**Rainbow Baby**

(a 5 minute monologue by Claire Booker)

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 **Characters**

 Sylvia: A middle aged woman, neatly dress.

 **Props and Set**

An open set, conveying a church hall store room. Props include a pair of scissors, a chain and locket, an assortment of old clothes and sewing materials.

(*Lights rise on Sylvia who is addressing the birth mother of Polly, her adopted daughter)*

Oh yes. I remember everything about that day. You wore red. A velour dress. The label was sticking out. I had this terrible urge to cross the Courtroom and tuck it back in. *(Sylvia looks at a letter in her hand and reads aloud in disbelief)* “All I want now is the simplest thing in the world? To love my own child?” *(she folds the letter up)* You don't love at the drop of a hat. It's hard work. You're up all hours, you go without, you worry yourself sick.

*(Sylvia puts the letter back into her handbag)* I always had a feeling you’d turn up one day. Just a hunch. Blood’s thicker than water after all. *(pause)* I’d have invited you round for tea, but Jim’s a bit touchy at the moment - one of his moods about Polly and the future and everything. Then I had a brainwave. Why not meet at the Wednesday Club? Much more informal. A lot easier for all concerned.

*(Sylvia starts to rifle through a pile of costumes)* Excuse the mess, by the way. We’re right in the thick of it. 'The Live Wires' hit Wolverhampton next week. (*sudden inspiration*) Any good with a needle? (*pause*) Oh, pity. I don’t know, every year I swear it’ll be my last effort, but I do love to see them well turned out and not everyone’s got the knack for it. (*pause*) Wonderful name, isn’t it? The Live Wires. Jim thought it up. Polly's the star, of course. She's written most of the songs herself. And she paints. And she plays the piano. You did spot her on the way in, didn’t you? Red skirt? Paisley top? Funny how she suits red too. (*pause*) Not easy to miss, is she? All that bounce. All that talent. I mean, the others are good, of course. But Polly . . . well, Polly shines.

Oh come on; let’s sneak a peak at them rehearsing. I can never resist it. She'll recite you a poem if you like. Oh yes. Real poetry. It’s hard to stop her. It just pours out. I know it’s not Shakespeare or anything, but she’s got a real ear for rhyme. *(she pulls a greetings card out of her handbag)* Listen to this one. She wrote it for my birthday. It’s only got two spelling mistakes and one of them’s an apostrophe - they don’t count. *(reciting proudly)* "My Mum loves tea, and she loves me. My Mum has a handbag, and loves my Dad. When we go out, I laugh and shout. But my Mum is best. She wears a blue dress."

*(long pause)* Not exactly your cup of tea, is she? Oh, there's nothing I don't know about disgust. I've seen it on some of the best faces - out shopping, down the pictures, in MacDonalds. What's so wrong with her? She hasn't got two heads. Polly's Polly. I wouldn't want her different. If she was like everyone else she'd be . . . odd.

*(Sylvia pulls herself together and starts rifling through the costumes)* You’ve done well for yourself, though. A university professor. Very impressive. Ambition's a good thing. I try and drum that into Polly. I know she'll never be prime minister or anything, but so long as she does her best, we’re perfectly happy. *(she grabs a torn silk dress triumphantly)* Ah! *(she checks the material for flaws)* Just what we need for Miss Muffet. There’s enough here to do all the flounces. I might even squeeze out a bit of trim for the bonnet. I never throw anything away. It’s against my religion. Every piece of material's got potential.

*(Sylvia holds onto the dress and searches for an un-picker)*  Of course, Polly and I don’t always see eye to eye. Oh no. That would be asking too much. Clothes! Don't get me onto clothes. If there's one thing I won't tolerate that's indecent clothing. Specially for a girl like Polly. Well, I mean it's asking for trouble. All the other young women, they've got their A levels and boyfriends and career prospects. But my Polly, she's got nothing but her innocence. If that was taken away from her. If some boy tried to . . . or an older man . . . (*agitated*) All she talks about these days is babies, babies, babies. I half hoped she wouldn’t put two and two together and work out . . . how it’s actually done.

(*determined sigh*) You have to buckle on the armour. It’s me and Jim against the world sometimes. (*pause*) I married a diamond there. Jim’s my rock. Never made me feel any less a woman for . . . *(pause)* We'll adopt, he said. Simple as that. Didn’t bat an eyelid. But what with my diabetes and his age, they wouldn't let us have a baby. Not a healthy baby. And then they told us about Polly. (*pause*) Without you, there’d be no Polly.

*(Sylvia opens the locket around her neck)*  That’s the very first photo we took of her. Pretty as a picture. Little eyelids perfect as far as I was concerned. And I said to Jim, she's ours. And he didn't say no. My Jim never said no. We both felt it. I can't explain. It was like peeping at a flower that everyone’s walked past, but there it is, so small, so beautiful, just waiting to open. *(rises)* Listen. Can you hear her? She’s belting it out. (*singing along*) “I am a rainbow sunny and bright. I am a rainbow happy, happy, happy.” (*pause*) You see. Everyone deserves a second chance.

*(Lights fade to Final Black Out)*

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