

UNDERGROUND

A screenplay by

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CAST LIST

SAM: MALE, 36 YEARS, DARKISH, GRIM, ATHLETIC

LAQUETA: FEMALE, 25 YEARS, AFRICAN REFUGEE FROM CONGO

AMMON: 3 MONTHS, SON OF LAQUETA, BRITISH WHITE FATHER

AMMON: 5 YEARS, PRETTY BOY WITH A CREAM BROWN SKIN

THOMAS: 52 YEARS, BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE OFFICER

SPEAKER: FEMALE, BRITISH ANNOUNCER FOR VICTORIA LINE

AGATHA: 68 YEARS, BRITISH FEMALE WITH BLuish HAIR

SIMONA: 23 YEARS, FRENCH MANNEQUIN, ATTRACTIVE, BLOND

PASSENGER1: MALE, 52 YEARS, MANAGER

PASSENGER2: FEMALE, 35 YEARS, SUBURBAN TYPE

PASSENGER3: MALE, 23, STUDENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

MUSICIAN: FEMALE, 40, FRAGILE, PALE, BLACK HAired.

SAXOPHONIST: FEMALE 48 YEARS, DRESSED IN COLOURFUL RAGS

QUEEN VICTORIA: 60 YEARS, JUST HER HEAD WILL BE VISIBLE

EXTRAS: ABOUT SIXTY EXTRAS ARE NEEDED

INT. INSIDE THE TUBE. WINTER. DAY.

SAM is running downstairs, ignoring the MUSICIAN who plays some moving Irish tunes on his keyboard. Sam hurries to the platform.

Sam jumps into the tube train at the last second. The doors close right behind him.

More than a half of the seats are taken. Some people balance huge, expensive looking shopping bags on their laps.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

This is a Victoria Line train to Brixton.

Sam wears a simple brown jacket over his worker's outfit and a woolen cap. He places himself in the middle of three empty seats in a row.

The tube starts running. Sam sits slightly panting but relaxed and as though he is glued to his seat, indicating a good sense for balance and body. He puts his battered, leather backpack to his left.

Sam takes his cap off, releasing silky, long black hair. When he moves is right hand a silver bracelet with a big turquoise can be seen.

Opposite of Sam sits AGATHA. When she sees Sam's long hair and the bracelet, she clutches her shopping bags tight and focuses on an advertisement of a law school, attached above Sam.

Sam pushes back his hair and rummages in his backpack. He drags a sketch block and a charcoal-pen out and starts to sketch until the tube slows down noisily.

SPEAKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is Green Park, change here for the Jubilee and Piccadilly Circus Lines. Alight here for Buckingham Palace.

Many people enter at Green Park station, the tube is getting crowded.

SPEAKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is a Victoria Line train to Brixton.

People look out for places to sit and place themselves on the remaining seats. The ones who are not so lucky stand close to the poles and hold tight.

Sam places his backpack on the floor between his legs to make room for PASSENGER1, who then slumps onto the seat to Sam's left, getting the current issue of The Economist out of his briefcase.

SIMONA approaches to Sam's right side. By now, there is the only free seat left.

SIMONA
(speaks with a French accent)
May I sit here, please?

Sam shortly looks up to Simona. He likes what he sees but quickly suppresses any sign of interest.

SAM
Why not.

Sam makes a short inviting gesture.

SIMONA
Thank you.

Simona sits down to Sam's right.

SPEAKER (O.S.)
This is a Victoria Line train to
Brixton.

The tube starts running. Simona is pressed slightly against Sam's shoulder. He ignores her and continues to draw an angel, sitting on a frame.

The frame is drawn in a playful design. The edges of the frame consist of flowers and a half moon with stars.

Underneath the angel, Sam has started to draw the name "Cynthia Bakers" in a pretty and crafty design.

SIMONA
What a beautiful picture. Are you a
painter?

Sam starts to draw a new line which reads, "born 28th of July 2011, "

SAM (O.S.)
No. A stone carver.

Sam continues to draft the sentence that reads, "died 20th of October 2011"

SIMONA (O.S.)

Oh, I see.
It must be sad to create art for
the dead.

Sam looks up from his draft and in the eyes of Simona.

SAM

No, it's not.
(pauses)
At least, they can't talk so much.

Sam drags his cheap MP3-Player out of the pocket of his jacket and puts the earphones on.

SIMONA

Oh. Okay, I get it.

Simona turns and faces Agatha.

Agatha makes an indignant face, slightly shrugs her shoulders and then continues to stare at the advertisement above Sam.

Sam starts to work out the lips of the angel on his sketch. He gives the angel a merciful, welcoming smile.

The frame freezes, centering on the angel's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE.

TITLE AND CREDITS FOR THE CAST appear over an artfully worked out, charcoal sketch of the angel's face.

INT. VICTORIA LINE PLATFORM. DAY.

On the bench right underneath one of the tiles displaying a cameo of Queen Victoria sits LAQUETA holding AMMON in her arms.

To her left on the bench is a big, pink bag. The kind of bag which is used to transport pets. A green plastic heart is attached to one of its handles by a ribbon.

To Laqueta's right on the bench stands a smallish empty cardboard box. Three coins are gathered there.

Laqueta starts humming an African children's song with a low and soothing voice. She kisses her baby on its forehead and looks up again. Her eyes are full of sorrow. She is close to tears.

The tube is coming in from the left and stops noisily. Many people are exiting.

Sam is the last. He is waiting right behind Agatha who has problems to exit with all her bags. He notices Laqueta and watches her.

Most people move on hastily. They either do not see, or ignore Laqueta.

Agatha staggers out of the train and then looks over to Laqueta. She starts talking to herself. Just loud enough to make sure that Laqueta would hear it.

AGATHA

Now they even use children to beg.
Why do they not leave them at home?
To beg with babies is the last
thing to do. I wish somebody would
call the police.

As Laqueta hears the word "police" she get nervous. She drags a green shawl out of her pink bag.

Sam makes a brief, excusing gesture towards Laqueta and moves on.

Laqueta wraps the shawl around her small shoulders with her right hand, then she wraps it around the baby, binding him tight to her front.

Sam's and Laqueta's eyes meet for a second. Sam shakes his head in a sad and denying gesture. Laqueta looks down to her feet while Sam passes the bench.

Laqueta starts to pack her few belongings. At last, she takes the coins out of the box, puts them in her pocket, folds the box neatly and stashes it into the pink bag. She is ready to go.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you
at all times.

Laqueta takes her bag and slowly walks away from the bench. She can still see Sam from behind, who walks without any hesitation towards the broad staircase.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. VICTORIA LINE PLATFORM. DAY.

On the bench underneath the Queen-Victoria-cameo tile, Laqueta's pink bag with the green plastic heart attached to its handle is placed right beside her cardboard box which has a few coins in it. The right part of the bench is empty.

The tube train enters the station. Many passengers exit before others enter. One of the last exiting is Sam.

The tube train leaves the station.

Sam sees the abandoned pink bag and walks over to the bench. He walks up and down a bit, searching.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you
at all times.

Sam places his backpack on the bench and sits down between the pink bag and his backpack. Once more he looks to the left and right side with a searching expression which morphs slowly into his usual grim face.

Sam gets an expensive looking book out with the title "Mastering the Craft of Stone Masonry". He studies some pages about sculptures and churches in Paris.

Sam takes his sketch block out of his backpack and starts drafting the sculpture of a gargoyle.

A couple of coins are being thrown into the cardboard box. Sam looks up but the spender is not visible anymore. He continues his drafting.

Baby Ammon starts crying inside the pink bag.

Sam looks up, surprised. He puts his sketch-block face up to his right and secures it quickly by dropping his backpack on the edge of the block. Then he turns to the left to open the pink bag.

Sam unzips the bag. Ammon is lying on his back, crying. His blue baby bonnet is a bit too big and covers his eyes. Sam drags the bag a bit closer and with his left hand he carefully puts the bonnet back in place uncovering Ammon's eyes.

SAM

It's okay little guy. I did not
know you were in there. No need to
cry. Look, it's all good.

Sam imitates a bunny with his hand in front of Ammon's face moving his fingers back and forth like a bunny would move its long ears.

Ammon stops crying and follows the movement of Sam's hand with great interest.

Ammon's and Sam's eyes meet. Ammon starts to smile.

Sam's face splits into a grin and broadens slowly into an honest, loving smile. He beams at Ammon.

Ammon giggles.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, you sweet little guy.
I wonder when your mommy will be
back.

(pauses)

Why did she leave you here all alone? You
don't know? Don't worry, she'll be back in
no time.

Ammon starts crying and looks very unhappy.

Sam carefully touches the cheek of Ammon.

Ammon stops crying and sobs now just a little bit.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, little sunshine. I
understand. It is boring inside the bag.
I'll get you out of there.

Sam carefully takes Ammon out of the bag. By doing so, a white envelope comes out and falls on the floor right before Sam's feet.

Sam places Ammon in his left arm, bows forward and grabs the envelope which is addressed "TO THE FINDER".

SAM (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

I see. I understand. Now we do have a real
problem. A really huge problem.

Ammon makes some noises, expressing that he feels uncomfortable.

Sam tucks the envelope quickly into his pocket. He starts imitating the bunny with his right hand again. Ammon smiles and moves his fists uncontrolled towards Sam's hand.

Sam cuddles Ammon, but makes a concerned face.

THOMAS is coming from the left end of the platform, walking towards Sam who does not see him coming because he has only eyes for Ammon.

The next tube train enters the station and comes noisily to a halt.

THOMAS

Sir?

(coughs slightly)

Excuse me, Mister?

SAM

Yes? Sir?

THOMAS

It is not allowed to beg here.

SAM

So what?

THOMAS

So, you better pack your things and leave.

Sam makes a puzzled face.

Amongst the stream of passengers who exited the tube, Agatha becomes visible. She sees Thomas and nods in approval.

Agatha approaches the bench.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you at all times.

AGATHA

You should be ashamed, young man. Why don't you find yourself a job and start working?

Agatha licks her lips and looks satisfied. She does not wait for an answer but addresses Thomas.

AGATHA (CONT'D)

Well done officer. Just yesterday his wife sat here and begged. It is such a shame. They should take the baby away from them.

Agatha nods shortly and moves on in direction to the main exit.

Sam holds Ammon tight and leans back. He looks grim and his lips are pressed to pale, thin line.

The tube train exits the station noisily.

Some passengers gather around the scene. They watch Sam with disgust.

PASSENGER2

That's right. That filthy Gipsy rat looks healthy enough to find himself some work. He does not need our money.

Some passengers applaud. Ammon starts to sob.

Sam caresses Ammon.

SAM

It's alright baby boy. I've heard things like that many times before.

Sam touches Ammon's baby fist.

Ammon looks at Sam and stops sobbing.

SAM (CONT'D)

Your good, old Sammy knows how to handle that. You'll see. Don't worry.

PASSENGER2

If the Gipsy does not like to work, he can go back home to Romania where he belongs.

Again a couple of passengers clap their hands. Thomas turns away from Sam and addresses the crowd.

THOMAS

That's enough now, people. Please. Please, move on, move on.

Thomas makes ushering gestures. Some people look a bit disappointed but they slowly start to move in direction to the exit.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Move on, people. Here is nothing to see. It is all under control.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you at all times.

SAM
(mumbles)

Indeed. Beware your luggage. That is important. And don't forget to carry each other's burdens as well.

Sam looks to his draft showing the gargoyle.

SAM (CONT'D)
You do agree, don't you?

Thomas turns back to Sam.

THOMAS
And now back to you, Mister. As I said already, we do not allow beggars here.

SAM
I understand what you are saying, but I am not begging.

THOMAS
And what is this there?

Thomas points to the cardboard box with the coins.

SAM
I don't know. This does not belong to me.

THOMAS
Hard to believe.

SAM
Sometimes the truth is hard to believe. Tell me about it.

THOMAS
I will confiscate it then.

SAM
Do what you have to do.

Thomas takes the cardboard box and folds it around the coins. He puts it into the pocket of his uniform jacket.

Sam looks back down at Ammon who seems to be following the conversation and action with great interest.

SAM (CONT'D)
Was that all, officer?

THOMAS
Not really. What is your name?

SAM
Sam Westcliff.

THOMAS
Nice name.

SAM
One of the blessings of being adopted by an Irish family.

THOMAS
May I see your I.D.?

Sam drags his BRITISH PASSPORT out of the inner pocket of his jacket. He passes it over to Thomas.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Right. SAMIRO WESTCLIFF. "Samiro" does not really fit to your family name, Mister Westcliff.

SAM
That's true. One of the curses of being adopted by an Irish family.

THOMAS
(leafs through the passport)

I see you have a valid and permanent permission to stay in the United States? What brought you back to Great Britain?

SAM
Good dogs always return home, don't they? No matter how many times they get kicked.
(stands up)
This is what you think, isn't it? I tell you something. I am not a dog. I want to be treated with respect. I am an upright British citizen and I do not see any reason why I have to answer all these questions -. Sir.

The next tube train enters the station and stops.

THOMAS
There is no need to be aggressive, Mister Westcliff.

SAM
I am -
(gets louder)
not aggressive.

Some passengers gather around the scene.

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you
at all times.

SAM

I just don't understand what all
this monkey business is about. As I
have already said; I do not beg. I'm
just sitting here waiting for the
baby's mother. That is all. End of
story. Since when is it forbidden
to wait at a station in England?
Did I miss something?

The tube exits the station.

Ammon starts to make singing baby noises.

PASSENGER3

He's right. Why don't you just
leave him alone? Is it because
of his long hair? Or because he
taking care of his baby?

THOMAS

(unsure)

As I said before, begging is not
allowed here.

SAM

And as I have said before, Sir, I
am not begging.

PASSENGER3

You heard him. He is not begging.

Other people in the crowd mumble in agreement with
Passenger3.

THOMAS

Alright people. That is enough.
Please move on. This is not a
public discussion here. Move on,
move on.

Thomas points towards the exit. The crowd slowly walks
away from the bench towards the exit.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

So, Mister Westcliff. Back to you.
For now I will let you get away
with this. If I ever see you
begging again -

SAM
You won't, and you know that.

THOMAS
Here is your passport.

Sam puts the passport in the back-pocket of his jeans.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I hope you'll never give me a
reason to interrogate you again.

Thomas walks away from Sam and Ammon.

SAM
(mumbles)
Hope dies last, they say.

SPEAKER (O.S.)
Please keep your luggage with you
at all times.

Ammon has fallen asleep by now.

Sam sits down on the bench again and puts the pink bag
on the floor between his feet.

Sam drags the envelope out of his pocket, opens it and
starts to read the letter.

LAQUETA (V.O.)
Dear Finder! I am a failure and
Ammon deserves better. I have
no money, no place to go and no
papers. Ammon's father denies him.
If they find me - I can't do this
to my son...

Sam looks up from the letter. He tucks it back into
his pocket.

Ammon is still asleep and Sam starts carefully, not to
awake the baby, to gather his things. He closes his
sketch block and puts it into his backpack.

After this he kisses Ammon who still sleeps on his
cheek, leans back and waits patiently.

The next tube train runs into the station. Many people
exit and enter. The platform is crowded.

Laqueta is visible at the end of the platform. She is
running towards Sam.

LAQUETA
God bless you!
(breathless)
You have my baby.

Sam looks up and sees Laqueta.

LAQUETA (CONT'D)
I made such a huge mistake.

Laqueta looks desperate. She is panting heavily.

The tube leaves the station.

SAM
I knew you would come back. I
was waiting for you.

Laqueta looks at Ammon who is fast asleep and held by Sam. She sits beside Sam, still watching Ammon.

LAQUETA
I didn't know what to do. I have no
money and no home. Ammon's father
has beaten me. He denies the child.
He promised to marry me but this is
over now.

(pauses)
And I am illegal. They will send me
back. Me and Ammon. You don't know
how it is there. War and hate. My
whole family got killed...

SPEAKER (O.S.)
Please keep your luggage with you
at all times.

Laqueta bursts into tears.

Ammon hears his mother crying and wakes up.

Ammon sees Laqueta and smiles at her, signaling with his hands and arms that he wants to be with her.

Sam passes the baby to Laqueta. She embraces Ammon and kisses his face.

LAQUETA
Oh Ammon, I couldn't bear the
thought to live without you. I knew
it was wrong but I didn't know what
to do. I so am sorry, so really,
really sorry...

SAM

Listen, I understand. I will help you. I have a small, furnished apartment to let in my one of my houses. It is close by. Once you have a job, you can pay me the rent.

Laqueta's face lightens up a bit.

LAQUETA

I do not know what to say.

(pauses)

That is such a generous offer.

SAM

I was lucky in my life. Often. This is a good occasion to give back. I can help you with the immigration process, as well. If you let me. If you like.

LAQUETA

If I like? I don't know what to say.

Thank you a thousand times, Sir.

SAM

My name is Sam.

Sam smiles friendly and looks into the eyes of Laqueta.

Laqueta's face is wet from her tears but she hesitatingly starts to smile.

LAQUETA

I am Laqueta.

SAM

A beautiful name.

LAQUETA

It means "the quiet one".

SAM

Suits to mine. "Sam" is a short for "Samiro". It means "the lonely one".

Sam smiles and faces Laqueta who answers with a sweet smile.

Sam and Laqueta make a longer eye contact and then both nod to each other at the same time, consenting.

SAM (CONT'D)

Shall we go now?

Laqueta kisses Ammon and holds him tight to her chest.

LAQUETA

Yes, please. We are ready to go.

SAM

We have been in the underground long enough, haven't we?

SPEAKER (O.S.)

Please keep your luggage with you at all times.

SAM

Yes, and if I would have to hear this dull announcement once more it would drive me nuts.

Ammon laughs.

Sam picks up the pink bag and Laqueta holds Ammon tight in her arms. Both walk side by side to the exit and use the staircase to get out of the station.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EXIT OF VICTORIA STATION. SPRING. DAY.

Laqueta, Sam and the five years old Ammon are on their way upstairs to exit the station. The SAXOPHONIST is standing to the left side of the entrance. He has an old hat in front of him. A few coins are already gathered in there. He plays a melancholic Hungarian tune.

Laqueta is dressed elegantly. Sam wears a black sport-jacket and designer jeans. His long hair is tidily bound back and his head is covered with an elegant, black hat.

Laqueta and Sam hold Ammon's hands and lift him at each step of the staircase so that can jump high with each step. He looks happy and laughs.

Sam laughs too and Laqueta smiles.

LAQUETA

Just one more time or my arm will fall off. And I will need this arm when I have to shake hands with all the guests of Daddy's gargoyles-sculpture exhibition tomorrow.

AMMON

Oh, come on Mummy. I know you are strong. Please, please just a bit longer. We are almost there.

Laqueta gives in and so they let Ammon jump until they reach the end of the staircase.

Laqueta sees the saxophonist and stops. Sam and Ammon stopped too. Laqueta gets her purse out She drags a twenty dollars bill out of her D&G purse and passes it to the saxophonist.

The saxophonist stops playing and takes the bill.

SAXOPHONIST

Thank you, Madam. This is very generous.

LAQUETA

Never mind. I had a lot of luck in my life and now is a good occasion to give back.

Sam has heard her words and takes her into his arms, giving her a long, loving kiss.

OUTRO

The saxophonist starts to play a merry, Hungarian dance tune. The frame freezes, turns to b/w, gets darker and dissolves into black.

In the center of the screen the Queen Victoria cameo which we know from Victoria Station appears. It morphs into the Queens real face. QUEEN VICTORIA turns her head and looks in direction of the camera. She smiles in approval and nods elegantly.

FADE TO BLACK

CREDITS for the CREW roll in.

[...]

MUSIC

Anna Peszko
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Thomas Bouterwek

[...]

Editorial Department

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THE END