

BLOW

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EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

A hooded MAN (25), sits precisely ten steps up and directly in the middle of a steep set of dirty stairs leading to an important city building. It is the middle of the day and PEOPLE are walking around him going up and down the stairs totally unaware that they are passing the man by. The street below is choked with traffic, PEDESTRIANS stride purposefully along the pavement. A BUSKER plays a mournful tune from the bottom stair.

Hunched over, with his head down so that his hoodie shadows his face, the man plays with a box of matches.

He opens up the box and selects a match. As he goes to light it, the sound of the city dims, the movements of the pedestrians and vehicles slow, and the city scene darkens to almost black except for a circle of light shining down on the stairs off to the side of the man.

He strikes the match against the box. A bright flame ignites and the flame slowly burns towards his fingers. He stares at the flame.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - AFTERNOON

Within the circle of light a stylish PREGNANT WOMAN (mid 20s), pauses for a moment on the stairs. She is dressed in an stylish and expensive business suit. Nothing is out place and even her distended stomach looks to be part of her ensemble. She has a designer over-sized handbag slung over her shoulder.

She holds the side of her to term pregnant stomach and grimaces. After a few moments, the discomfort goes away and she continues her journey down the stairs to the open door of a waiting limousine. Her CHAUFFEUR tips his hat and helps her into the car.

The sound of the car door closing brings us back to the man.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The man shakes the match out just as the flame reaches his fingers. He drops its remnants onto the stairs at his feet.

The sounds and light of the city rise as his fiddles with the matchbox again. The pedestrians swarm around him ignorant of his presence. No-one hits him or touches him in any way. The busker's tune becomes even more mournful.

When the man eventually selects another match the scene darkens, the tune fades and as he strikes it against the box a circle of light highlights the road side. The man is seemingly unaware of the scenes played out before him. His sole concentration is on the burning match.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - MORNING

A limousine pulls up to stop underneath the bright circle of light that pierces the darkened gloom of the city. The chauffeur jumps out and runs around to the side of the car and opens the door. The woman climbs out. Without acknowledging the chauffeur she take a couple of steps towards the stairs. A BOY (4), tumbles out of the car quickly followed by an AU-PAIR.

The boy runs towards the woman and wraps his arms around her legs. She looks down on him with disdain while the Au-pair tries to pry the boy away from her legs.

The boy has his arms out, reaching for the woman, while the Au-pair drags him away.

The boy silently screams for his mother.

BOY
MAMMA!

The woman ignores his pleas, turns and strides up the stairs.

The distinct clacking of the woman's shoes on the stairs brings us back to the man.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

Again the man shakes the match out before it burns his fingers. He drops the blackened stick on to the stairs at his feet.

The sounds of the city again rise, and the streets lighten as he plays with the matchbox. Pedestrians continue to pass him by. He ignores them, concentrating on his matchbox and they are still oblivious of him.

The busker's tune has become darker and heavier though the man on the stairs ignores his efforts as do the pedestrians that pass him by.

When the man selects another match again the city scene darkens leaving just a circle of light bathing the sidewalk.

After he strikes the match the dark tune fades while the sound of a car pulling up at the curb can be heard.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - MORNING

There is a STREET VENDOR selling hot food from a cart parked on the sidewalk.

The chauffeur opens the limousine's door and the woman climbs out. A BOY (6), dressed in his private school uniform climbs out after her. He waits patiently while the woman adjusts his school tie and straightens his hat.

With a perfunctory kiss on the boy's cheek the woman strides up the stairs.

The boy and the chauffeur watch her go.

The chauffeur grins and motions the boy to follow him to the street vendor's cart where they are handed each a hot dog with all the trimmings.

They sit on the bottom stair and take a bite out of their respective treats. A unseen blob of ketchup falls from the boy's hot dog and lands on his shirt.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The flame reaches the man's fingers and he shakes it out and drops the charcoal stick onto the stairs.

The sounds and lights of the city rise again as the man sits on the steps pondering the matchbox that he is turning over and over in his hands. The busker's tune has changed again and its squeaking notes seems out of tune and out of sync with the environment within which the piece is being played.

Again the city sounds dull when the man selects another match. After the match ignites and a bright flame starts to burn, a bright circle of light bathes the street and sidewalk.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - EVENING

The boy, still in his school uniform, paces back and forth along the pavement. On his white shirt is a large dried up blob of ketchup.

The boy stops pacing when he sees the woman walking down the stairs. His face lights up at the sight of her.

When the woman reaches the child, she reaches out and scratches at the dried sauce with her manicured finger. The look of disgust on her face makes the child's face fall.

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The woman slides past the child into the open doorway of the car. The chauffeur sadly watches as the boy despondently climbs in after her.

The sharp slam of the car door being closed bring us back to the man.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The man shakes the match out and drops it onto the growing pile at his feet on the steps.

The busker's music picks up slightly causing the man to look down at a few people dropping small coins into a hat. With the music the sounds and lights of the city rise again.

The man resumes his pondering of the matchbox that he is again turning over and over in his hands.

Again the city sounds dull when the man selects another match. After the match ignites and a bright flame starts to burn, a bright circle of light again bathes the street and sidewalk.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - AFTERNOON

The boy (10), in his private school uniform, stands to attention next to the chauffeur waiting for the woman.

He has a sheet of embossed paper in his hand and his expression is one of pride.

When the woman comes down, he steps forward to hand her the certificate.

She brushes past him knocking the certificate out of his hand into a puddle of dirty water on the sidewalk.

The chauffeur helps the woman into the car while the boy picks up the wet and soggy paper. He gingerly shakes it trying to dry it.

The chauffeur takes out his handkerchief to help clean it off, but quickly ceases when the woman snaps her fingers at him.

The chauffeur carefully takes the certificate and puts it on the front seat while the boy, clearly upset, climbs into the back of the limousine.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The flame burns close to the man's fingers, he shakes it out and drops the match onto the stairs.

Turning the matchbox over and over in his hands the city sounds become louder and the day brighter. The busker still plays the same tune.

When the man again opens the box and selects another match the street sounds fade and when the match is struck the day darkens until there is just again a circle of light on the city street.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The limousine pulls up and the chauffeur opens up the car door for the woman who is dressed in a beautiful evening dress.

The boy (15), climbs out after her. He is dressed in a tux.

The woman turns to him and straightens his tie and brushes of a minuscule piece of fluff from his shoulder. The boy puts up with her attentions but his expression is one of boredom.

As they climb the stairs the boy turns to the chauffeur, rolls his eyes and grimaces. The chauffeur shrugs his shoulders and grins back.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The man shakes the match out and drops it onto the growing pile at his feet on the steps.

With the busker's music, the sounds and lights of the city rise again.

The man resumes his pondering of the matchbox being turned over and over in his hands.

Again the city sounds dull when the man selects another match. After the match ignites and a bright flame starts to burn, again a bright circle of light bathes the street and sidewalk.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - EVENING

The boy (15), is crying with embarrassment as he runs down the stairs to the waiting limousine. He has a smeared chocolate stain marring the pristine white of his shirt.

He opens the door and jumps into the car before the chauffeur reaches the side of the limousine.

The chauffeur looks up the stairs for the woman and when he does not see her he gets into the vehicle and drives away.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The flame of the match reaches the man's fingers and he quickly shakes it out to drop it at his feet.

The busker's melody, though brighter, is difficult to listen to as he reaches for notes that are beyond his ability.

The scene remains dull and the tune fades away as the man quickly lights another match.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - AFTERNOON

The youth (17), is dressed in his graduation cloak and mortar board hat. Standing beside the limousine, he taps his foot impatiently waiting for the woman.

He begins pacing the sidewalk, continually checking his watch. The concerned chauffeur watches the youth pace and glances towards the top of the stairs looking for the woman.

After a short while the youth gives up and jumps into the front passenger seat of the limousine.

The chauffeur takes one final look at the top of the stairs then gets into the vehicle and drives away.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The match this time gets shaken out two thirds of the way down the stick.

The busker's tune is now upbeat and playful. The pedestrians are less rushed as they walk past. The city street appears brighter and the sounds of the vehicles slightly muted.

A YOUNG STREET TRAMP climbs the steps. She sits beside the man. She watches him turning the box over and over in his hands.

The man glances at the girl.

The man turns back to his matchbox, selects a match and strikes. The scene darkens again with the bright circle of light highlighting the sidewalk, but the busker's music remains throughout the next scene.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - MORNING

There is a street vendor selling coffee from his booth on the sidewalk. The limousine pulls up and the YOUNG MAN (19), climbs out not waiting for the door to be opened by the chauffeur. He is dressed in an immaculate business suit and is carrying a stylish briefcase. He nods, smiles and pats the chauffeur on the back in thanks before he makes his way up the stairs.

The woman climbs out of the back of the limousine. Her clothes are not as well put together as they have been in the past. She silently pleads with the young man as he strides up the stairs.

WOMAN

Wait! Wait! You don't understand! I did it for your own good.

When the young man totally ignores her pleas, she rushes up the stairs after him almost tripping as one of her high heels gets caught in a crack in the stairs.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The man quickly shakes out the match and immediately lights another. The busker's tune is still upbeat and many pedestrians are placing coins into his hat. Some of the pedestrians stop to listen and clap along to the tune.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - LATER

The woman, with her makeup running in streaks down her face, stumbles down the stairs to the waiting limousine. She hovers at the door but has to open it herself when the chauffeur does not alight to open it for her.

When the door is barely closed, the vehicle pulls out squealing into the traffic.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

The man shakes out the match before it reaches his fingers. The young street tramp holds out her hand for the box. The man shakes his head and quickly strikes another match.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - DAY

The young man walks jauntily down the stairs and goes over to the coffee vendor. He buys two coffees and then goes over to the driver's side door of the limousine. He raps on the glass. The window opens up to show the smiling chauffeur. The chauffeur gets out and accepts the hot coffee.

Together they make their way to the stairs and sit on the second bottom step sipping their coffees watching the world go by, listening to the busker's happy tune.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - PRESENT DAY

Just as the flame of the burning match reaches the fingers of the man he throws back his hood to reveal his face. He smiles at the girl sitting beside him. He is the boy who grew to a young man in the depicted scenes.

He brings the burning match right up to his face and blows it out.

BLACK OUT