I watched the view slip by through the train window, the world outside flashing into pitch black as we plunged into a tunnel.

This can’t be it… ten years, and she just shows up out of the blue?

The steady rhythm of the train rocked my thoughts back and forth. Why would my mum, the woman who abandoned me when I was only two,suddenly want to see me? I saw faint scraps of memory: her chestnut-brown hair, flashing blue eyes. Everyone used to say I looked just like her. My father would always sigh when I asked, “What happened to her?”But he never gave me an answer.

A clean, robotic voice cut through my thoughts, announcing the arrival of my station. Clutching my satchel, I tried to hold my chin high, to look like the strong, brave girl she would have wanted me to be. The train doors slid open.

She was waiting, her arms wide and her smile bright. But something about it - too artificial, too eager. It felt wrong. I barely knew this woman. Should I have stayed home?

Hesitant, I stepped forward and let her embrace me. Her hands were soft, and her breath was warm. I hugged her back, convincing myself it was the right thing.

She gave me what I thought I wanted: apologies, regrets, stories of why she had left - the answers I had been searching for my whole life. I finally felt that I could trust her.

That night, after she settled into our house, I crept downstairs for a drink of water. It was past my bedtime, so I tiptoed, careful not to wake anyone. But I heard the voices - words I was never meant to hear

She hadn’t come back to be my mother. She was sick, desperate . And I, her abandoned daughter, was the only match she had left.

The glass trembled in my hand as I realised the truth. The warmth of her hug, her too-bright smile, all the words she’d spoken - it was all a mask.

She came back for herself. Not for me. I finally understood what had happened to her.