

Bread and Salt

written by

Daniel Smith

Address 7 Dudley Drive G12 9SE  
Phone 07887815161  
E-mail [danieljlsmith18@gmail.com](mailto:danieljlsmith18@gmail.com)

FADE IN:

INT. FLAT/CUPBOARD - DAY

Momentary blackness, before a square of light spills into the dark, revealing the little kitchen beyond the flung-open cupboard door. From the bottom of the square a little hand juts forward, stretching it's fingertips and searching blindly in the cupboard, jerking this way and that, before closing around something past the boundary of the weak incoming glow.

INT. FLAT - CONTINUOUS

A LITTLE GIRL, around 7, takes what is revealed to be a big plastic salt shaker into the pile of condiments in her over-stacked arms. Cute as a button, in a top and shorts too big for her skinny wee frame, we follow her through to the equally pokey living room, made more cramped by a cumbersome table loaded with plates of cold cuts and crisps. She spills the contents of her arms, and proceeds to slide them, upstanding, closer to the centre of the table.

INT. FLAT/KITCHEN - DAY

A loaf of CRUSTY WHITE BREAD fills the screen, slowly sinking in on itself as the blade of the KNIFE descends from above. We see Girl sawing away at the bread, until DISEMBODIED MUMBLING gives her pause.

INT. FLAT/DINING TABLE - DAY

A nondescript BOTTLE and some mismatched glasses are set down with a PLONK, before a key jangles, and the phantom voices become clear and loud as the door squeaks open.

MAN (O.S.)

Ah, he was a jobsworth. They all are. Just another day on the office for him.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Sit down if you're coming in.

MAN (O.S.)

You don't want me to?

WOMAN (O.S.)

You have. So sit.

MAN (O.S.)  
 (snorts)  
 Wouldn't miss a do like this. That  
 a bottle?

A great big black coat with the shabby YOUNG MAN in a green tie somewhere inside it crumples into the seat at the head of the table. The WOMAN, similar age, walks behind him to hang up her coat, also in black. She looks frail, but stands tall with a stern, steely expression.

WOMAN  
 (to Girl)  
 Get the bread.

Girl exits to the kitchen.

MAN  
 Lovely turnout in't it.

WOMAN  
 (sitting down)  
 Nearly perfect. Coat aff.

Man only moves to pour two glasses. Girl brings the bread to the table.

MAN  
 (picking up girl)  
 'Ey you! Remember me? That looks lovely, only the best scran at this house, eh! Did yer mum get that today?

WOMAN  
 Sheila brought it over before the church.

MAN  
 Didn't fancy the after party?

WOMAN  
 You've a keen eye. Yes it is a bottle.

MAN  
 Probably for the best she never come. Would be a bit cramped.

He necks his drink and pours another.

WOMAN

Funny you say that, I'm actually expecting someone else over soon so

-

MAN

So. Don't you agree?

WOMAN

What.

MAN

That priest. Bastard, naw?

WOMAN

Don't swear here.

MAN

He never did I suppose?

He puts Girl down, who climbs onto the remaining chair, and slaps some ham onto a slice. She munches away, ignoring the adults.

WOMAN

The priest was fine. Spoke well.

MAN

Spoke well. That's the problem in't it? If he'd cared any, he'd a spoke honest, not well. What's that? Empty... platitudes. The cut-and-paste life story of a human being nicked out a few Hallmark cards. They're all the same.

WOMAN

A funeral is not the time for honest assessment.

(to Girl)

You can sit there til our guest arrives.

MAN

"Guest"? Sorry but looks like I'm the best you're gonna get the day doll.

WOMAN

God, could you imagine? A rather important person is on their way. A person of station. He's going to help us out of this mess.

MAN

Class aye? Social worker?

WOMAN

I'll be so happy never to see you again after today.

MAN

'This mess' - am I picking up some bitterness regarding your man's death?

WOMAN

(to Girl)

Bedtime soon.

Girl trots off, sandwich in hand.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

His daughter and her mother, left stranded and alone? What money there was, thrown down your throats down at McTavern's?

MAN

His money, what d'you want from him?

WOMAN

On occasion aye. You ever hear about Sports Day? She won. Egg and spoon. First prize is brand new running shoes, *brand new*, still in the box and everything. The first time I go to open the box all i find is a bottle of green stuff. And it was already half empty.

MAN

Well that's a pretty negative way of looking at things.

WOMAN

I am bitter.

MAN

At him dying.

WOMAN

What did he leave behind? Just a family, not much else.

MAN

Women... Accountability is an alien concept to yous. You don't think you are at fault? You really don't do you? It's just his fault for dying, right, the asshole.

WOMAN

(pause)

Are you... is this - are you being funny?

INT. FLAT/BEDROOM - DAY

Girl sits tucked up in the rickety bed. CRUMBS fall from her chin to the duvet. She looks across to the chest at the bedside. A picture has been laid down, with its stand poking upward.

INT. FLAT/DINING ROOM - DAY

Man's GLASS is filled almost till it overflows.

MAN

You hate him right?

WOMAN

Yes.

MAN

For boozin' aye? Oh, slanje.  
(raises glass)

WOMAN

And his choice of booze buddy.

MAN

Exactly. Exactly. Why did he need a drinking buddy?

WOMAN

To make him look good? Other than that, believe me. I have no idea.

MAN

Because men who live with women like you need men like me. You tortured that boy.

WOMAN

He tortured me.

MAN

Yes yes you're a tragic figure I know. You made that very clear to him. From what he told me you made that very clear to him every day.

WOMAN

What? That he was going to send us into the street? He went through jobs almost as quick as he went through pints. And girlfriends.

MAN

That's where I come in.

INT. FLAT/BATHROOM - DAY

An old TOOTHPASTE TUBE HOVERS OVER A BRUSH.

Girl is sitting on the toilet, legs swinging freely beneath her, trying in vain to extract anything from the empty tube. She clambers up to stand on the toilet seat, in order to reach a cabinet over the sink. We CLOSE IN ON HER FACE as she opens the cabinet, removing items to get to the back. As she places the out-of-view items in the sink, we hear them RATTLE. Eventually she finds another toothpaste tube, and replaces all the items, with further rattling, and closes the cabinet.

INT. FLAT/DINING TABLE - DAY

We rejoin the wake. Woman is looking stony, coldly angry at the glee with which Man insults her.

MAN

You think we would get shitfaced and start hooring about the city?

WOMAN

No I thought you would get together to share your opinions on String Theory.

MAN

We were friends. Hear of them?

WOMAN

You seems to be leading to some very important point - could you get to it before fucking off forever? I'm expecting a human being over soon.

MAN

Friends - someone in who's company  
one feels safe. A person you can  
trust. Confide in.

They stare at each other.

MAN (CONT'D)

You were not his friend.

WOMAN

What did he "confide"?

MAN

I can always tell the man who  
drinks for fun from the man in  
pain. If you were to ask the latter  
what they'd just necked, they  
couldn't tell you for the life of  
them. Might as well be mercury or  
blood. Doesn't matter to them.

WOMAN

Which are you, a drunk or a drunk?  
You're boring me.

MAN

He was a slight wee lad, our boy.  
Angry breeze could knock him on his  
arse. And what's the phrase - Hell  
hath no fury like..?

For the first time, Woman is truly struck by Man's words. She  
lowers her eyes to her glass, and drinks long. Man's wicked  
smile widens.

INT. FLAT/BEDROOM - DAY

We see ONE PINK-SOCKED FOOT on the floor by the bed. A  
matching sock drops from on high, followed by a corresponding  
bare foot. The socked foot then briefly ascends only to  
return similarly exposed. The feet spin on the spot, and  
travel across the room. Where they had stood, we see faint,  
discoloured coppery spots marking the floor.

GIRL is just into her fresh new jammies, and admiring herself  
in a FULL LENGTH MIRROR. The mirror has several cracks along  
the top, and a corner seems to be missing, leaving the back  
of the mirror exposed.



INT. FLAT/DINING TABLE - DAY

THE BOTTLE is running low

MAN (O.S.)

What was he gonna do, phone the  
polis?

Woman lights a cigarette and draws deep.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You think you're so much better  
than him...than both of us. But you  
have your vices too. Drinking and  
friendship, they were ours, aye.  
Hoping for something better, that's  
yours. Hoping he could be better  
than who he was. That thwarted hope  
drove you to some extremes. And  
this new one, this magical figure  
that's gonna walk through the door  
any second now... that'll do the  
same. You're drunk on hope.  
Aw darling, I'm sure you had your  
reasons. And it's ok, I don't want  
one, cutting down.

Woman exhales in response.

MAN (CONT'D)

What I'm really curious about  
though; why all this?

WOMAN

All what.

MAN

The man who ruined your life.  
Turned you into... who you are now.  
The man you did such things to.  
Dead and gone, out of your life.  
And what little he left behind?  
That's gone too, spent on his send  
off. Nice-talking bullshit priest,  
reception, food and drink - some  
anyway - the whole deal. Why this  
parade?

WOMAN

That's what you're curious about?  
Why a funeral for a dead man? Asked  
and answered. Finish your drink.

MAN

I bet I know.

WOMAN

You don't know a single thing about me.

MAN

The guilt, just eating away at you, knowing that more than me, more even than him, more than anyone - you put that man in a box.

WOMAN

Get out.

MAN

So the least you could do was make it a nice box.

WOMAN

Why are YOU here? What do you get out of saying these things? Get out.

MAN

And this, this saviour that you've convinced yourself is coming over, gonna get you out of the sticky financial wicket your victim left you in... man is he?

WOMAN

(stands)

Get out! Get out of my house! You are a sick, mangy little mongrel and you will not be in our lives for one more day on this Earth.

Man snickers as he necks his drink, and then downs the dregs at the bottom of THE BOTTLE. As he lowers it, we see Girl in the doorway, staring unflinching at the adults.

MAN

I am sick. I cannot think why you allowed me to darken your doorstep in the first place... it could be contagious... still. Cheers for the medicine.

WOMAN

It's finished.

MAN

Not that piss. Your expression  
could cure all my woes. Even the  
loss of my good friend.

(stands)

Well I hope your man comes soon,  
and that his bed shall prove warmer  
than you've become accustomed to.

(to Girl)

Bye sweetie, look after your mother  
for me. Doesn't look like anyone  
else will.

Girl stares into Man's bloodshot eyes, neither impressed or  
afraid.

GIRL

What happened to your teeth?

Man's smile falters. He straightens up, and turns to the  
door. He leaves without turning back.

Woman draws from her cigarette, shaking. Girl lifts the  
glasses and moves towards the kitchen. Woman stops her as she  
passes by gently cupping her face with a hand.

WOMAN

Leave it. That's my job. Off to  
bed.

Girl smiles faintly, and returns the glasses, before exiting  
the living room.

Woman looks after her, beginning to regain her composure, and  
stubs out her cigarette. She is silent.

We see the scattered remains of the modest reception; the  
food, plates and glasses dispersed in front of the host.

A SOFT KNOCK. The woman's head jerks up to look at the door.  
Her face is hard to read - both hopeful and scared.

FADE TO BLACK.