

Mother Nature

by Danielle Fahiya

Characters

Gwenllian Hinds, 20s-30s playing age, mother who has brought her children to have their photographs taken.

Fred Peterson, 40s playing age, Photographer taking Gwenllian and her two children's photographs.

Leonard Hinds 3, son of Gwenllian

Elvira Hinds 4, daughter of Gwenllian

INT. FRED PETERSON'S STUDIO

Fred is in the studio greeting his next customer Gwenllian and her children Elvira and Leonard.

FRED Nice to meet you Gwen, Leonard and Elvira.

GWEN And you Mr Peterson

FRED Just call me Fred please

GWEN Say hello kids

LEONARD/ELVIRA Hello

FRED There's a treasure box full of fun toys and clothes for you to try

Leonard and Elvira rush over to the treasure chest

LEONARD/ELVIRA Wow!

ELVIRA Mummy look at this pretty dress

LEONARD Mummy can I wear the sailor's hat?

GWENLLIAN No put them down and come back here please.

FRED It's ok, the chest is for the kids though some adults can get excited too!

GWEN Thanks but they're in their Sunday best for today so no need for a change of clothes...kids back now I said!

Gwenllian snaps her fingers at the children to come back

LEONARD Orrr Mum it's not fair!

ELVIRA And that dress is prettier than mine

GWEN Don't be rude you two!

FRED It's ok! Take a seat or you're welcome to stand.

GWEN Go on kids

FRED And mum too

GWENLLIAN Oh no thank you, it's not about me. The photo is to send to their father at sea.

FRED But the package for family photos offers more than one

GWENLLIAN Yes but I'm not dressed appropriately.

FRED For who?

GWENLLIAN I can't

FRED I insist

GWENLLIAN Please don't make a fuss

FRED If it's money that you're worried about then

GWENLLIAN (interrupting) I'm not a charity case

FRED I'm sorry I didn't mean to offend

GWENLLIAN My husband might be at sea but I'm not defenceless

FRED I wasn't assuming, I just thought you might like to join your children

ELVIRA Mummy sit with us

GWENLLIAN Just sit with your brother there's a good girl

LEONARD Mummy please- daddy would like a photo of us all as well.

ELVIRA You said he likes to see you smile.

Gwenllian thinks about it

FRED Your package includes five copies. You could also send to extended family at Christmas

LEONARD I don't like standing on my own

ELVIRA It's scary

GWENLLIAN Well I don't want you scared darling, so if you really want me to be in the photo with you I will be

ELVIRA I do

LEONARD Me too

Gwenllian sits with her children

FRED Ok so if you all stand or sit towards me. Whatever you prefer.

Pause

Ahh now that's looking lovely from here.

GWENLLIAN If I would have known I'd have been in the photos today I would have worn something more suitable. I can see some of last night's dinner on my skirt.

FRED All people will see is a loving family photo with a doting mother and her beautiful children.

LEONARD Mummy why is he pointing that towards us?

ELVIRA What's going to happen?

GWENLLIAN Hold still he's about to take a photo

Gwenllian nestles them close

Fred takes a photo

GWENLLIAN Do you have children Mr Peterson?

FRED Fred, please. No, I do not, not yet anyway.

GWENLLIAN Well men do have the luxury of time in that department

FRED I'm not sure my wife is able

GWENLLIAN Oh I'm sorry

FRED No you're fine. It's a common question.

GWENLLIAN You really don't have to say anymore

FRED It's ok, families come in here all the time I'm used to seeing children

GWENLLIAN But you still have a family

FRED Yes back in Denmark

GWENLLIAN No I mean you and your wife.

FRED I suppose we are in our own way yes. Although my wife Ginny is forever asked why a woman of child bearing age doesn't have children yet.

GWENLLIAN Waste no thought on others intrusive opinions. If I cared how the world saw my family I would struggle to leave the house.

FRED I wonder, did your family have problems during the riots?

GWENLLIAN We live in Barry, so away from the riots of Tiger Bay. But threatening crowds did gather there after a fatal stabbing

FRED Were you safe?

GWENLLIAN We managed to stay away and keep safe.

FRED That's good. Many good men were seriously injured or worse including friends of mine.

GWENLLIAN I'm so sorry. I just hope one day soon we care more for the content of one's heart rather than the colour of their skin.

FRED We are all made in God's image, are we not?

GWENLLIAN Yes

ELVIRA Mummy can we sit on your lap?

LEONARD I'm tired

GWENLLIAN You weren't tired 5 minutes ago when you were happy to raid the treasure chest.

LEONARD Yes but

GWEN If you stay still for the photos how about I get you an iced bun from the bakery, like your father used to buy us?

LEONARD Promise?

GWEN Yes

ELVIRA And me!

GWEN Of course you too.

FRED So is your husband working as a sailor at sea?

GWENLLIAN Yes he's part of the British Navy, he was recruited back when he was in the West Indies. It's one of the few jobs he's allowed to do. His skin is too dark for certain jobs here. Makes me feel sick with anger sometimes.

LEONARD Mummy, are you angry?

GWEN Not now darling no

ELVIRA I miss daddy

GWEN I miss him too, give us a cwutch!

FRED I'm sure these photos will bring him comfort

GWENLLIAN I hope so. But I sometimes feel I'm not enough, that they need their father too

FRED When I think of my mother I think of her always staying strong... despite struggling... Anyway that's what your children will remember in the days and times ahead.

GWENLLIAN Well I must say thank you Fred for listening to my troubles, and for making the children and I so at ease.

FRED Oh it was my pleasure. I hope you were glad to be a part of it.

GWENLLIAN You surprised me...I was

EXT. HMS Southern Prince

Crashing waves surround the ship as black British seamen are working dealing with deck maintenance, tugging ropes, cleaning the deck.

MAJOR CUNNINGHAM Officer Hinds! Officer Hinds! Letter for you

LEONARD SNR Thank you Sir

GWENLLIAN My darling Leonard. We hope this finds you well and makes you smile...we miss you so much but know that you're working hard to

provide and come home to us soon. Stay safe, all our love, your Gwennie, Leonard and Elvira.

THE END