



School of Life

Filmmuseum Potsdam 15.–19. Mai 2006

Pädagogisches Dossier

Imelda Marcos of Bethnal Green

UK 2004

Writer/Director: Sean Wood, Producer: Rebecca Bazzard, Running Time: 11 Minutes

SYNOPSIS

A young girl is nine years old today. Her dad's forgotten, her mum's remembered but can't get in the party spirit. A pair of second hand shoes, bought as an afterthought by her dad, seems like the perfect present. Only trouble is they don't fit properly.

INHALTSANGABE (deutsch)

Ein Mädchen feiert seinen neunten Geburtstag, aber es will keine rechte Partystimmung aufkommen. Ihr Vater hat den Geburtstag vergessen und schenkt ihr nachträglich ein paar gebrauchte hochhackige Sandalen. Während mehrerer Gänge zum Einkaufen – Snacks für sie und ihre Schwester, Zigaretten für ihre Eltern usw. – trägt das Mädchen stolz die neuen Schuhe zur Schau. Leider passen sie nicht richtig und was am Ende bleibt, sind nur ein paar große Blasen.

CAST LIST

Girl	Alice Callari	Mother	Rachel Kait
Father	Kevin Dignam	Sister	Phoebe Wood

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The idea for the film came about by seeing a neglected child walking gamely but awkwardly down a street in winter wearing only a t-shirt, mini skirt and badly fitting high heels. She brought to mind similar instances on the estate where I live of youthful resilience in the face of a dispiriting home life and this is something I wanted to capture in the film.

The drama is low-key, emphasising nuances in relationships and textures of daily life. Resentments are two-edged and hard for the protagonists to label, let alone resolve. A key aim is that the viewer realise that the family's problems are habitual with no clear-cut solution. They should feel unease for the children, when the door closes at the end.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

IMELDA MARCOS was once the 'Steel Butterfly,' the beautiful wife and confidante of Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Imelda was voted Miss Manila in the early 1950s spent her early life as a beauty queen. When the Marcos regime became increasingly unpopular, Imelda's glamorous excesses were a frequent target of criticism. While much of the Philippines remained mired in poverty due to the sinking economy, Imelda was said to possess hundreds of pairs of shoes in an enormous walk-in closet and hordes of jewels. She reportedly owned 3,000 pairs of shoes (size 8 1/2), which were found by the opposition forces after the Marcos regime was overthrown in 1986. In 1987 she famously defended herself by stating: "I did not have three thousand pairs of shoes, I had one thousand and sixty." Most were worn only once or not at all. The collection included a pair of plastic disco sandals with three-inch-high, flashing, battery-operated heels.

BETHNAL GREEN is a place in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in the heart of London's East End. By the end of the nineteenth century, Bethnal Green was one of the poorest slums in London. Jack the Ripper operated at the western end of Bethnal Green and in neighbouring Whitechapel.

A Tudor ballad about the 'Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green' tells of an ostensibly poor man who gave a surprisingly generous dowry for his daughter's wedding.

DIALOGUE LIST

Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you etc ...

DAD

What's going on?

What?

YOUNGER DAUGHTER

It's her birthday?

DAD

Just goin' out.

LITTLE BOY

Daddy!

MUM

Don't worry luv, we'll have our own little party.

'ere go down the shops - get yourself some crisps and drink and stuff ...

'an get us a pack of fags an' all ... Good girl.

DAD

Happy birthday.

'Ere get yourself something. And something for your sister too.

MUM

How's that? Better?

Yeah.

DAD

What's up?

MUM

Don't fit.

DAD

What?

MUM

Show him then.

DAD

Where's your sister?

DAUGHTER

Michelle's.

DAD

What's wrong with a plaster?

MUM

Put your socks on.

DAD

'ere get yourself something from the shops.

Go on.

Give her some money to get something.

Only us left.

MUM

Baby?

DAD

Sleeping.

Come on.

BOTH DAUGHTERS

Bang bang you're dead, fifty bullets in your head...

Me mummy -

DAUGHTER

I don't know that one.

YOUNGER DAUGHTER

I don't either.

Pat a cake - pat a cake ...

Pat a cake - pat a cake ...