

The Sandwich

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE WRONG SIDE OF AN ENGLISH CITY - DAY

Boarded-up council houses. Neglected terraces. Burnt out cars. Cobbled streets and narrow alleyways.

SUPER: 1991

Overgrown gardens. Weeds flourish - in strange places.

Busted bricks. Cracked kerbs. Potholes. Dirty broken windows.

Factory and shop 'Closing Down' signs.

Pushchairs shifting wailing bairns through puddles.

Rotting telephone directories. Junk mail. Litter.

Cheeky kids. Fat folk. Skinny folk. Scruffy types. Scary types.

Corner shops. Run down pubs. Graffiti. Tattoos. Body piercings. Smashed bus shelters.

Fish and chips. Greasy burgers. Kebabs. Aggressive cats.

Empty plastic bags. Old newspapers blowing in the wind.

Dogs. And their shit.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Huge. The shells of partly built new houses cover half of it.

The rest contains remains of partially demolished warehouses.

A tracked Poclain 90 excavator bangs away at old walls - with enthusiasm.

Its big bucket bangs. Smashes. Dust rises. Walls fall.

REVS high - powerful. Smoke pumps from a rusty exhaust above the cab.

The rest of the site seems void of life.

Rain drizzles.

The machine driver is JACK - early sixties, white-haired. His jumper and trousers are old and dirty. But he's content and bellied. Sucking on cigarettes as if it'll go out of style.

It almost will.

Smoke pumps from his nose.

The Poclain is a big digger not ideal for demolition - but Jack's doing a good job.

It's obvious he knows what he's at. He likes it.

A KID wanders past at the edge of the site. Cheap tracksuit, dirty trainers. Kicking stones while he strolls.

His hair's black, untidy and wet. His face too.

He could be anywhere between twelve and seventeen. Age has strange ways round these parts.

The lad's face is young. But his expressions are older. Wiser.

He strolls in front of the busy excavator - several times.

Jack notices. But acts like he doesn't.

The Kid passes again.

The machine stops - cab door swings open. The Kid's been watching. But pretends he hasn't.

Jack pulls a lever near his knee. REVS reduce.

JACK

Mornin'.

Kid hums, no other response. Kicks a stone. It skips through a cloudy puddle.

Jack eyes the lad. Turns the ignition key.

The digger's engine winds down. All's almost quiet now.

Kid glances everywhere - except at Jack.

The door swings in the wind. TUTS. It gets a damn good kick.

This time it catches. Stays open.

Jack adjusts his seat back. Relaxes.

The Kid watches a blackbird - swooping low.

JACK

Hungry, lad?

Frowns as Kid shrugs his shoulders. Too busy watching birdy - landing to grab something.

JACK

Oh. I am. Nosebag time.

Reaches behind him, pulls out a well worn holdall. Unzips it.

The bird lifts its beak high, swallows. Flies away.

The Kid watches it go. Pulls out a small tin of baccy, rolls a cigarette - with considerable skill. In the rain too.

An old sandwich box sits open on Jack's knee. A metal flask of steaming coffee fills a mug in no time.

The Kid sucks hard on his damp rollie. Spits baccy out.

Black finger smudges appear on Jack's sandwich. Hygiene ain't high on his list of priorities. Not today.

The Kid can't help but watch him - munching his doorstep of bread and cheese.

JACK
Hungry now then?

Kid nods. Briefly rubs his belly.

Jack wipes his hand on his overalls to carefully take out another large sandwich.

Between thick slices of white bread is cheddar cheese - cut thick enough to kill several mice with kindness.

He offers the huge buttie.

The Kid glances up. Pushes half a brick around with his foot.

Slowly, he advances towards Jack - now remaining frozen. Sandwich proffering.

Dirty trainers pick their way across rubble like a mountain goat. This Kid's lithe. Half way there...

JACK
Shouldn't ya be at school, like?

Kid stops. Jack's expression drops.

JACK
Hey. Woah! Don't go, soft lad!

But the lad's already hurrying - back the way he came.

JACK
Take it for later, at least.

Jack shakes his head. Kid gets smaller - vanishes.

He shrugs. Looks at the sandwich. He opens his mouth to take a bite. Instead he places it back in the box.

Puts his bag away. Releases the door catch.

JACK

Daft.

SLAM. The machine REVS way high. Slews - arm swinging fast.

Big bucket THUMPS violently into a wall.

Jack's face though - calm as a breeze. But it reddens.

LATER

Getting dark. Rain gone. Just the Poclain scraping rubble into heaps. No other movement.

Kid appears in the distance. Face and hands dirtier. Blood stains and dirt marks below the knee of his left tracksuit leg. A small rip's visible.

He stops. Mucky paws in pockets. Animated as ever - hopping from foot to foot. Hands in and out.

Head bobbing, whistling a tuneless song. No chance of anyone recognising it.

Jack spots him - but carries on regardless. Kid does the same. They get closer.

With a hundred foot gap the machine REVS down. Dies.

Hydraulics HISS. Jack parks the bucket on heaped broken bricks and timbers. Poclain's door swings open.

Picks up his bag. Climbs down - nimble for his age.

The Kid faces away. Stares toward the distant city centre.

Jack's bag drops onto a low wall. Sits beside it.

Kid glances back to see Jack pour out the last of his coffee.

Watches him place his half-full buttie box next to the steaming cup.

Then - Jack gets up.

Ambles straight to a pristine Ford Granada.

Kid's bright eyes flick between Jack and the low wall, then away.

Granada's door SLAMS shut. Locks.

Jack carries a tabloid newspaper and a can of lemonade back.

JACK

Alright?

THE KID

Yeah. Why wouldn't I be?

JACK

Don't look it. What happened the leg?

Bony shoulders shrug.

Jack smiles. Sits back down. Flicks through his paper. His eyes stay on it...

JACK

Still hungry?

Kid nods. Some enthusiasm.

Jack's eyebrows rise with surprise. Slides his buttie box along the wall.

JACK

Help yourself.

Places the can of lemonade beside the box. Sees Kid lick his lips. Sniffs. Spits.

JACK

Well ya can. If you give us a rollie.

A sneer appears on Kid's lips. Spits again. Pulls out baccy.

A passable smoke's done quick - holds it out.

The older man briefly examines it. Nods. Places it between his lips. Pats the wall twice.

Kid hesitates, sits. Doesn't sit still though.

Jack does a fancy Zippo trick to light his cig - bangs it against his hand. Clicks fingers. All in one swift movement. The Kid's face brightens.

THE KID

Nice, mister.
(spits baccy)
Nice lighter too.

A huge drag later Jack grins. Passes the lighter to The Kid.

JACK

Don't be setting anything on fire but cigarettes with that.

THE KID

Can I keep it?

JACK

Can ya fuck! The wife gimme that.
 (clenches a fist)
 Thirty odd year ago an' all. It
 should do another thirty yet, too.
 It says on it...

His fist unfurls. But Kid's already holding out Zippo. Jack takes it. Tries to meet Kid's eyes. Doesn't quite.

An old dirty thumb rubs across his Zippo engraving.

JACK

Wedding present, like.

THE KID

Top band. Gedge is good, man. Lost
 Pandas. All that.

Jack puzzles, pockets Zippo. Takes the lid off his lunchbox. Kid turns away when Jack offers the big cheese sandwich.

JACK

Here. Helps with hunger, like.

Kid turns back. Eyes big buttie.

THE KID

What's the catch, like?

Jack spins his cigarette. Kid smiles, for the first time.

Takes the buttie. Demolishes half in seconds. Burps. Jack nods at the unopened can. Worry crosses Kid's face.

JACK

Just fuckin' take it. It's nothin'.
 Owe me nowt. Don't want owt either.

THE KID

(mouth full)
 Why not? Everyone wants summat.

JACK

It's called ah... It's called
 somethin'. Can't think of it. Not
 enough of it about.

Kid ignores him, but sees Jack bite his lip with the corner of his eye.

JACK

Right. One more thing to do. Then
 all done.

He climbs back up on to the machine.

Within a minute padlocked metal shutters cover all the Poclain's windows.

Jack returns. The can of lemonade remains untouched.

POPS and HISSES when Jack opens it. Places it back exactly where he got it.

Kid and Jack exchange a split-second look.

Kid clears his throat... Swigs on the can then almost finishes the sandwich off with incredible speed.

Coughs hard, spits out a lump of cheese. Coughs again.

A wince crosses his face. Sneers at the partial crust of bread in his hand.

THE KID
I don't like cheese.

Chucks the remains of the sandwich onto a brick heap.

JACK
Hey!

Kid storms off. Jack stares at him.

JACK
(under his breath)
Daft.

Jack packs up his bag. Wanders back to his car.

The can of lemonade sits alone on the wall.

LATER

Very dark now. The can of lemonade sits exactly where it was.

The Kid picks it up. Takes a swig.

FADE OUT.