita gives her a reassuring nod. She joins in with the chant.

CROWD
We need shelters! We need shelters!

Pandemonium has broken out.

Clive the foreman's face is one of horror as he surveys the scene. He is red-faced and sweating.

An embarrassed and panicked looking Godfrey lunges at the microphone.

GODFREY
And now ladies and gentlemen we head back to Broadcasting House.

26

INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - DAY

26

The last of the outside broadcast paraphernalia has been removed and the floor is back to normal full operating status and deafening sound.

GODFREY
How did you let that happen? This is totally disorderly and unacceptable. Don't you have control over your staff? We're at war man!

CLIVE
I'm terribly sorry sir, this should never have happened and those responsible will be disciplined.

GODFREY
Well I should jolly well hope so!
And you'd be darn lucky if we ever come to this sorry factory again.

Godfrey exits. Clive the foreman marches down the assembly line towards Agnes and the other four women disrupters.

CLIVE
Get your things and come with me.

This public humiliation is Clive's warning to any future agitators amongst the work-force.

Agnes leads the way. As she passes Rita, Doris and Tilda, she looks straight ahead; proud, brave and defiant to the end.

The women, sober, work on in silence.

27 EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

27

The train transporting the evacuee children winds its way through verdant countryside.

28 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

28

Kids in their seats argue about football teams, play cards, or sit in silence, homesickness and fear of the unknown. George stares out the window.

Suddenly, a paper ball hits him on the side of the head, lobbed by the trio of bully boys in the seats behind.

George gets to his feet. He stands in the aisle and faces up to them.

GEORGE
Okay. Who wants to fight?

He raises his fists, bounces on his feet.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(at the boys)
You? You? You?

All the other kids transfixed by this ongoing drama.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Which one of you has got the balls?

The bully boys shrink back in their seats, look away.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I thought so. All mouth and no trousers.

He returns to his seat. The red headed girl grins at him.

RED-HEADED GIRL
You showed them. My name's Cathy,
what's yours?

GEORGE
(reluctantly)
George.

Not wanting to engage with her further, he pointedly turns to look out of the window. We're transported as the landscape fleets by.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

29 EXT. HANWAY HOUSE. STREET - DAY

29

It's the previous summer.

We see a cricket bat tapping on the ground. George holds it tightly in front of a makeshift wicket (a kitchen chair). He is playing cricket with FRIENDS, including Arthur, in the middle of the street.

From the front gate of the Hanway house, Rita appears in her apron.

RITA
George! Tea! Five minutes!

GEORGE
Okay!

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(at Arthur)
Come on then! Are you going to bowl
or what!

ARTHUR
Hold your horses!

He delegates his fielders, strategically shifting them to the right and to the left.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
(waving his arm)
Further back.

GEORGE
Come on, come on!

ARTHUR
Alright, you asked for it.

Arthur runs in, head down. He bowls a full toss.

George's bat connects with the tennis ball and sends it high up into the sky.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Catch it! Catch it!

The ball seems to hang in the air.

Next door neighbour, Fireman Jack, mug of tea in hand, stands at his front gate watching the game.

TWO OF THE BOYS
(Shouting in unison)
I've got it! I've got it!

They run to catch it, colliding into each other as the ball hits the ground.

GEORGE
Six!

Arthur is furious, steam coming out of his ears. He's a terrible loser.

ARTHUR
(to the two boys)
What's the matter with you both?
Bloody butter-fingers.

RITA
(from the house)
George! Tea! Now!

Rita turns back inside.

George drops the bat on the ground. He winks at Arthur.

ARTHUR
Go home to Mummy, you black bastard
you.

George stops in his tracks, visibly hurt. He crosses slowly to the house. We hear the tinkling of keys on a piano coming from the Hanway family house.

Gerald's fingers glide across the keys playing the Fats Waller number *Ain't Misbehaving*.

GERALD

*No one to talk with, All by myself
No one to walk with, But I'm happy
on the shelf.*

George comes in, eyes downcast, dragging his feet.

GERALD (CONT'D)

*Ain't misbehavin'
I'm savin' my love for you.
Come on George, let's hear ya!*

George shakes his head. Arthur's insult is still resonating in his head.

GERALD (CONT'D)

What's up?

His fingers softly tinkle on the keys.

GEORGE

Nothing.

GERALD

Doesn't look like nothing to me.

Rita comes in, wiping her hands on an apron.

GERALD (CONT'D)

*Like Jack Horner
In the corner
Don't go nowhere...*

Rita puts an arm around George, joins in.

GERALD & RITA

*What do I care?
Your kisses are worth waitin' for
Believe me.*

She gives George a big smacker on the cheek.

GEORGE

Ugh. Mum!

RITA

Come on sourpuss, join in!

GERALD & RITA

*I don't stay out late
Don't care to go...*

GERALD & RITA & GEORGE
*I'm home about eight
 Just me and my radio.*

George smiles. As he sings along, his blues are chased away. The family are a choir. It's jovial, sweet and beautiful and somehow the music lulls them all to another place. A better one.

RITA & GERALD & GEORGE
*Ain't misbe havin'
 I'm savin' my love for you*

END FLASHBACK

31 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

31

George snaps out of his memory. Across from him, Cathy is asleep. He makes a decision. He gets up, grabs his suitcase and crosses down the aisle to the connecting door.

The few who notice assume George has thrown a wobbly and is going to sit somewhere else.

The sound of the clunk of the carriage door.

Cathy starts awake.

32 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

32

The train winds its way through the countryside. A signal up ahead. The train slows, wheels squealing.

33 INT. TRAIN - DAY

33

As the train slows, George throws his suitcase out and jumps down after it.

34 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

34

George tumbles for a while bruising himself as he falls but is unhurt as he picks himself up. Finding his suitcase he looks back at the train to find Cathy waving from the window. He waves back as the train picks up speed.

35 EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

35

George emerges from a train tunnel into bright sunshine.

The sound of stillness and bird song as he runs to a clearing beside the track.

36 EXT. CLEARING BESIDE THE TRAIN TRACKS - DAY 36

George pulls the tag from around his neck and hurls it into the bushes.

He rummages through the suitcase discarding a gas mask and bits of clothing. He stuffs a wrapped sandwich into his jacket pocket.

In the distance, a slow-moving beat-up freight train approaches.

Discarding the suitcase, crouching low, he jogs beside the freight train, propels himself up and unlatches an unlocked hook. Sliding the squeaky door to one side, he throws himself inside.

37 INT. FREIGHT CARRIAGE - DAY 37

George tumbles inside, slides the door closed behind him. As his eyes adjust to the light, he looks around.

In a corner of the carriage three boys, all dressed similar to George and two of them with suitcases, stare back at him. They're stowaways like George - children that didn't want to go.

38 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 38

The train chugs through green landscape, smoke trailing from its funnel.

39 INT. FREIGHT TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY 39

Some time has passed now. The three boys joke around loudly, laughing and teasing each other.

George is apprehensive and keeps himself to himself at the opposite corner of the carriage, pretending not to be interested in what they are doing.

TOMMY, the boldest and the oldest of the three, roughly the same age as George, keeps looking over in his direction.

TOMMY
(surprising everyone)
Hey!

George looks up uncertainly.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What's your name?

GEORGE
George...

TOMMY
(sing-song)
Georgey, Georgey, pudding and pie,
kissed the girls and make them cry.

GEORGE
(sing-song)
Little Tommy-Tucker sang for his
supper. What shall we give him,
brown bread and butter.

Touché. Tommy grins.

TOMMY
These are my brothers, Archie and
Ian.

ARCHIE
Do you want to see my beetle?

George makes his way over to them. They shuffle aside and make room. Archie puts his hand into his pocket and retrieves a small match box. Opening it we see a live beetle.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
It's name's Gerry. Do you wanna
hold it?

George sticks out his hand and Archie puts it onto his palm. The beetle begins to move up his arm towards his wrist. Archie picks it up and puts it back into the matchbox.

IAN
Tommy, I'm hungry.

TOMMY
Stop whining.
(at George)
When we got to Wales, they were
going to separate us. Put us each
with a different family. That
wasn't going to happen - in our
family it's one for all and all for
one.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 So we ran for it, hid in the woods
 and then we jumped on this train.

GEORGE
 I've got a sandwich.

Ian's eyes light up.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 We can share it.

He hands it to Tommy who unwraps the greaseproof paper and divides it up.

IAN
 Strawberry jam. My favourite.

Silence for a few seconds as they scoff it down.

TOMMY
 (mouth full, at George)
 How did you get away?

GEORGE
 I jumped off the train.

TOMMY
 Jeepers!

They regard him, impressed.

GEORGE
 My mum sent me away... At the
 station, I told her I hated her and
 I didn't even say goodbye.

Tommy regards George with an empathy and intelligence greater than his years.

TOMMY
 She's your mum, she'll forgive you.
 They always do.

GEORGE
 (low)
 I just want to say sorry.

The boys are quiet for a moment. Then...

ARCHIE
 Do you know what happens if we get
 caught, George?

George shakes his head.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I'll tell ya. They march you to the nearest station and stick you on the next train and then they gag you and tie you to the seat with straps. They don't give you anything to eat or anything and they hang a sign around your neck that says 'DANGEROUS ESCAPEE' so you can't escape again.

George takes that in.

GEORGE

What happens if you want to go to the bog?

ARCHIE

I dunno, I suppose they let you wet yourself.

GEORGE

Maybe they give you a nappy or something.

They giggle.

TOMMY

Let's play dares.

They gather round.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Alright, rock paper scissors. First up me and George.

Tommy and George shake their fists three times.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

One, two, three. Paper wraps rock.
I win! Ian and Archie next.

(to George)

You play the loser. One, two,
three.

Ian and Archie shake their wrists three times.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Archie, you play George. The loser has to do a dare. Alright, here we go! One, two, three.

(beat)

Ahhh unlucky George. Scissors cuts paper.

George looks disgruntled, he's been played. Tommy looks up at a hatch on the roof of the carriage.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(pointing at George)
I dare you.. I dare you to climb up
onto the roof of the train.

George, not wanting to look cowardly, nods.

GEORGE
Easy.

Hiding his apprehension he climbs up onto the stacks of freight and makes his way up to the hatch on the top of the carriage.

It's stiff and he struggles with it for a moment. Giving it one final shove, it swings open with a loud thud.

The sound of the air funneling past fills the carriage. George pokes his head out. His cap is blown clean away. He's petrified. He looks down at the boys who look back expectantly.

TOMMY
Go on then!

Putting on a front, fearful and unsteady on his hands and feet, George crawls his way up onto the carriage rooftop. The train turns a slight bend and George looks scared as his grip loosens, he steadies himself. Sitting on the middle of the roof he finally gets his bearings, his eyes widen, he looks around at the beautiful green landscape zipping past, the country air filling his lungs.

With George's help the brothers precariously clamber out, Archie and Ian first.

In all the excitement George is suddenly distracted in the moment and loses his balance. Alerted, Tommy grabs his jacket and pulls him back to safety. Relieved and exhilarated, George acknowledges Tommy with a nod. Tommy grins. There is a silent bond.

The boys sit in a row on the top of the train, hands in the air waving, shouting and laughing. It's a real feeling of freedom.

We see a young girl with a sheepdog walking in a field near the train tracks. The dog barks excitedly at the sight of the four boys sitting on top of the train. The girl is alerted, not believing what she sees, she waves in wonder. The boys wave back.

We see the boys on the roof and the train snaking off into the distance.

40

INT. FREIGHT TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY

40

Time has passed and the boys are back in the carriage asleep in a heap. The train slows, creaks loudly to a halt. Tommy is instantly awake.

TOMMY
London! Wake up!

He climbs up and peers out from a hatch on the side of the train. His vantage point is obscured by the connecting carriage, pieces of the London skyline in the near distance visible, but no train station.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
We've stopped but we're not at a station.

We hear the crunch of heavy footsteps on gravel. A man's voice, and then another, soon accompanied by the cranking of freight train doors as one by one they are slid open and slammed shut.

With each slam -

GUARDS
(O.S)
Clear!

The boys look at each other, hoping someone has a plan.

George stands up and points up at the hatch. Tommy, knowing it's too late, pulls him down. The boys sit quietly.

The footsteps are nearing and louder now. The slamming of freight doors resemble the sound of a guillotine reverberating in their carriage.

In the split second they hear the latch go, George tucks himself tight behind a wooden crate, making himself as small as he can.

The door rattles open abruptly. Light from a torch fills the space, exposing the boys.

GUARD ONE
Well, well, well. What do we have here.

Archie and Ian scramble, jumping and pushing past the muscular Guard. He manages to grab Ian by the arm and Archie more precariously by the sleeve. As he struggles to get the boys under control he calls for back up.

GUARD ONE (CONT'D)
Ron! Bruiser! Over here!

Tommy jumps from the carriage onto the back of Guard One, kicking and punching him.

TOMMY
Let go of my brothers! Let go of my brothers!

George jumps from the carriage and joins in trying to free Archie and Ian.

Archie and Ian wriggle out of Guard One's clutches and make a run for it. Tommy and George let go of Guard One and follow. Tommy outpaces George.

All four boys are now running.

The Guards are in hot pursuit. Like KEYSTONE COPS they comically fall over themselves giving chase, winning the boys time.

We hear the sound of a train approaching as Tommy runs across several tracks to meet Archie and Ian who are now waiting on the other side.

Tommy stops in the middle of the tracks, turning back towards George as the sound of the approaching train intensifies.

Something stops George.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(hardly audible)
Come on George! What's stopping you! You can make it!

George hesitates.

At that moment the approaching train eclipses Tommy from George's view. The sound is almost deafening as Tommy doesn't notice another train traveling from the opposite direction. We hear a loud thud.

ARCHIE & IAN
(scream)
Tommy!!

Once the train's clear, Tommy is nowhere to be seen. He has been hit by the train, leaving Archie and Ian standing in the same spot, with George on the other side of the tracks facing them.

The train that has hit Tommy comes to a screeching, grinding halt.

George is in shock. He stands still as a statue, rooted to the ground. The Guards run past him to the front of the train.

GUARD ONE
(to George)
Wait here! Don't move!

We hear the haunting cries and screams of Archie and Ian as they run towards the front of the train on the other side of the tracks as we hold on George's face.

Something is alerted in George. We hear Tommy's voice repeating what he said earlier.

TOMMY
(O.S)
Come on George! You can make it!

George dashes off down the bank and doesn't look back as he slips out of sight.

41 EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

41

George climbs over a brick wall and enters the back garden of a suburban house.

He opens a side-gate and walks down an alleyway onto a deserted suburban street.

42 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

42

Traumatized and fearful, George presses on.

An ambulance and a fire truck whizz by, sirens blaring, George ducks out of view.

A bus comes to a halt nearby, picking up passengers. From afar George looks at the front of the bus which says Trafalgar Square.

He sprints and jumps on at the last minute. Another ambulance with bells ringing whizzes by.

George places himself at the top of the bus now out of breath trying to reconcile.

43

INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY, LOCKER ROOM - DAY

43

Rita removes her head scarf and takes off her grey overalls before making her way to a large sink where she joins other women and begins her routine of scrubbing her hands and arms with a brush and soap.

There's a lot of noise and chat with women in various states of undress, applying make-up at the crowded mirror, and getting ready to leave. Doris and Tilda are among them.

Rita rinses the soap off her arms and dries them with a towel. Making her way to her locker, she opens the metal door to reveal a photograph of George stuck on the inside which snaps her out of her ritual. She touches her neck where the St Christopher used to hang.

PRE-LAP: We hear the sound of swing-jazz music.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

44

INT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - 1930 - NIGHT

44

Small, intimate, a nondescript space that has been converted into a makeshift night club, festooned with Chinese lanterns. A RAG TAG BAND play swing jazz music. Young MEN and WOMEN, a mix of East End Londoners and SEAMEN on shore leave, mainly black, throng the dance floor. Others seated at tables, drinking and chowing down noodles from steaming vats of food and eyeing the local talent.

The staff are all Chinese. From her vantage point in the hall, a middle-aged CHINESE WOMAN keeps an eagle eye on the proceedings, tots up earnings in a large ledger. Discretely scattered here and there are a small number of Chinese BOUNCERS, ready to pounce at the first sign of trouble.

We make our way through the crowd and find Rita (17) jiving with MARCUS (23).

She laughs as he swirls her across the dance floor, lifting her high in the air.

This is the first time we've seen her like this, so carefree and happy.

It's a raucous fun spectacle. Everyone in unison hand-claps and kicks.

The band, a mixture of black, white and asian musicians, sets the pace.

Partners are swung in the air. This goes on for some time until the number comes to a crashing end and everyone applauds.

Rita and Marcus step away from the dance floor, sweaty, out of breath, hand in hand.

Sitting face to face, nose to nose with broad grins on their faces. Rita wipes the sweat off Marcus's brow.

Marcus grabs her hand and kisses it gently.

They grin at each other as if they are the luckiest two people in the world.

Marcus removes a SILVER CHAIN from around his neck and in one movement attaches it to Rita's. Attached to it is a small pendant of Saint Christopher.

MARCUS
(sing-song Grenadian accent)

My mother gave it to me, and now I am giving it to you. It will keep you safe.

She throws her arms around him.

Nearby, a group of 4 WHITE MEN observe Rita and Marcus locked in a passionate embrace.

45

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTRE - 1930 - NIGHT

45

The evening has drawn to a close. There's still a buzz in the air as people exit the makeshift dance hall into the cold night air, including Rita and Marcus, hand in hand.

The group of four white middle-aged men, spotting the couple, cross over to them. One of them bumps Marcus hard on the shoulder.

RITA
Oi watch it!

MAN ONE
What you say?

RITA
I said watch it! You did that on purpose.

MARCUS
(a warning)
Rita, don't engage.

MAN ONE
What kind of man are you what needs
a woman to defend him?

MAN TWO
(at Rita)
What are you doing with that
fucking monkey anyway?

MARCUS
Hey. Watch your mouth.

Man Two throws a punch at Marcus. Marcus dodges out of the way and punches him hard in the stomach. The other three men enter the fray. Marcus is the superior fighter, but there are three against one. He defends himself as best he can. A crowd has gathered.

Two policemen appear running in to break up the fracas.

POLICEMAN ONE
What's all this ruckus about?

MAN ONE
He tried to attack me! He's a
savage, Officer!

RITA
He's lying. They started the fight!

MAN TWO
I saw it with me own two eyes. He
was like an animal. He came at us
for no reason.

Policeman Two grabs Marcus by the collar.

POLICEMAN TWO
Alright mate, you're coming with
us!

MAN TWO
Too right! He should be locked
away! He's a menace to society!

MARCUS
Officers, they threw the first
punch. I was defending myself!

POLICEMAN ONE
 Well you'll have a little bit more
 defending to do when we take you
 down to the station.

Marcus is marched off by the policemen, Rita in tow.

RITA
 (hysterical at the
 injustice)
 He hasn't done anything!

The police frog-march Marcus to a police van. He looks back at Rita before the doors to the van are slammed closed on him. Rita watching, helpless, as he is driven away.

She will never see him again.

END FLASHBACK.

46 INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY, LOCKER ROOM - DAY

46

TILDA
 Rita? Rita?

At her locker, Rita is lost in the memory.

TILDA (CONT'D)
 Oh good you're back with us then.

Rita snaps to.

RITA
 Sorry.

Doris sticks her head around the door.

DORIS
 Hurry up, you two.

Rita and Tilda grab their coats and make their way out of the locker room.

47 INT. LONDON BUS - EARLY EVENING

47

Our view is the top of a double decker bus entering into Central London. George sits at the front of the top deck, his blank eyes staring forward.

BUS CONDUCTOR
 Tickets please!

George digs into his front pocket, hands him the coin Gerald slipped to him. The Conductor gives him a ticket and some change.

BUS CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
Next stop Piccadilly Circus!

GEORGE
(to bus conductor)
Sir am I on the right bus to get home?

BUS CONDUCTOR
That depends where home is, doesn't it.

GEORGE
Clifford Lane. Stepney.

BUS CONDUCTOR
Well, you are and you're not. What you need to do is get off at the next stop, cross over the road and catch the 14 and go three stops back where you come from. And what you do is get off that bus, take a right and then a left, cross over the street and then you'll see the bus stop for the 64 heading to Liverpool St, but you need the one that says it's heading to Whitechapel. And then it'll be 5 stops.

George nods his head along with the instructions, hearing the sounds of the words but not registering a word.

GEORGE
Thank you.

He makes his way downstairs. The bus slows at a stop. He jumps off.

George is dirty and unkempt, his knees are scuffed and his shoelaces untied. He walks on, unaware of the looks in his direction, dazed by the noise and the mass of people, and the shops he has never seen before, distracted by all that London has to offer.

Across the busy main road, he sees the large imposing edifice that is HAMLEY'S, the most famous toy shop in the world.

The city feels magical and not what George is used to. In some kind of odd unison everything seems to be moving; cars, vans, people. It's a spectacle for George in sound and colour.

Precariously dodging traffic, he crosses the road.

49 EXT. HAMLEY'S TOY SHOP - EARLY EVENING

49

Mechanical toys set up in the window display. George's eyes caught by a mechanized train set which moves through a picturesque papier-mâché mountain-scape past other toys on display. He imagines himself, Tommy, Archie and Ian sitting on top of the carriage, hands in the air, whizzing through the artificial landscape. We hear the screams and laughter of the boys.

A SECURITY GUARD approaches.

SECURITY GUARD

Get along with you, boy. Loitering
is not permitted. Go on, scat!

50 EXT. LONDON STREET - EARLY EVENING

50

George strolls aimlessly around the busy streets, hopelessly lost.

Ahead, a large BOMBED-OUT BOOKSHOP with the front entrance completely blown out. Shards of glass everywhere. A well-dressed GENTLEMAN exits through the shattered doorway, tipping his bowler hat as he passes George, feet crunching on broken glass. George's curiosity is sparked.

51 INT. BOMBED-OUT BOOKSHOP - EARLY EVENING

51

George enters through a blasted out window.

He looks around in wonder, he can hardly believe his eyes.

Dust hangs in the air, shelves crisscross the space, it's like entering a labyrinth. Half the ceiling is missing, the darkening sky clearly visible.

Surreally, the bookshop is still open for business. A queue at the makeshift table set up for payment. SHOP ASSISTANTS sweep the aisles, collect the books strewn across the floor. An announcement on the tannoy system.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are closing for business, we will be open again tomorrow at 10. Please make your way to any available exit. Thank you.

George exits with the other customers.

52 EXT. LONDON STREET - EARLY EVENING

52

George strolls aimlessly around busy streets, not knowing which way to go.

As night descends we see the silhouette of an AIR RAID WARDEN emerge from the mist. He spots George from across the street.

They lock eyes. All George knows is that this is a man in uniform and that he must make his escape.

He turns and runs. But the warden is too quick for him, and grabs hold of him.

WARDEN

Gotcha.

For the first time George sees him close up. He is black: tall and strong-looking, with an open, handsome face.

IFE

What's your hurry?

GEORGE

Just getting some shopping for me mum.

IFE

What's your name?

George doesn't answer.

IFE (CONT'D)

Where do you live?

George is silent.

IFE (CONT'D)

Come with me.

He takes George by the arm and marches him off.

53

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - EVENING

53

We see George's worn shoes dangling as he sits on a stool in the warden's office. MAPS, CHARTS and DATA dress the walls.

Ravenous, George gobbls a sandwich.

IFE
Slow down or you'll choke.

He laughs.

GEORGE
(through a mouthful)
What's your name?

IFE
Say again?

George swallows.

GEORGE
What's your name?

IFE
I asked you first.

GEORGE
(beat)
George.

IFE
Pleased to meet you, George. My name is Ife.

GEORGE
Ife?

He giggles.

IFE
Ife is Nigerian for love.

George giggles again.

IFE (CONT'D)
Where do you live, George?

GEORGE
(beat)
Stepney. Clifford Lane.

IFE
How did you end up here?

George's head sinks down to his chest. A beat...

GEORGE
 (barely audible)
 I jumped off the train because I
 didn't want to go.

Ife regards him.

IFE
 Finish your tea. Then you can come
 with me on my rounds. Afterwards,
 I'll take you home to Clifford
 Lane. How does that sound?

George nods in relief. Not long now, and he will be reunited
 with Rita and Gerald and Olly the cat.

54 INT. HANWAY HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - EVENING

54

Stardust Memories by Louis Armstrong plays from the wireless.

We find Tilda, her skirt hitched up to her waist, white
 knickers exposed, and Doris kneeling down behind her, black
 coloring pencil in hand, trying to draw two straight lines
 down the back of her legs.

DORIS
 Oh for goodness sake, keep still.

TILDA
 Sorry, it tickles.

Doris stands and surveys her handiwork.

DORIS
 Ok, I think I'm done.

Tilda checks.

TILDA
 You haven't gone nearly high
 enough!

DORIS
 So what? No one's going to be
 looking up there.

TILDA
 Well, I must have higher hopes for
 the night than you do.

DORIS
What about Dave?

TILDA
What about Dave. He's far away in France. What he doesn't know won't hurt him.

Rita comes in looking dressed up and glamorous. Her hair is curled and pinned beautifully, her eyes and lips enhanced by makeup.

Doris and Tilda coo.

TILDA (CONT'D)
Don't you look nice when you let us at you!

RITA
I'm really not in the mood.

TILDA
Nothing that a drink or two won't cure. And I gave you the last of my lippy, don't make me regret that!

She puts on her shoes and grabs her coat.

TILDA (CONT'D)
Come on, let's get there before all the good ones are gone...what's left of them.

As she makes her way out the door, Doris links arms with Rita.

DORIS
I know what's on your mind. At least George is safe, it was the right thing to do. A night out is exactly what you need, exactly what we all need.

She gives her a squeeze, they put on their coats and follow Tilda out into the night.

The three women link arms, the sound of their high heels click-clacking along the street as they cross to the pub.

56

INT. EAST END PUB - EVENING

56

A busy East End pub filled with locals, mostly elderly and middle-aged, drowning their sorrows. There's a familiarity and ease and cosiness with everyone as if we've arrived in someone's living room. People gathered around Gerald at the piano, leading a sing-song over the racket of voices and laughter in the room.

Rita, Doris and Tilda are seated at a corner table.

A trio of SERVICEMEN in uniform stroll inside, make their way to the bar.

TILDA

Bingo.

Under the table we see her slipping off her wedding ring.

Across the room, Jack is sinking a pint with colleagues DAVIES, early 40's, stout, broken nose, ex-boxer) and CAMPBELL, early 30's.

Jack glances at Rita, catches her eye. She gives him a small wave, he small-waves back at her.

At the corner table, Doris sneaks a look at the Servicemen at the bar.

DORIS

The tall good-looking one is giving you the eye, Rita. Most definitely.

Rita's eyes don't lift from the table.

TILDA

My round.

She gets up.

TILDA (CONT'D)
More of the same?

RITA

I'm alright. I think I'm going to leave. I might go over to help out that Mickey Davies, at that new shelter.

TILDA

What? Mickey the midget? Well you know what they say...

(winking)

Height can have its advantages.

Rita and Doris roll their eyes.

DORIS
(at Tilda)
You and your one-track mind! Can't
you just shut it for even one
minute!

TILDA
(unremorseful)
Sorry.

She laughs, crosses to the bar.

The Servicemen shift up to make room for her.

SERVICEMAN ONE
What's your name, doll?

TILDA
Tilda with a T.

SERVICEMAN TWO
What's your poison, Tilda with a T?

TILDA
We've all got jobs now, we can buy
our own drinks thanks very much.

SERVICEMAN
Ah, come on, doll. We're gentlemen
from the old school, where chivalry
is alive and kicking. Let us treat
you and your friends.

TILDA
(no hesitation)
Oh alright. If you insist.

He signals at the Barman.

Across the room, Jack watches as Tilda rejoins Rita and
Doris, accompanied by the 3 Servicemen with a tray of drinks.
Davies nudges him.

DAVIES
Looks like you missed your chance
again, Jackie boy.

Jack doesn't respond.

CAMPBELL

(slurred)

Yeah but she's damaged goods isn't
she? She's got that little monkey
to look after.

He laughs.

Jack gets up.

JACK

On your feet, Campbell.

CAMPBELL

You what?

JACK

Get up. Let's take this outside.

In this moment there is no stutter. For a mild-seeming man, he looks focussed and positively dangerous. He looks like he knows how to fight.

Across the room Rita, others, pick up on the tension. The chatter in the room dies down.

Davies tries to make peace.

DAVIES

Sit down, Jack. He's had too much
to drink. He's pissed, man.

CAMPBELL

(slurred)

Just having a laugh. Keep your
shirt on.

We see Rita, coat on, exiting the pub, kissing Gerald goodbye on the forehead as he continues to play the piano as people sing along.

Jack sits sinking his face into his pint as his eyes follow Rita out.

We hear the click-clack of high heels descending a concrete staircase. Rita emerges into a large basement.

The walls are of open brick with structural columns planted every five meters. The low ceilinged, squat space is dimly lit by industrial metal lamps.

It's a shelter for 2000 people. It's epic.

We follow Rita as she passes people lying on beds, some ill and some just resting, towards a large crowd gathered at the far end.

MICKEY DAVIS 29, suited, white, 3ft6, stands on a table addressing the crowd. He is a forceful orator.

MICKEY

...This is not a Government sanctioned shelter, and due to the overcrowding of official shelters we decided to open our doors, not just to the injured or the homeless but also to people simply trying to find refuge. And there have to be rules put in place due to the squalid unsanitary situation which occurred last night. Please use the buckets which have now been provided. There will be another bucket going round for a collection to help fund this facility. We are here for your wellbeing and to give all equal care, regardless of whoever you are or wherever you come from. Like most of you here I grew up in the East End. As a Jew, and in my community, we helped each other, we joined together with good working class men and women to fight the fascists. Now I want to be clear: some have called me a socialist, a communist, a danger to our society, but my ideals are more closely associated with Christianity than with communism. 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. Maybe Jesus was a red. I don't know.

Laughter.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

God bless us all and our brave servicemen and women that are fighting for our liberty. And thank you for your support. And don't mix up the buckets!

The crowd, amongst them patrons and patients, some in beds, laugh and applaud.

Shouts of 'Mickey, Mickey'.

The MUSICIANS strike up. An accordion, metal spoons and a harmonica. Their collaborations sound more like a rhythmic racket than music.

Mickey clammers off the table and is lifted off his feet by a grateful audience, his head nearly hitting the ceilings as the crowd jostle him up and down.

We see Rita amongst the people applauding.

58 INT. FRUIT AND WOOL EXCHANGE SHELTER - NIGHT 58

Rita crosses to where Mickey sits at a make-shift desk, shifting paperwork and allocating tasks.

RITA
Excuse me.

MICKEY
One second.
(at a Volunteer)
We've sourced some insulin for
Sheila Mason in Bed 17.

He hands her a bag.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Make sure she takes it, she's in a
bad way.

The Volunteer nods, leaves with the bag.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
(at Rita)
How can I help?

RITA
I'm Rita Hanway. I'd like to
volunteer. I can make beds, clean
floors, I don't mind doing
anything.

MICKEY
How's your First Aid?

RITA
I did a course three months ago.

He regards her.

MICKEY
Are you alright?

RITA
(beat)
I evacuated my son this morning.
I'm really missing him.

MICKEY
Right decision, Rita. The bombing
is not stopping any time soon. Come
with me.

He leads her past volunteers making up beds, settling patients, stirring a large pot of porridge, assisting new arrivals.

He stops at the bed of a sweet looking girl (10).

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Hello Betty. I've got a new friend
of mine I want you to meet. Her
name is Rita.

Betty's arm is wrapped in dirty looking bandages.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
She's going to change your
dressing.

RITA
What happened to your arm, Betty?

BETTY
I don't know.
(beat)
I want my mum.

Mickey discreetly shakes his head at Rita before leaving.

RITA
Do you want a cuddle?

Betty's lower lip trembles. She nods her head. Rita gives her a long cuddle, rocking her in her arms.

RITA (CONT'D)
Let's get you fixed up. I'm going
to disinfect your arm and then give
you a nice clean bandage.

She sets to work gently taking off the bandage.

RITA (CONT'D)

Have you got pets at home? A dog or
a cat or a goldfish?

BETTY

I've got a rabbit. We thought it
was a girl so I called her Daisy.
But then she turned out to be a
boy!

Rita laughs.

RITA

Hold still. This might hurt a tiny
tiny bit.

She pulls off sticking plaster.

RITA (CONT'D)

Brave girl. All done.

59 EXT. LONDON STREETS - NIGHT

59

George with Ife on his nightly patrol.

The streets are dark and the soft light of Ife's lantern is all they have to guide them. Their shadows appear like giants projected on the walls of houses.

GEORGE

Ife, where do you come from?

IFE

Nigeria. Do you know where that is?

George shakes his head.

IFE (CONT'D)

It's in Africa.

GEORGE

That's where lions are from.

Ife laughs.

IFE

Well yes, in some places there are lions. Not where I come from though.

GEORGE

What about crocodiles?

IFE

Yes, there are crocodiles. But the only thing you really have to look out for in the city are the buses, motorcycles and cars. Nigerians drive like crazy people.

George looks confused.

GEORGE

Are you black?

IFE

(laughs)

Yes.

GEORGE

I'm not black.

IFE

Are you not?

GEORGE

No. My father was. He was born in Grenada. My mum says he lives in heaven now.

IFE

What's his name?

GEORGE

Marcus, but I never knew him...my mum said people took him away from us before I was born.

IFE

Why was that?

GEORGE

I don't know.

He hesitates.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I told my mum I hated her.

Ife regards him.

IFE

Why did you say that?

GEORGE

Because she made me go.

IFE
She did it to keep you safe.

GEORGE
(low)
I know.

They pass a house, lights blazing in the front room.

IFE
Wait here.

George watches as he crosses to the front door, knocks hard.

IFE (CONT'D)
(Knocking)
Hello... Hello.

A MAN in a vest and braces eventually opens the door.

IFE (CONT'D)
Good evening, sir.

The man doesn't respond.

IFE (CONT'D)
It's black-out after 8pm. Please
pull your curtains closed.

The man looks from Ife to George and says nothing. He turns back, slamming the door behind him. Ife appears to take no notice.

A second later the lights go out.

Ife and George walk on.

George's small hand reaches up for Ife's. They walk down the dark street together hand in hand.

IFE (CONT'D)
Do you know what I do when I'm
afraid of the dark?

George looks up at him.

IFE (CONT'D)
I sing. Singing helps me feel brave
and strong.

Ife begins to sing. He sings in a language that is unfamiliar to George. It's beautiful and Ife helps George to join in.

George loves the sound of the new words and sings along.

We hear their singing accompanied by traditional *African Instruments* as they walk along the dark residential street.

It's both charming and comforting and offsets the gloomy surroundings.

The chilling wail of the AIR RAID SIREN interrupts their singing.

Ife jolts into action, pacing fast in the direction of a shelter. Pulling George behind him, his small feet race to keep up.

60 EXT. AIR-RAID SHELTER - NIGHT

60

Ife and George arrive at a government shelter. Busy lines have already started forming.

Women with rollers in their hair, children bundled up in blankets, people in all sorts of disarray.

As one of the wardens is trying to maintain order in the frenzy to take shelter, another spots Ife and ushers him forward.

Disgruntled looks on people's faces as Ife paces past into the shelter, George in tow.

61 INT. AIR RAID SHELTER - NIGHT

61

A large but cramped concrete cavern, low ceilings supported by old wooden beams. It's cold and crumbling.

The light coming from the broken fixtures distorts faces, illuminating some and casting shadows on others. Inhabitants in corners concealed in darkness.

Makeshift beds on upturned crates and benches. Children's heads with messy hair, resting on improvised pillows, four or five to a bed. It's hard to tell which shapes are bodies and which are stacks of belongings.

GEORGE
(to Ife)
I need to pee.

IFE
(indicating)
Behind those curtains.

George moves towards the curtains, pulling them back to find two buckets in the corner.

In an attempt at dignity sheets have been hung to conceal them, one marked 'Ladies' and the other 'Gentlemen'. It's squalid.

George takes away his hand from over his nose and mouth and undoes his pants, closes his eyes, and pees into the bucket. Whatever's in there he doesn't want to see.

George returns to Ife and looks around the shelter as more people file in and take their space.

There are WOMEN KNITTING. An OLD LADY settles down and unpacks a flask of hot tea and a sandwich. She stops to make room for an OLD MAN to rest beside her. He's dressed in a threadbare suit with briefcase ready for the night, he looks more like he's going away for a weekend break.

People everywhere are trying to settle in the strange surroundings with the sound of bombing and destruction outside.

Ife leads George through looking for a space for him to settle.

The sound of an angry voice.

WHITE MAN
If you don't move there is going to
be trouble.

A small group of WHITE PEOPLE are hanging a sheet to segregate themselves from a group of JEWISH and SIKH FAMILIES.

WHITE WOMAN
This is for English people, move
over.

SIKH MAN
(Politely)
But madam...

WHITE MAN
(cutting him off)
Don't raise your voice at my wife.
Who do you think you are eh? Just
move over.

A JEWISH MAN intervenes.

JEWISH MAN
Sir he wasn't raising his voice. We
have every right to settle where we
choose.

WHITE MAN

And I definitely wasn't talking to
you lot mate, so you better shut up
and sit down or I'll give you
what's for.

Ife intervenes.

IFE

What seems to be the problem?

The reaction to Ife's appearance is one of relief and surprise.

SIKH MAN

This gentleman has put up this
sheet to contain us. To put us in a
prison within a prison. I have no
interest in looking at him but I do
not want to be concealed.

Ife tears down the sheet and addresses the white man.

IFE

Sir, there is no segregation here.
We are all equal members of this
country, willing or not.

Ife, being overheard, is getting the attention of everyone in ear-shot.

IFE (CONT'D)

This is exactly how Hitler came to power, by dividing man against man, and race against race. We are in a situation of war, banded together, asked to do our best. This will be the making or the breaking of us and I would like to think we can step up to the occasion and see our fellow human beings as equals, and that we treat each other with compassion and respect.

Shamed in public, the White Man and his wife look away.

Ife crosses back to George. George looks up at him, moved by his words.

GEORGE

Ife, you could be my dad.

IFE
 (wry)
 I think your mother might have
 something to say about that.

He settles George in a makeshift bed.

IFE (CONT'D)
 Get some sleep. I'm on duty, I've
 got to finish my rounds. I'll be
 back in the morning.

GEORGE
 Take me with you!

IFE
 It's too dangerous.

GEORGE
 Please!

IFE
 I'll be back in a few hours. And
 I'll teach you another song when I
 take you home.

He ruffles George's head, crosses to the exit.

George's eyes follow the light of Ife's lantern as it illuminates his way, only to fade and eventually disappear as he ascends the stairs.

A restless George tries to fall asleep to the sound of distant bombings.

BEGIN DREAM:

62

INT. CINEMA - DAY

62

We are now in a large grand cinema, seated with 200 people. Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* is on view.

Rita and George are sitting in the middle of a row of seats, light flickering off their faces, engrossed in the action on screen.

The soundtrack is Rita, Gerald and George singing AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' from the earlier parlour family sing-along scene.

GERALD, RITA & GEORGE
*No one to talk with
 All by myself.
 (MORE)*

GERALD, RITA & GEORGE (CONT'D)
*No one to walk with
 But I'm happy on the shelf
 Ain't misbehavin'
 I'm savin' my love for you.*

63 EXT. CINEMA - DAY

63

The singing continues.

GERALD & RITA & GEORGE
 (singing)
*I don't stay out late
 Don't care to go
 I'm home about eight
 Just me and my radio
 Ain't misbehavin'
 I'm savin' my love for you*

Rita and George exit the cinema, swinging their joined hands, joyous. The colours of the scene are hyper-real, as if we have entered into another reality, a familiar one but more alive.

END DREAM

64 INT. AIR RAID SHELTER - DAWN

64

The all-clear siren sounds. George startles awake. He gets up, looks around.

There is no sign of Ife.

The wardens usher people out of the shelter. George plucks up the courage and approaches one of them.

GEORGE
 Excuse me, sir, have you seen Ife?

The warden hesitates.

WARDEN
 Wait here lad.

He crosses to his colleague nearby. The all clear siren continues to sound. George stays put as others file out around him.

The wardens are in earshot of George, he can hear what they're saying.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
 The lad's asking for Ife.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

65

INT. BOMBED OUT HOUSE - THE PREVIOUS NIGHT

65

Flames and smoke disorientate us. We have no idea of the scale or danger.

We see what looks like a lantern. A spot in the mist. We hear Ife's voice...

IFE

Anyone there? Come towards the light! Come towards the light!

We are now with Ife. Each turn of his lantern illuminates the wreckage of a house. Sometimes familiar and sometimes unrecognizable.

The sound of far off projectiles, WHISTLING to the ground and EXPLODING, accompany us.

His lantern swoops to the left to reveal a shoe, but on closer inspection we see it's a severed foot.

VOICE (O.S)

Help! Help!

Ife hurries towards the sound, lantern aloft.

IFE

Hold on! I'm coming! Keep calling!

He scrambles down a mound of debris.

We see a MAN badly wounded, pinned in position by a large concrete slab.

Ife scrambles around. He picks up a nearby metal bar and begins to leverage the slab with all his might. Perspiring and teeth gritting he roars with each desperate effort.

66

EXT. BOMBED OUT HOUSE - NIGHT

66

Ife emerges from the bombed out house, coughing, his face and clothes covered with soot. The rescued man is draped around his shoulders.

He makes his way down to the street, hands him over to waiting AMBULANCE WORKERS. Exhausted, his breath is visible in the cold night air.

A GROUP OF RESIDENTS are waiting nervously as the EMERGENCY SERVICES are already dousing the house, hoses at full power, trying to calm the flames.

A WOMAN rushes over.

WOMAN
(her distress)
Somebody please help, my mother is trapped, she's disabled, she can't get down the stairs.

IFE
(without a second thought)
Where is she?

The woman points to a house across the street. Ife rushes towards it.

The sky is now dotted with search lights as bomber planes HUM in the air.

We hear Ife singing to himself as he runs into the house, the same song he sung with George.

END FLASHBACK.

67

INT. AIR-RAID SHELTER - DAWN

67

The all clear siren continues to moan. The two wardens glance at George.

WARDEN ONE
And that was it. Poor sod, he didn't think twice about himself.

WARDEN TWO
We've got to see about getting that runaway boy back on a train.

They are speaking softly, but George can overhear them. He turns on his heel and takes off.

WARDEN ONE
Hey! Come back!

George runs at lightning speed to the exit.

WARDEN TWO
Not our problem mate. We've got enough on our hands.

On these words, we stay on George's face as he makes his way to the street. The weight of the deaths of his friends is taking a toll. Something has hardened in him as he wipes away his tears. He is more determined than ever to get home.

68

EXT. LONDON STREETS - DAWN

68

George is met by the devastation of crushed, smoldering buildings from the previous night's onslaught.

As he passes through the destruction all around he suddenly feels more alone than he ever has in his life. He stumbles along the uneven terrain with no direction to go.

We move along buildings and ROWS OF HOUSES, past PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIZED. We see RESCUE SERVICES hard at work, FIREMEN still trying to put out flames. We see BUSES buried in craters.

We travel above the surreal destruction of London (plan view). The impact of war. DEAD BODIES CARRIED ON STRETCHERS, AIR RAID WARDENS digging through wreckages and other EMERGENCY SERVICES, COLLAPSED HOUSES, SMALL CONGREGATIONS GATHERING, prayers being said, an old woman standing outside a bombed out derelict building feeding an array of stray cats.

We see Gerald wearily making his way home along his street, bundle under his arm, carrying Olly in his cat carrier, nodding to his neighbours doing the same.

Rita files out of Mickey's shelter.

69

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

69

Rita, now dressed for work, walks down the near-empty street. The pavements are still soaked from the night's fire fighting efforts.

Fronts of houses wiped clean away. Snapshots of how people live their lives exposed, like dolls' houses, for all to see.

A WOMAN with a broom pathetically tries to tidy up.

Rita scuttles past a large wall miraculously standing on its own, but teetering in the wind.

70

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MORNING

70

Rita passes an alleyway, A serviceman (his back to us) is having sex standing up against a wall. The woman is obscured from view.

The obscured WOMAN catches Rita's eye. It's Tilda, still dressed in her clothes from the night before. The Serviceman is one of the three Servicemen from the pub.

Undeterred in her pleasure, Tilda holds Rita's gaze and gives her a wink. Rita taps her wrist, eyebrow raised in a gesture to say hurry up. She walks on.

71

EXT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - MORNING

71

Rita approaches. A crowd gathered at the end of the street, shift workers and onlookers held-back by air raid wardens.

RITA
What's going on?

WORKER
They say there's a bomb or something.

RITA
In the factory?

WORKER
We don't know.

72

EXT. BUILDING ADJACENT TO MUNITIONS FACTORY - MORNING

72

A stethoscope is being pressed against a metal object. Every time it's replaced onto the surface we hear a gentle ping.



THOMAS CLARK (an officer of the Royal Engineers, mid 40's, mustache , sleep deprived) and two colleagues are carefully examining the unexploded bomb which has formed a large shallow crater. Air raid wardens are assembling sandbags.

Emergency services are all around, including Jack and his unit.

Thomas looks up. His eyes alight on Jack.

THOMAS CLARK
Over here, my good man. I need you
to assist.

Jack nods, crosses nearer. Thomas hands him a tool.

THOMAS CLARK (CONT'D)
Hold this.

He bends to listen.

THOMAS CLARK (CONT'D)
It's not ticking yet but it's a
Category A.

Jack nods, trying to hide his alarm.

THOMAS CLARK (CONT'D)
The slightest vibration could set
it off.

Jack nods again, trying to mask his fear.

Thomas and his colleagues examine the incendiary.

COLLEAGUE
It's going to be impossible to
move, Sir.

THOMAS CLARK
(bellows)
Alright. Positions please
gentlemen.

We follow the procedure as apparatus are taken off of a truck along with a domestic boiler and led to the device.

A 'trepanner' machine is carefully attached before the sound of drilling is heard as it automatically cuts a hole in the casing of the bomb.

Two rubber tubes are carefully attached to the device and snake down the street in different directions. Steam hisses as it's pumped from the boiler feeding into one of the tubes and liquified explosive is extracted through the second tube into a truck with a large tank. The process is precarious.

The whole apparatus looks a little bit clunky and absurd.

COLLEAGUE
(to Thomas Clark)
We're underway Sir!

JACK
What's happening?

THOMAS CLARK
We're steaming out the explosive.
Less explosive, less damage. Now,
my good man, you and your
colleagues move everybody along, as
far away from here as possible.

JACK
Yes sir.

THOMAS CLARK
Now!

Jack goes into action. Rallying his colleagues to help move everyone to safety.

JACK & OTHERS
Now the lot of yeh, get back! Move
right back!

Jack spots Rita in the crowd.

WOMAN IN THE CROWD
Is it a bomb?

JACK
Just move away from this area,
Madam, as fast as you can. Move it!
Now!

73 EXT. MUNITIONS FACTORY, EAST END - MORNING

73

An almighty explosion rocks the air.

The bomb has prematurely detonated and taken Thomas Clark and his team with it.

Munitions workers and spectators race away in confusion through a massive dust cloud.

A gust of wind changes direction and a great cloud of dust from the explosion swirls, Rita and others are lost in the fog and confusion, not knowing which direction to turn. We hear the sound of violent coughing, a few screams.

Rita feels a hand on her shoulder, it's Jack. He's the calm in the storm. He guides her to the side of the road and sits her down on the kerb. He hands her a flask of water. She drinks deeply.

Nothing is said as he gently removes a piece of debris from her forehead. It's as if this near death experience, this world of limbo, has encouraged Jack to act. There is a moment of connection. As the dust begins to settle, their gaze is broken and reality reveals itself again. Rita feels vulnerable and exposed.

JACK
You alright?

She nods. He glances back at the mayhem of the explosion.

JACK (CONT'D)
I b...b...I better get back.

RITA
Thanks.

A moment between them. Then he turns and runs back to the seat of the blast.

TILDA'S VOICE
Rita! Rita!

Late for work, she is running up the road.

Breathless, she catches up.

Rita watching as Jack is swallowed up in the dust bowl at the end of the street.

74

EXT. LONDON STREET - MORNING

74

We now find George looking worse for wear and walking purposefully down a market street.

We hear the beautiful song of a LAVENDER MERCHANT as George passes.

LAVENDER MERCHANT

(singing)

*Won't you buy my sweet blooming
lavender, sixteen branches one
penny, Ladies fair make no delay,
I have your lavender fresh today.
Buy it once, you'll buy it twice,
It makes your clothes smell sweet
and nice. It will scent your pocket
handkerchiefs, sixteen branches for
one penny,
As I walk through London streets
I have your lavender nice and
sweet, sixteen branches for a
penny.*

75

EXT. BAKERY - MORNING

75

A long queue outside. George stands peering in longingly at the bread and pastries on display.

76

INT. BAKERY - MORNING

76

Inside, at the counter, a beautiful YOUNG WOMAN (bi-racial) is being served.

The SHOP-OWNER spots George salivating at the window.

SHOP OWNER

Oi!

He crosses over, knocks loudly on the glass, shooing George away.

The Young Woman looks at George, taking him in.

SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)
 (returning to the counter)
 They should get rid of the lot of
 them. Bloody scallawags.

YOUNG WOMAN
 (paying up)
 Takes one to know one.

SHOP OWNER
 How dare you.

She puts two fingers up at him as she exits the shop.

77 EXT. LONDON STREET - MORNING

77

George walks forlornly down the street. The young woman shouts after him.

YOUNG WOMAN
 Hey!

She speeds up to catch up with him.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
 You hungry?

George is suspicious. The young woman breaks off a small piece of pastry from a brown paper bag and hands it to him. He hesitates for a nano-second and then grabs it and gobbles it down in one. He holds his hand out for more.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)
 Hold your horses, boy. When did you last have something to eat?

GEORGE
 I can't remember.

YOUNG WOMAN
 Let's go get you a glass of milk
 and a sandwich and you can be on
 your way. I'm Jess. You?

George is silent.

JESS
 What's your name?

George is silent.

JESS (CONT'D)
 No name, no sandwich. Your choice.

George, hungry, takes a chance.

GEORGE
George.

JESS
Nice to meet you George.

GEORGE
Can I have a sausage sandwich?

JESS
I don't see why not.

She leads the way down the street.

78 INT. LONDON PUB - DAY

78

Smokey, dusty, a scattering of punters, mainly older men, drinking and smoking in silence. At the bar, legs dangling from a high stool, George is scoffing milk and a sandwich.

Nearby, huddled at a table, Jess is with THREE WHITE MEN, ALBERT, HARVEY and FRED, 40's, and a white woman in her fifties, BERYL. They have all seen better days. They eye George at the bar.

BERYL
Well, he's small enough, that's for sure.

ALBERT
You done good, Jess. What's his name?

JESS
George.

ALBERT
He's a runaway. I can smell them a mile off.

He bellows at George.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
Come here, nipper, let's take a proper look at you.

George swallows the last of the sandwich, gulps down the milk. He gets off the stool and crosses over to them.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
How was the sandwich?

George hesitates. Albert is scaring him.

BERYL
Albert asked you a question,
George.

GEORGE
(beat)
Good.

BERYL
What do you say George?

GEORGE
(beat)
Thank you.

ALBERT
Alright son, time to get to work.

The gang gets up from the table, grab fags and jackets.

George, frightened, turns to look at Jess who guiltily looks away.

Harvey, the heavy of the trio, takes George by the arm, drags him out of the pub.

79

EXT. BOMBED OUT STREET CORNER - DAY

79

The group walk briskly and purposefully down the street, Harvey dragging George along.

A newspaper hoarding attended by a scrawny looking NEWS VENDOR leans against a wall. The headline reads 'LONDON CAN TAKE IT'.

Albert nods at the vendor and hands him a note.

NEWS VENDOR
Cheers, Albert.

He scurries away.

Albert bends to George, speaks softly into his ear.

ALBERT
There's a hole in the wall behind here. What you need to do is make yourself as small as possible and crawl through.

BERYL

Take this.

She hands George a large burlap sack.

ALBERT

Inside, take as much as you can,
everything you can see. Speed is of
the essence, Georgie.

George stares at him, fearful.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

Understood?

George turns and runs. Harvey sticks out a leg and trips him up, pulls him roughly to his feet.

Albert leans in to George, faces centimeters apart.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

If you try that again, I will personally thrash you until you are black and blue. After that, if you're still breathing, we will chuck your body into the River Thames. Nobody will ever find you, dead or alive.

George pales, filled with fear.

The gang do a quick check that no one is watching. Harvey moves the newspaper hoarding aside, exposing a large hole in the wall. He lifts George and pushes him roughly into the hole. They replace the hoarding to cover it.

Albert hands out cigarettes.

HARVEY

Cheers Al.

They take up nonchalant positions as they wait for George to return. Fred picks up a newspaper and turns the pages.

BERYL

Fred, it's upside down, you stupid git.

The gang guffaw.

George clambers through the dark hole.

81

INT. BOMBED-OUT JEWELERS - DAY

81

George drops to the floor. He picks himself up. He is covered in dust and debris and his knees and hands are scuffed. He coughs, rubs at his eyes, tries to make sense of where he is.

His eyes caught by a large cabinet, shattered in two, broken glass everywhere.

Inside the cabinet, precious and semi-precious jewels in disarray, gleaming in the shadowy dusty light.

Slowly, he crosses to the cabinet.

He opens the burlap bag and starts emptying the shelves. A hoard of SILVER WATCHES, BRACELETS, RINGS. His small hands working as quickly as they can.

Suddenly, he hears the sound of a door shattering, sending more dust and debris in all directions. Beams of light from torches flood inside.

He crouches down behind the counter, trying to keep perfectly still. He can hear his heart hammering in his chest.

TWO AIR RAID WARDENS come in, cautious steps as they crunch through the rubble.

George crouched behind the counter, eyes wide with fear.

A beam overhead totters.

AIR RAID WARDEN ONE
Out the way!

As the beam crashes to the ground. More dust and debris.

AIR RAID WARDEN TWO
Let's get out of here.

AIR RAID WARDEN ONE
Wait a minute.

His eye caught by the gleam of jewellery in the shattered cabinet.

He crosses over, he is right beside George. The other warden calls out to him.

AIR RAID WARDEN TWO
Jim, take a look at this.

He shines his torch at the wall. The hole that George came through is revealed.

AIR RAID WARDEN ONE
Any scallawag off the street could
come in here and help himself.

On George, crouched low behind the display case.

There is silence for a long beat.

Then the sound of grunts and something heavy being shoved.

The wardens place a heavy safe in front of the open wall,
effectively sealing off George's exit.

AIR RAID WARDEN ONE (CONT'D)
Let's go. We've done what we can.
It's up to the Old Bill now.

They cross to the exit. At the split display case, Warden Two pauses, leans in.

He is head to head level with George. If he turns to the right, he will see George crouched small, looking back at him.

But instead his focus is on the jewelry. He picks up a ring, blows dust off it, shines his torch on its ruby rays.

He is about to stash the ring in his pocket when he notices the display racks George emptied earlier.

He sees a trace of a hand where the dust has been wiped clean. He runs a finger through it noticing that these are fresh hand prints.

Instantly alert and feeling like someone is watching him, he snaps his head to the right.

Cut to the place where George had been hiding...

He is no longer there, but his footprints in the dust are enough confirmation that the wardens are not alone.

AIR RAID WARDEN TWO
(putting back the ring)
There's someone in here... Been
nicking the jewelry.

They remove their truncheons, instantly on high alert. Stepping over fallen plaster and wood, they sweep the room with torches.

George has wedged himself behind some fallen ceiling plaster.

As the wardens near, George knows he is seconds away from getting caught. In a panic he looks left and right trying to figure his way out.

He sees a large teetering pillar of wood. With all his strength he kicks out at it. It falls, bringing down more dust and debris, in the path of the wardens.

AIR RAID WARDEN ONE
(scared)
Let's go.

AIR RAID WARDEN TWO
One second...

Unaware, he inches closer to George.

An adjacent beam collapses right across his path.

AIR RAID WARDEN TWO (CONT'D)
Too right. Let's go.

They exit, Air Raid Warden Two sneakily pocketing a watch as he leaves.

George puts his head in his hands with relief.

Beryl's shadow appears at the front door of the jewelers.

BERYL
(urgent whisper)
Oi boy, hurry, come out now.

82

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

82

Now in a makeshift den in an abandoned warehouse, the gang empty the bag and look at the spoils of the robbery on an improvised table.

The elegant, crafted jewels are a huge contrast to the surroundings.

George is sat, surrounded, Jess beside him.

ALBERT
Well done my boy. You did good.

GEORGE
Can I go home now?

ALBERT
All in good time.

GEORGE
No. Now.

Albert backhands him hard across the face. Blood trickles from his nose.

JESS
(to Albert)
Don't do that!

BERYL
(a warning to Jess)
Jess, keep your mouth shut-

Too late, as Albert back-hands Jess hard across the face, who doesn't show any emotion.

ALBERT
(at George)
Did that hurt?

Albert's appearance starts to contort. He slaps himself hard in the face. Everyone freezes, knowing what is to come. No-one dares say a word. Albert breathes heavily, trying to get his rage under control.

He begins to pace backwards and forwards, mumbling to himself. The sound of explosions in his head; faint whistles which explode on impact one after the other. With every explosion he strikes himself hard in the face. It looks ritualistic, like calling on the gods for protection. He falls to the ground and curls himself into a ball, then stands up and repeats the dance again.

He's re-living the horror of the trenches of the Great War. He's obviously suffering severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The gang are well aware of these turns.

Beryl, from behind, wraps her arms around Albert enclosing him like a straight-jacket.

BERYL
(well-worn words)
It's alright, it's alright. You're here with us. You're not there.
You're here.

Albert's breathing comes under control and coming to from his episode, he pushes Beryl off him and looks at a petrified George.

ALBERT
 (still breathing heavily)
 Now young man, you deserve a
 reward.
 (at Jess)
 Go get him some cake.

Jess takes George firmly by the hand, away from the table to the exit.

Albert hollers at Jess.

ALBERT (CONT'D)
 He's a slippery little tyke, make
 sure you keep hold of him.

83 EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

83

Jess holds on to George's hand tightly as she pulls him down the street. Her cheek is inflamed and there is dried blood caked around George's nose.

JESS
 (angry)
 You see what happens? Don't you
 ever dare cross him again!

GEORGE
 Why do you stay with him?

She doesn't respond.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 He's a nasty, horrible man.

JESS
 He's my dad.

George takes that in.

JESS (CONT'D)
 He's the only family I got.

GEORGE
 Why is he so mean?

JESS
 He wasn't always like this, he
 doesn't mean it.

She hesitates.

JESS (CONT'D)
 He fought in the Great War. He was
 a young boy when he enlisted.
 Something happened. He has
 nightmares, he says he can't unsee
 what he's seen.

She looks at the dried blood around George's nose.

JESS (CONT'D)
 Does it hurt?

GEORGE
 Just a little. Does it hurt where
 he hit you?

JESS
 Just a little.

She smiles. She is becoming very fond of George.

JESS (CONT'D)
 I think it might be time for a
 sausage sandwich. What do you say?

GEORGE
 Yum.

They share a smile.

84

INT. MUNITIONS FACTORY - DAY

84

Production is in full swing, workers, including Rita, Doris,
 and Tilda, bent to their tasks.

The loudspeaker tannoy squawks and crackles into life. On the
 landing above, Clive makes an announcement, oozing with self-
 importance.

CLIVE
 (over tannoy)
 Calling Rita Hanway. Calling Rita
 Hanway. Will you make your way to
 the office please.

At the production line, Rita, startled, looks up. Doris and
 Tilda look at her questioningly. Rita shakes her head, gets
 to her feet.

Doris and Tilda and others, watch as Rita crosses the floor
 and climbs the metal steps to the office. They exchange
 questioning looks.

85

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

85

Inside, waiting, are two OFFICIALS, a woman and a man.

Pumped up with a sense of his own importance, Clive leads Rita inside.

CLIVE

Take a seat, Rita.

Filled with foreboding, she stays standing where she is.

MALE OFFICIAL

Mrs. Hanway, I'm Timothy Ashdown,
and this is my colleague Brenda
Watson.

FEMALE OFFICIAL

We're from the Department of
Children Evacuees.

Rita is suddenly filled with dread.

WOMAN

It has been brought to our
attention that your son George
Hanway did not arrive at his
destination.

RITA

(beat)

What did you say?

MALE OFFICIAL

We found out that about an hour or
so into the journey, he absconded.

RITA

He absconded? What does that mean?

FEMALE OFFICIAL

A child who befriended him told us
that he jumped from the train.

Rita, struggling to comprehend.

RITA

He jumped!?

Her mouth is dry, she can hardly get the words out. Rita
shakes her head in shock and disbelief, struggling to process
this turn of events.

RITA (CONT'D)

(choked)

He was placed in your care, you are
responsible for his safety-

CLIVE

Now, Rita, this must be a shock,
please contain yourself-

RITA

(strangled, at the
Officials)

Where is he?

FEMALE OFFICIAL

We don't know.

RITA

Where is my boy?

She is experiencing mounting hysteria.

MALE OFFICIAL

All the relevant authorities, and
the police, have been informed.

RITA

You were meant to be looking after
him-

MALE OFFICIAL

All the protocols were followed in
accordance with the law.

FEMALE OFFICIAL

Here are our details, Mrs Hanway.

She hands Rita a card.

FEMALE OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

We are truly sorry. If he comes
back home, please let us know.

Rita stands a moment, fists clenched, poised on the edge of
hysteria.

Doris and Tilda and others watch as Rita strides out of
Clive's office and descends to the floor. Clive follows on,
close behind.

CLIVE

I know you're upset, Rita, and that's understandable, given the circumstances, but you are in the middle of a shift-

She pulls off her protective clothing and throws it on the ground.

RITA

My George is missing and all you can think about is your flipping shifts. Who do you think you are? Well you can shove your job up your jaxy! I'll be back when I've found my boy!

The eclipsing sound of the munitions factory is all we hear as we see Rita stride towards the exit. Doris and Tilda, unable to leave their station, yell after her.

87 EXT. HANWAY HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

87

Rita, coat on, back turned facing the window above the sink. Gerald stares at her in disbelief.

GERALD

(softly to himself)

Why did he jump?

RITA

(turns, shouting)

I don't know Dad, no one knows.

She picks up her purse and door key.

GERALD

Where are you going?

RITA

I'm going to find George. I can't stay here twiddling my thumbs.

GERALD

(getting up)

I'll get my coat, I'm coming with you-

RITA

No!

Gerald stares at her.

RITA (CONT'D)
 (on the verge of tears)
 What if he comes home and there's
 nobody here?

She leaves. Gerald sits down heavily. Olly the cat comes into the room. Gerald picks him up and begins to pet him. The distress on his face is visible.

88 EXT. FIRE STATION - LONDON - DAY

88

Davies and Campbell and other firefighters are washing down vehicles and prepping for the inevitable evening raids.

Rita walks into view.

RITA
 Is Jack here?

DAVIES
 (indicating)
 He's inside.

As she crosses inside, Campbell raises his eyebrows and smirks at Davies.

89 EXT. BUSY LONDON STREET - DAY

89

Jess crosses the street to the bakery where she and George first met, she's holding tightly on to his hand.

90 INT. BAKERY - DAY

90

They enter and stand in line.

JESS
 Pick a cake George.

George points.

She loosens her grip on him to open her purse and at that moment George makes a run for it. She shouts after him.

JESS (CONT'D)
 Come back!

91

EXT. BUSY LONDON STREET - DAY

91

George runs as fast as he can, as if his life depends on it. He looks back, Jess is gaining on him. Suddenly, strong arms grab hold of him. A POLICEMAN looks down at him.

POLICEMAN

What's your hurry, young fella?

Jess catches up.

JESS

(out of breath)

Thank you officer. He's my son.
He's a bit of a tearaway.

GEORGE

She's lying! She's not my mum...
they make me steal for them-

JESS

He's supposed to evacuate this
week. He doesn't want to go.

POLICEMAN

Listen, lad, you evacuating is for
your own safety, and we have more
important things to do than minding
scallywags like you.

There is more than a hint of racism in his tone. Jess takes offense.

JESS

What did you just say? He's not a
scallywag, he's my son!

GEORGE

I am not, she's lying to you-

POLICEMAN

Apologies, ma'am. I didn't mean to
offend.

Jess grabs hold of George and leads him away.

JESS

If you ever try that again, it
won't be Albert giving you a good
belting, it will be me!

She is on the verge of tears.

JESS (CONT'D)
I thought we were friends!

92 INT. ST PANCRAS STATION - EVENING

92

From the rafters we see the scale of the station as Rita and Jack, smartly dressed in his dark blue uniform, sash and soft cap, arrive at St Pancras station - a dramatic contrast to how we first experienced the location. The only real movement and sound is the night-mail being loaded onto noisy trolleys.

We see a railway worker pointing Rita and Jack towards a booth at the far end of the station.

CUT TO:

93 INT. ST PANCRAS STATION - EVENING

93

Jack and Rita stand at the lost property booth.

JACK
(at the REGISTRAR)
Excuse me.

The Registrar looks up peeking over his glasses.

JACK (CONT'D)
A 10 year old boy, name of George Hanway, was evacuated from this station yesterday morning. He's gone missing.

Jack shows him a photograph of George.

REGISTRAR
This is lost property, not lost children! Read the sign.

JACK
(level)
I can read the sign. I'm asking whether you've heard anything-

REGISTRAR
I can't help you. Nothing has been reported here.

JACK
(sarcastic)
You have a nice day mate.

94

INT. PLATFORM 3, ST PANCRAS STATION - EVENING

94

Jack with Rita as she walks slowly down the platform.

JACK

Wh...what ever happened to Marcus?
Did you..did you ever hear from him
again?

She hesitates.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I don't mean to pry.

RITA

After they took him away...the next day I went to the police station. They told me they had released him without charge. A few days later, one of his ship-mates gave me a letter from him. He said he'd been deported back to Grenada, and that he would do everything in his power to return to me. I found out I was pregnant and nine months later George was born. I never heard from Marcus again.

Halfway down, she abruptly stops. Her nostrils flare, her chest rapidly rises and falls, her breathing is labored. She is having a full-on panic attack. He guides her to a bench.

JACK

Big breaths. In, out, in, out.

His hand on her back reassuring her. Gradually, her breathlessness subsides.

Their eyes meet. Another moment of connection.

He helps her up, gently leads her away.

From afar, we see the two figures walk slowly back up the platform.

95

EXT. SPITALFIELDS - LONDON - NIGHT

95

It's raining, murky water bounces off the pavement. We see Rita soaked, standing outside a greengrocers, approaching a passer-by.

RITA

Sorry Madam, my son George is gone missing. He's got dark hair...

WOMAN

Sorry love, no.

She looks through the condensated window of the greengrocers where Jack is waiting in a queue. Hearing laughter, she turns back to see a couple, man and woman, on the other side of the street embracing, teasing and kissing one another as they hurry through the rain. Rita's eyes are locked on them.

Jack exits the greengrocers, a bell rings as the heavy door shuts behind him. The sign on the front of the door is turned to 'CLOSED'.

JACK

The word is out. People know about George but there's been no sighting of him.

They walk on, collars pulled up against increasing rainfall. He guides her to shelter under an awning.

JACK (CONT'D)

You're shivering. Here.

He takes off his jacket, drapes it around her.

JACK (CONT'D)

He's a scrapper, Rita. He knows how to take care of himself.

RITA

He told me he hated me.

JACK

I suppose I would have said the same thing if I was him.

She looks at him, startled.

JACK (CONT'D)

I would have wanted to stay with you ... I mean...I mean you're his Mum.

The rain sheets down.

The sound of an AIR RAID SIREN begins to whine.

Jack kicks into action, grabs Rita's hand and they both start to run.

RITA
No this way, let's go to Mickey's.

They start to run hand in hand.

96 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

96

Albert and the gang, Jess and George, scoff bowls of food. Jess hands out steaming mugs of tea.

ALBERT
You look different, girl. What's all that stuff on your face?

Everyone looks at her. There are splodges of rouge on her cheeks and a smear of red lipstick on her mouth.

JESS
Beryl did me up. D'ya like it?

BERYL
She looks 'très chic' don't you think? Very 'à la mode.'

HARVEY
Classy.

ALBERT
Shut it, Harvey.

HARVEY
Sorry Al.

Jess is severely uncomfortable with this back and forth.

Albert turns on Beryl.

ALBERT
I told you before, you keep your slutty hands off her-

BERYL
Alright just tryna see the potential.

ALBERT
The only potential is you getting a smack.

There's a loud banging on the door. Harvey gets up, opens the door to an air-raid WARDEN with a receding hairline, swamped by his uniform.

AIR-RAID WARDEN

Alright, Al?

ALBERT

What? Spit it out.

AIR-RAID WARDEN

Café de Paris just got bombed. I think it could be a good earner.

Albert digs into his pocket and hands over coins to the warden.

ALBERT

Depending what we find, there might be some more for you. Now, get out of here. Scram!

He slams the door in the warden's face.

97

INT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - NIGHT

97

We see George's feet come into view from above. His hands hold tightly onto a thick rope which is tied around his waist, lowering him into total darkness.

98

EXT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - NIGHT

98

Albert, Harvey and Beryl wait by a closed back door, smoking and pacing.

Jess is on the lookout, out of earshot.

HARVEY

He's taking his time. Maybe he's stuck.

Albert turns on Beryl again. He's still seething.

ALBERT

Did you hear what I said? You keep away from Jess.

BERYL

She needs to earn her keep, she's growing up now, Albert. She needs a woman's touch.

Harvey snorts.

ALBERT

Keep away from her or I'll kick
your ass to kingdom come.

BERYL

(mild)

Whatever you say, Albert.

She holds up her hands in a gesture of surrender.

The door opens. George peers out.

ALBERT

Good boy, Georgie. Good boy.

They slip inside. Jess holds her lookout position.

99

INT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - NIGHT

99

As the gang, George in tow, descend either side of a grand double staircase, lanterns in hand, their image starts to dissolve as a raucous Café de Paris appears in full technicolor swing.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

100

INT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - EARLIER THAT NIGHT

100

KEN 'SNAKEHIPS' JOHNSON (26) a tall, handsome black man, dressed in white morning suit. Tails flapping as he conducts the multi racial band with baton in hand.

Everyone and everything is jumping.

We swirl around to COUPLES DANCING as they laugh and jive to the rhythm. This is the upper crust and they have come to enjoy themselves.

The room is a swathe of white tablecloths, MEN IN BLACK SUITS AND TAILS and WOMEN DRESSED UP TO THE NINES.

Teeth gleam as they look to the band in admiration. Drinks in hand. Jewels glistening. Champagne flowing.

Band leader, Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson's toes tap a rhythmic beat to the song *Oh Johnny*. The AUDIENCE lean in closer and closer. He has them in the palm of his hand. As his jives get wilder, he stirs the audience into an anticipatory frenzy. Snakehips shouts out to his trumpeters.

SNAKEHIPS

Now horns stand up please!

With that the band ERUPTS behind him. The back row of trumpet players rise to their feet, BLASTING OUT a raucous tune.

SNAKEHIPS (CONT'D)
Excuse my French.

The audience laugh in titillation. The joint is truly jumping. It's as if the music has perfumed the air and a sexual appetite truly awoken.

A WAITER sparks up a match, offering it to a LADY with an extended gold cigarette holder. Eyes meet. The smoke elegantly wafts from the tables.

Faces bathed in the soft golden light from the twinkling table lamps. A sea of perfectly tonged hair.

A YOUNG FEMALE GAY COUPLE break away from the dance, faces glistening with sweat, they collapse into chairs, laughing, bodies close.

We see RICH SOCIALITES shrugging off furs as they take their seats at crisp linen tablecloths.

A dashing light skinned black man, obviously a GIGOLO, takes a LATE MIDDLE-AGED LADY's hand, ushering her to the bathroom. ATTENDANTS pay no mind.

WAITERS dip and dive through the mêlée, carrying trays of jewel colored cocktails.

We follow a WAITER as he clears a platter of oysters, piled high on a bed of snowy rock salt. He makes his way past the dance floor through the swing doors into the kitchen - another world.

The music not audible now, only the CLINKING and CLANKING of pots and cutlery. KITCHEN STAFF of all different nationalities are heard. CHEFS dressed in smart whites, calling out in chorus...

SOUS CHEFS
Yes Chef!

It's organized chaos, bodies CRISSCROSSING, PASSING, CHOPPING and PLATING.

Through the seeming chaos the same waiter appears adjusting his hair with one hand, champagne bucket and tray of crystal flutes in the other.

He enters back into the dining room and takes the tray over to a table of young women, smiling as he leaves.

THREE GIRLFRIENDS dressed exquisitely. One raises her left hand elegantly for the other two to admire her ENGAGEMENT RING. They bustle with excitement as they congratulate her.

At that point a FAINT WHISTLE is heard. The noise begins to build, getting LOUDER, HIGH PITCHED and more PIERCING.

The noise takes over from the music. Snakehips looks back at the band, wildly signaling for them to stop.

The sound of the instruments TUMBLE OVER themselves as the musicians put on the breaks. They all look skywards in their black tails, one could think they resemble stranded penguins.

END FLASHBACK

101 INT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - NIGHT - PRESENT

101

Harvey violently tugs at the ENGAGEMENT RING on the dead woman's finger.

His lantern, now resting on the table, bathes light across the woman's body as it jolts with every yank.

Fred standing idle observes Harvey as he works. He picks up one of the crystal flutes on the table, still filled with champagne, and polishes it off with one gulp. He then picks up the end of a fag that is still gently shoulderling in the ash tray. He takes a drag.

FRED

That's not coming off.

Albert grins and reveals a set of pliers. He waves them in the air.

There's a casualness in the way Albert sets to work as if he's done it countless times before. There's no element of empathy, he's numb to what he is doing. The lady's TEAR DROP EARRINGS swing backwards and forwards with the force of his motions.

As the coup de grace, he rips the earrings from her ears. She slumps forward.

A few emergency workers are seen making their way through the debris of the club. Albert, not in the least deterred, carries on with his task. There seems to be a strange acceptance of the fact that criminals would attend and an understanding that any interruption to their deeds could end in fatal bloodshed.

The emergency men carry on their work at a safe distance, trying to find signs of life.

Albert, noticing George has been watching the emergency workers as if it could be his salvation, but not understanding the dichotomy, shoves him with a foot.

ALBERT

Stop gawping and get to bloody work unless you want them to put you back on that train. Cos that's what they'll do.

Albert points to an adjacent table.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

See that bracelet. Get on with it!

George's reaction is one of fear. He is numb and terrified of the consequences if he doesn't do what he's told.

George grabs a bag and lantern and moves off. As he does so he trips, falling flat on the ground, the CLANGING sound of his lantern echos through the space.

The truce is broken and there is eye contact between the criminals and the emergency workers. Then, just like that, both groups go back to their respective tasks as if nothing untoward is going on.

George crosses the ballroom. It's as if someone has hit the pause button. The whole scene like something out of Pompeii but lit by lanterns. Bodies are frozen in time with no evidence of any wounds or blood.

The strange dance of the environment continues as the black gigolo we saw earlier suddenly arises from the rubble with dust covering his whole body, blood streaming from the top of his head. He holds onto the white gloved arm of the middle aged lady he had been engaged with, but now with no body attached. Realizing, he drops the arm and stumbles his way to the emergency workers.

George sees the female couple who are intertwined, clung together in their last moments. As he stares, he feels something on his neck. He flinches, trance broken. Beryl has crept up behind him, gold cigarette holder in her mouth, flapping a dead man's wrist in his face.

BERYL

(laughing)

Don't worry they're all dead. Their lungs burst with the explosion, that's why you don't see any blood.

(MORE)

BERYL (CONT'D)

Now get on with it and don't make
that racket again.

George, blocking out emotions, gets to work. He quietly hums
the song that Ife sung to him.

102 INT. CAFÉ DE PARIS - NIGHT

102

From the other side of the dance-floor we see the gang are
enjoying emptying whatever bottles and glasses are left on
the tables, joking, and mocking the dead.

ALBERT

(in a posh woman's accent)

Waiter may I have a glass of
champers?

BERYL

Of course madam.

(pouring Albert a glass)

Ma'am, I happen to notice that
you've lost a finger.

ALBERT

Yes it seems that my ring was so
heavy it couldn't take the weight.

The gang fall about laughing as Albert holds up the
engagement ring.

George realizes he has a possibility to escape. He waits for
his moment and creeps carefully up the grand staircase. His
heart is in his mouth; descending the stairs is a warden, but
knowing that George is part of the gang, there is no
acknowledgment, he doesn't want to get involved.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. CAFE DE PARIS - NIGHT

103

George is out in the open air, he runs at pace. Turning a
corner he bumps hard into someone. They both fall to the
ground.

It's Jess. George is terrified.

JESS

What the bleedin' hell are ya..!

(realizing)

George?

She slowly gets to her feet and scuttles back to her corner and checks, there is no-one in sight. They look at each-other, not knowing what to do next. A moment passes.

Jess traces George's face with her eyes then breaks the spell by turning her back on him. George doesn't move at first.

We stay on Jess' pained face as we see George begin to move and run off into the distance, feet slapping the pavement.

104

INT. FRUIT AND WOOL EXCHANGE - NIGHT

104

We see an accordion, its lungs being squeezed, old fingers pressing the keys. It's the anthem *My Old Man*.

A chorus of EAST END VOICES, men and women, young and old, all singing in harmony.

People sit and lie haphazardly looking up at the improvised stage that has been prepared. A chuffed Mickey observes as the sing-along slowly gathers momentum.

We hear the murmuring of violence from above - bombs exploding and anti-air craft fire. The room shudders as soot and dust fall from the beams on the impact of each explosion. Jack stands looking up at the ceiling, conflicted. He should be out there, saving lives.

A MOTHER bounces a BABY on her lap. An OLD WOMAN waves a frail hand as she sings. Everyone is intent on being heard. The music brings a sense of hope to this place of hopelessness and fear.

Jack watches Rita sitting with Betty, holding her close, softly singing along. Rita gives him a look of despair, he knows she's thinking of George.

105

INT. GEORGE'S HIDING PLACE - NIGHT

105

We hear the far off hum of GERMAN BOMBERS.

We find George hiding, but it's not clear where.

GEORGE
(singing)

*No one to talk with, All by myself
No one to walk with, But I'm happy
on the shelf,
Ain't misbehavein'
I'm savin' my love for you.*

He swipes away the tarpaulin which has been covering him, allowing gathered rain-water to fall to the side. We find him on a SMALL WOODEN LIFE BOAT moored on the Thames.

The boat gently rocks with the lapping of the water.

George reaches for the chain around his neck and touches it for reassurance.

The sky now haphazard with circling SEARCH LIGHTS. The humming of the German bombers which has been getting increasingly louder up until this point is now deafening.

Looking upwards, they look like a swarm of flies weaving their way through the puffs of smoke left by ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE. George is mesmerized by its beauty and starts to count, pointing at the Bombers.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
One, two, three, four...

A SIREN whines.

We hear the continuous whistling of BOMBS being deployed. An EXPLOSION hits the water, violently rocking the boat.

The boat turbulently SMASHING into the bank. Water now filling the vessel.

George clambers out.

He scrambles up onto the bank. His feet hardly touching the ground as he begins to run in the opposite direction of the blast.

The boat begins to sink behind him.

A GERMAN PLANE has been hit and we see a trail of smoke and fire as it descends, TWISTING VIOLENTLY towards the ground. Towards George.

A spotlight has attached itself to the plane, we see the heavy apparatus maneuvered by two women as they trace it's descent.

George is frozen, paralyzed on the spot as the Messerschmitt Fighter comes closer into view, near enough to see the face of the German pilot.

George turns on his heels running as fast as he can, not looking back. His breath and feet hitting the pavement are all we hear as the plane overtakes him, eclipsing him and eventually CRASHING into a building. EXPLODING on impact.

With the explosion George picks himself up off the ground, we hear the sound of metal hooves on the cobbled streets. George looks up to see the magnificent sight of the rag-and-bone horse we saw earlier coming into view, galloping along at full pace, a fragment of the carriage skipping and dangling behind it.

An arm comes into view, pulling George over a stack of sandbags. We see more explosions as George finds himself beside an anti-aircraft gunner and two female colleagues. The sound is deafening as the bullets rattle out into the sky and fire is returned from oncoming fighter planes, shells fall to the ground.

The gunner is hit in the shoulder. He cries out in pain. We see the younger of his female colleagues scramble, taking out a first aid kit and pressing hard on the wound. The other woman takes over the apparatus. She follows her targets and fires at will.

George is paralyzed. The scene is one of chaos.

Bullets retaliate.

FEMALE GUNNER
(to George)
Get your head down!

George ducks for his life. Moving her viewfinder through the sky the female gunner engages again, rattling off rounds into the oncoming planes. The trails of bullets whizz through the sky smashing into an aircraft.

FEMALE GUNNER (CONT'D)
Get out of here!

INJURED GUNNER
Get to the underground like
everyone else! Run! Go on, off with
ya!

GEORGE runs as fast as he can. In the distance he sees the warm glow of light escaping from behind a barricade of sand bags.

As he gets closer, he sees stairs leading down into an UNDERGROUND STATION.

FIRETRUCKS come into view. FIREMEN disembark. Gigantic jets of water pelt into burning buildings.

106

INT. TEMPLE UNDERGROUND STATION - NIGHT

106

As soon as George reaches the bottom of the stairs into the empty ticket hall, there is a strong smell of urine. In one of the corners he spots a woman squatting, about to defecate. There's one station attendant at the far end of the ticket hall.

George sneaks past and ducks under a barrier and past vacant ticket booths making his way onto the non-moving wooden escalators, laden with people in a very British way lying on the right allowing for people to pass.

As George descends, the sound of chaos outside begins to muffle as he gets deeper into the heart of the station. There are people scattered everywhere bedding down for the night.

Some order has been imposed. People queue politely for soup, a card game has started pulling strangers into a circle, an improvised puppet show for children.

An irate TICKET INSPECTOR with several colleagues appears, demanding the attention of the crowd.

TICKET INSPECTOR

(shouting)

Ladies and gentlemen can I have
your attention please?

Nobody takes any notice.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)

Alright, everybody out! There are
no more trains running tonight.

WOMAN

(holding up a ticket)

I've got a right to be here, I've
paid for a ticket!

TICKET INSPECTOR

It's a ticket to travel madam, not
to stay overnight.

WOMAN

Well I'm waiting for me train until
it gets here.

MAN

Me too.

TICKET INSPECTOR

But there won't be a train for 8
hours!

WOMAN TWO
 We're early. We don't mind waiting.
 We're British.

TICKET INSPECTOR
 Look, the rules are the rules, I
 didn't make 'em...

The crowd continue as they were, ignoring the ticket inspector and his colleagues, waving their tickets.

It's obvious from this scene that people's initiative to shelter in the underground cannot be deterred by the government. The ticket inspector realizes his authority has no jurisdiction in this new war-time environment.

He is jeered as he and his colleagues move away from the platform, defeated. Insults towards them are heard.

TICKET INSPECTOR (CONT'D)
 (at his Colleagues)
 There's no more capacity. We have
 to close the barricades.

He leads the way to the escalator. The Inspectors slide closed the scissor barricades, effectively cutting off access in and out.

George picks up an unattended blanket and wraps himself up in it. Finding a spot down on the tracks, he squeezes himself between the wall and the last rail.

Like an ostrich with its head in the sand, a couple at the far end of the tunnel gyrate under a blanket as if no-one can see them. No-one takes any notice.

George covers his head, exhausted, he falls asleep.

107

INT. FRUIT AND WOOL EXCHANGE - NIGHT

107

The crowd applauds as the song *My Old Man* reaches its stunning climax, bringing us back to the shelter.

Rita looks down at Betty. Something has stirred inside of her.

She kisses Betty on the forehead.

RITA
 (to Betty)
 I'll be back.

She crosses to Mickey.

RITA (CONT'D)
 (speaking loudly above the
 applause)
 Mickey, can I sing something?

MICKEY
 You can sing?

RITA
 Yeah, a little. Is that alright?

MICKEY
 (smiling)
 I'll get the microphone.

Mickey hurries a microphone to the centre of the stage.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
 Ladies and gentlemen I have someone
 here who'd like to sing for us. May
 I introduce to you, Rita Hanway!

The crowd cheers. Betty smiles.

RITA
 This is for Betty, and for my son
 George who's missing.

There is a beat of silence as she takes a deep breath.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Please look out for him.
 (beat)
 I hope he can hear me wherever he
 is.

She begins to sing a cappella.

RITA (CONT'D)
*There's a somebody I'm longin' to
 see.
 I hope that he, turns out to be.
 Someone to watch over me.
 I'm a little lamb who's lost in the
 wood.
 I know I could, always be good.
 To one who'll watch over me...*

Her voice soars, haunting. Everyone is silent and
 introspective, thinking about what the future might hold, as
 if the song has given them space to reflect. Piercing their
 armour. It's beautiful. Betty is mesmerized.

The backdrop to the songs is sounds of SIRENS and FAR OFF BOMBS being dropped. But Rita doesn't falter.

At this point a man with an accordion accompanies her. The audience is taken. It's dreamy, sentimental, touching.

Jack watches, transfixed. He is completely and irrevocably in love with her.

We start to move away from the sight, as if we are a train leaving a station, slowly backing up into the darkness. The hopeful scene getting smaller and smaller until it's just a globe of light.

Rita's voice an echo begins to fade.

108 INT. TEMPLE UNDERGROUND STATION - SOME TIME LATER 108

George stirs... alerted to something.

He leaves his blanket and clammers over sleeping bodies.

Wading carefully through the quiet of people bedded down on the tracks, some see him passing but pay no mind.

George moves with URGENCY as if something is PULLING him forward into the darkness of the tunnel. He disappears.

In darkness now George's BREATHING and the SHUFFLE of his feet are our only guide.

We hear him fall. He picks himself up and keeps on going until... we see a SPECK OF LIGHT.

Small to begin with, bobbing up and down from George's POV. The light is then accompanied by an indistinct melody.

As George proceeds the spot gets bigger and the melody begins to clarify. We hear the vague hint of his mother's voice. It's the song *Pack Up Your Troubles*.

We arrive with George at another station, the music engulfing us now as another shelter is revealed.

A GROUP OF WOMEN are gathered around a BBC microphone, leading the shelter in song.

VOICES

*Pack up your troubles in your old
kit-bag and smile, smile, smile.
Just pucker up and whistle
What's the use of worrying
It never was worth while.*

(MORE)

VOICES (CONT'D)
*SO pack up your troubles in your
old kit-bag and smile, smile,
smile.*

George is disorientated, his eyes adjusting to the light.

He's searching for someone... his mother, only to find Tommy and Ife singing along joyfully. George's heart swells.

A strong current pulls George back down the tunnel. He does all he can to stay but it's of no use. He is eclipsed into darkness and cast back down the tunnel.

PRE-LAP: We hear a LOUD CRASH followed by a RUMBLING.

CUT TO:

109

INT. TEMPLE UNDERGROUND SHELTER - NIGHT

109

George is startled awake and finds himself in the same position he fell asleep in (he has been dreaming).

He is soaking wet and the tunnel is awash with rapidly flowing muddy water. A bomb has exploded at the far end of the platform tearing a gaping hole in the ceiling of the station fracturing water, gas and sewer pipes.

A VIOLENT CASCADE begins to quickly flood the shelter, creating panic and chaos.

Several people sleeping under the lip of the platform are swept away by the forceful rapid. Others hold on for dear life until they too are taken away by the current - one of them the woman who gave George his ticket.

People scream and shout trying to make their way up onto the platform. George holds onto one of the pillars which prop up the train tracks as the muddy water gushes past him.

In a flash people are submerged as the water levels quickly rise. The scene is one of terror as all the station lights begin to flicker into darkness.

A few people manage to retrieve hurricane lanterns and flashlights from the emergency boxes along the platform but this is the only source of light which is haphazard and infrequent at best.

The train tracks are now completely submerged. We see George trying to make his way to the platform moving past bodies and desperate people. A dim flashlight cuts through the dark guiding George to the platform. He makes a lunge for it only to be sucked in by the rapid current.

He's speeding into the abyss until a hand grabs his collar and hauls him onto the muddy platform gasping wildly.

People panic and head towards the exit in the darkness. Silt and water flow through the cross-passages and lower concourse where the now inoperable wooden escalators and only exit stand behind the locked scissor barricades.

Following the swarm of people, George arrives at the dead end.

The rush of rubble has laid down silt four or five feet deep. Swirling muddy water has reached the second step of the dysfunctional wooden escalators which we can see on the other side of the locked gates.

Just ahead of George a small horde of people have gathered heaving at the metal gates in abject desperation trying to open them as the water line, which is now waist high, is rising at great speed.

George looks on at the panic on people's faces as they hopelessly try to open the gate. Screams of despair are heard throughout.

An ELDERLY ATHLETIC MAN with a flashlight spots George and manically beckons him over.

ELDERLY ATHLETIC MAN
See if you can fit through and get
help.

George nods and takes a deep breath, submerging himself in the muddy water. He lies flat on his stomach and putting his head to the side he just about squeezes it and his shoulders under the gate.

As George tries to propel the rest of his body through, his shirt gets hooked. He starts to thrash around like a trapped salmon, feet kicking and splashing water. He can no longer hold his breath.

110 EXT. HANWAY STREET - NIGHT

110

Jack and Rita arrive home. At the gate to his house, he stops and looks at her.

JACK
We are going to find him, Rita. We
are going to find him and bring him
back home.

She looks at him.

RITA
Jack...

She hesitates.

111 INT. BEDROOM, JACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

111

Rita and Jack are both engaged in a passionate kiss.

There is a desperation in their engagement. Their breath and panting signal a yearning, they give each other life.

Both are immersed and oblivious. Lips, tongues, hands and hips are miraculously in unison in the chaotic sight of passion. The wants and needs of both parties are apparent, in their lust taking and giving what they need.

As Jack arches his back and comes, Rita holds on and gyrates her hips on his. She's not finished.

Baiting him with her hands and body to continue. Jack needing, wanting to please thrusts himself against Rita. His head buried into the sheets. The motion continues.

Rita stretches a hand out until she reaches climax.

They lie still, catching their breath.

Nothing is said.

Slowly they begin to pick up their discarded clothes and dress.

112 INT. SMALL BEDROOM, EAST LONDON - MORNING

112

George opens his eyes and finds himself staring at the ceiling of a small bedroom.

The door opens and a woman in her forties, dressed in a white blouse and dark blue skirt, enters with a tray of tea.

WOMAN
Our little hero's waking up. You saved a lot of lives you know. How are you feeling love?

George sits up and feels for his chain.

GEORGE

Where am I? Where's my St.
Christopher?

WOMAN

It's here love on the dresser. Your
clothes are drying on the rack. My
name's Ruby. Now drink this.

GEORGE

Can I have my chain please?

The woman retrieves the St. Christopher for George. He immediately puts it around his neck.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I want to go home.

RUBY

You're George Hanway, aren't you.

George doesn't respond.

RUBY (CONT'D)

A lot of people have been looking
for you, do you know that?
You're a very lucky boy. If my Bill
hadn't picked you up last night who
knows what could have happened. Eat
something, George. I'm going to get
a basin of water so you can have a
good wash.

GEORGE

I want to go home.

RUBY

I won't be long.

She smiles and exits. George is smiling too now, knowing that he'll be back home with Rita and Gerald soon.

George looks around the room. There are family photographs on the nearby mantelpiece - a married couple, children, grandparents, etc. His eyes alight on one photograph in particular, it's Ruby in a police uniform.

Ruby opens the front door to the man and woman from Children's Evacuation. They exchange greetings.

RUBY

Come inside. I'm just getting him up and ready.

114 INT. STAIRWAY - MORNING

114

Ruby carries a steaming bowl of water carefully upstairs.

115 INT. SMALL BEDROOM - MORNING

115

Ruby comes in with the bowl of water.

RUBY

Alright, George. Let's get you cleaned up.

She looks around the room. There is no sign of him.

116 EXT. HOUSE - EAST LONDON - MORNING

116

Cut to George shimmying down a drainpipe and running down the cobblestone alleyways behind the terraced houses.

117 EXT. EAST LONDON STREET - MORNING

117

From a distance George spots the RED BRICK CLOCK-TOWER a few streets away.

He recognizes some of the surroundings and landmarks from the beginning of his journey. Some are gone, some are damaged, some have survived.

A smile beams across his face. He's near home. His pace quickens.

118 EXT. CLIFFORD LANE - EAST LONDON - MORNING

118

George now runs with baited anticipation.

As he turns the corner to his own street, we see total devastation. The houses have all gone... obliterated.

The only thing that has survived is the RED BRICK CLOCK-TOWER. Miraculously, the only damage it has suffered is to the short hand which has been blown in half, as well as a small shattering of the clock face. We have now come full circle witnessing the aftermath of the bombing at the beginning of the film.

Although some recognizable structures remain, most have been reduced to rubble. George's face is one of disbelief and shock.

He stumbles through the debris. Rescue workers are bent over a body. As George nears, he sees that it is Gerald, dead.

GEORGE
(strangled)
Grandad!!

One of the Rescue Workers shouts out.

RESCUE WORKER
Somebody come and get this nipper!

A Nurse crosses through the treacherous terrain.

George falls to his knees. One of Gerald's arms is flung around the beaten up cat carrier. It's obvious that this is what saved Olly the cats life.

George opens the crate. Olly is beside himself.

George crouches down and wipes the dust and bits of debris off his fur. Suddenly, something in him erupts, his breath tries to catch up with the racing of his heart, his eyes now wet with tears he begins to cry as we have never seen him do before, wailing and sobbing. It's as if everything he has experienced, everything he has held in until now, has erupted/come to the fore.

Behind him, unseen by him, RESCUE WORKERS carefully carry a body on a stretcher. It's precarious work as they navigate the terrain.

The sheet covering the body slips on the descent to reveal the bloodied corpse of Jack.

The Nurse arrives at the scene.

NURSE
Come, dear. You're not safe here.

GEORGE
Where's my mum?

Near to where his home once stood, George sees a buzz of activity as RESCUE SERVICES search through the wreckage.

George places Olly back in the carrier.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Don't let anyone take my cat away!

He breaks loose and runs up to the summit of the rubble.
Panic stricken he looks around. Where is Rita?

He stands very still, as if he is rooted to the ground.
Suddenly he hears something.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Mum? Mum?

He listens intently. He moves towards a small mound, lowering his head to the ground.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Mum!

He runs clumsily at speed over to the team of wardens.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(panting with certainty
and hope)
My mum, she's in there. I can hear
her.

AIR RAID WARDEN
(with pity on his face)
Lad, we've already checked that
area. There's no sign of anybody.

GEORGE
(manic now)
She's there. I can hear her.
(shouts, tears in his
eyes)
She's bloody in there! You can't
let her die!

The air raid warden, shocked, looks at the desperation in George's face and caves.

He calls over to his colleagues.

AIR-RAID WARDEN
The boy thinks he can hear someone.

George leads the way, the air raid wardens follow.

George points to the crisscross of crumpled walls and they work together to carefully lift the top piece, revealing a small opening in the rubble.

Rita's anguished cries are unmistakable now.

The Air Raid Wardens exchange somber looks.

AIR RAID WARDEN
 The opening is too small. We'll never get in there.

SECOND AIR RAID WARDEN
 If we shift any of this the whole thing will collapse.

GEORGE
 Let me. I can get down there, I know I can.

He doesn't wait for permission, instead he begins to scramble over towards the opening.

AIR RAID WARDEN 2
 (grabbing him by the arm)
 Whoah, wait, wait.

The warden bends to his level. George's face is one of steely determination. He is not the boy that left home two days ago.

GEORGE
 My mum ain't dying! I'm going down, and nobody can stop me. Get me a rope.

The Wardens exchange a look.

119 INT. RUBBLE - MORNING

119

Two of the men lower George down slowly, a rope tied around his ankles, torch in hand, into the crumbling cavity below.

It's tight, claustrophobic and dark. George hears Rita's voice again, this time much clearer.

He unties the rope around his ankles as he's now at the bottom of the cavity and makes his way towards the sound, crawling on his stomach.

GEORGE
 Mum!

Alerted by something, he stops.

RITA (O.S)
 (hardly audible)
 George?

It's his mother's voice. With hardly any room, George twists himself in the jagged terrain.

George sees movement and begins to scramble towards it. It's Rita trapped from her waist down, her face full of dust.

RITA (CONT'D)
George?

Rita breaks into tears.

George, flat on his stomach, inches closer to Rita.

RITA (CONT'D)
(hardly audible)
How can you be..

GEORGE
I didn't mean what I said.

RITA
(a whisper)
I know, sweetheart, I'm sorry I let
you go.

GEORGE
I'm going to get you out of here.
Just wait a minute.

He moves slowly back to where he came from.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'm coming, mum. Just wait for me.

He makes his way back to the gap in the rubble and pulls on the line.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(shouting up)
Give me rope. Now!

120 INT. RUBBLE - MORNING (A SHORT TIME LATER)

120

We see George crawling again, digging as much as he can around Rita before tying the rope around her chest and arms. He tugs on the rope and shouts.

GEORGE
Pull!

With a heave, we see the air wardens above brace and pull.

Rita screams in pain as the rope tightens around her ribs, she stretches her arms out and holds on to the rope and braces.

More effort is made above ground as they continue to hoist. Every available hand it seems is on the rope.

AIR RAID WARDENS
One, two, three - heave...

It's working. Slowly Rita is being excavated.

As the wardens heave, the rubble begins to collapse and an almighty roar is heard. We see dust belching out of the opening from where the wardens are standing. The screen goes black.

George, covered in earth, resurrects himself from the dirt along with his torch. Rita is nowhere to be seen.

GEORGE
Mum! Mum!

He digs frantically to free Rita, not knowing exactly where she is. He scrapes and digs with all his might until a shoulder emerges and then her face coughing, spluttering and gasping for oxygen. George brushes the debris from her eyes and mouth. He shouts up to the air wardens.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Keep pulling!

Rita winces at every pull as her body is freed from the rubble not knowing that at any time there could be another collapse.

Finally she emerges from the rubble to the surface. Blood and dust are visible on her body. The fire wardens send the rope down for George, he ties it quickly around his chest and arms and as he is yanked upwards the cavity begins to collapse. George just makes it out in time.

Rita is quickly put on a stretcher. George descends the rubble, makes his way to Rita. The silver chain now dangles from his neck. She reaches out to touch it, then caresses his cheek. George falls into his mother's arms, they embrace.

(note: this scene will be revised pending further research around their procedures when excavating bodies/survivors from rubble)

PRE-LAP: The sound of a steam train begins to hiss.

121 INT. ST PANCRAS TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - DAY 121

We see a stationary train beginning to leave a platform. Tilda and Doris stand waving as it pulls away. Rita and George wave back from the train.

122 INT. TRAIN - DAY 122

Rita looks at George with a sense of pride. Her expression cannot eclipse the sadness which is deep inside her. George responds with a smile. He is also contemplating the recent past, his face is motionless as he turns to look at Olly the cat sat beside him in his cage.

As the train fleets by George looks out of the window to see Ife and Tommy smiling and waving at him from the side of the tracks. George waves back enthusiastically. With speed the view changes to present day London putting the past directly into the now. A contemporary looking George and Rita's faces are reflected looking out of the window.

Where have we come from? Where are we going?

We hear the song TBC as we see the train hurtling along, London fades into the distance.

END

*