

GOING UNDERGROUND

Written by

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INT. EDINBURGH ROYAL MILE - DAY

DANNY ALLBRIGHT [60], his wife ELOISE HARPER [60], a podgy PETER WRIGHT [60], his wife ANGEL DENNING [60], RICKY NEWMAN [60], his wife BETH FLEETWOOD [60], and Ricky's beagle BUDDY are walking up the busy High Street in Edinburgh's Royal Mile amongst the swarm of tourists on a bright summer's day. Performance acts, that are part of the Edinburgh Festival, attract crowds of people in the middle of the pedestrianised road.

ANGEL DENNING

(to Peter)

Where's this place you're going?

PETER WRIGHT

Living Scottish Discoveries. Ricky received a leaflet with an offer to visit.

ELOISE HARPER

(to Angel)

One of those historical trips through dark, dusty tunnels. Right up their street.

BETH FLEETWOOD

(to Ricky)

You sure Buddy will be ok down there?

Ricky Newman glances down at his dog.

RICKY NEWMAN

Yeah, he'll be fine.

ANGEL DENNING

(to Peter)

You be careful with that chest of yours, if it is dusty down there.

PETER WRIGHT

I'll be fine.

ANGEL DENNING

(to Beth)

Weak chest.

Angel glances at Peter.

ANGEL DENNING (CONT'D)

(to Peter)

You should have a mask.

Peter glances at Ricky and shakes his head with despair as they pass close to OLD BABA FATT [67] who is selling stuffed animals and creatures. He holds one in each hand to show passersby as he stands behind his stall.

OLD BABA FATT
Cute animals for the kids. Made
with loving care. Three pound each!

People congregate around looking at the merchandise while some hand over money.

OLD BABA FATT (CONT'D)
(to the wives)
Not just for children, you know.

The three wives smile.

ANGEL DENNING
Not today, thanks.

They continue pass the stall.

OLD BABA FATT
Maybe another time.

EXT. EDINBURGH ROYAL MILE - MOMENTS LATER

The group stop at the entrance to a close.

ELOISE HARPER
(to Danny)
We'll meet you back here...

She checks her watch.

ELOISE HARPER (CONT'D)
...at mid-day.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
(with resignation)
Uhuh.

Beth pecks Ricky on the cheek.

BETH FLEETWOOD
Enjoy.

RICKY NEWMAN
Hope so.

BETH FLEETWOOD
Yeah, well just be here as
arranged.

ANGEL DENNING
 (to Peter)
 Don't get overexcited. Remember
 what the doctor said.

PETER WRIGHT
 I'll be fine.

ANGEL DENNING
 (to Beth and Eloise)
 Right, let's find some bargains.

The wives say their farewells and head on, leaving the three husbands and the dog to advance into the close.

EXT. LIVING SCOTTISH DISCOVERIES/CLOSE - CONTINUOUS

The three men and Buddy advance through the close towards the tour guide entrance that is signposted Living Scottish Discoveries.

RICKY NEWMAN
 Freedom!

Peter Wright retrieves an inhaler and deeply breathes in.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
 (to Peter)
 You ok?

PETER WRIGHT
 It's just age catching up with me.
 I'm fine.

RICKY NEWMAN
 You're not alone.

INT. LIVING SCOTTISH DISCOVERIES RECEPTION - DAY

The three men and Buddy wait in the rickety, reception area of the tour operator. Behind the old, wooden counter, an OLD MAN [80] accepts their payment which he places in an ancient till which registers in pounds and shillings.

The men, survey the reception, fascinated with the surroundings. The old man is dressed in working man's clothes from the thirties.

A clock on the wall indicates it is eleven-thirty in the morning.

PETER WRIGHT

It's been a while since we've all
been out together.

RICKY NEWMAN

Yeah, I think this is the first
since our sixtieth birthdays.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

(to Ricky)

I've never heard of this place.

RICKY NEWMAN

Something different.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

Sedate?

RICKY NEWMAN

At our age, isn't that what life's
like?

PETER WRIGHT

It'll be like stepping back in
time.

OLD MAN

If ye'd like to take a wee seat
over there, I'll bring ye a wee
dram to set ye on yer way.

The men turn their heads to see a small round table with
three wooden chairs in the corner of the room.

They walk over and sit as the man circles the counter and
brings a tray with three glasses and a bottle of whisky.

The men smile and rub their hands with anticipation as he
lays down the tray. The label on the bottle has the words
ELIXIR 1328 printed. The old man wipes away the dust from
the bottle and begins to pour. With his hand slightly
shaking, he spills some of the alcohol which runs to the
edge of the table and drips on to the floor.

Peter takes a glass and sniffs the contents.

PETER WRIGHT

Oh...that's nice.

The dog is licking the alcohol on the stone floor.

OLD MAN

Aye, it's a rare one, it is. It'll set you up nicely for your venture below.

The old man then pulls out three A4 folded leaflets which he places on the table.

He shows Ricky the leaflet, which he opens to reveal a map inside.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Now, as you'll understand, these old tunnels under the city are centuries old, so watch yer step as ye make yer way.

Ricky looks intently at the illustration, taking a sip from his glass while the others savour their drink.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Then ye'll come to a fork. Just here.

He points to the location on the map.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Ye can choose whichever path ye wish to take, but ye cannae change yer mind once ye've made yer selection.

His head nods as he smiles reassuringly.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

It's fir health and safety reasons, ye ken.

Ricky looks up at the old man and grins, at ease with the instructions he has been given.

RICKY NEWMAN

Sounds good to me.

OLD MAN

Richt. When yer finished yer dram just make yer way through that door...

He points over to the closed door and they all turn to look.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

...and enjoy your trip.

With that, the old man takes the bottle and leaves the foyer through a door behind the counter.

PETER WRIGHT

What a funny wee man.

As Danny finishes his drink, he studies the map.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

These tunnels stretch for miles.

Ricky looks down at his dog, who is licking his lips as if waiting for more.

RICKY NEWMAN

You enjoy that Buddy?

INT. LIVING SCOTTISH DISCOVERIES RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

RICKY NEWMAN

Shall we make our way, then?

His friends agree and they rise from their chair. Peter and Ricky both take their maps but Danny leaves his on the table.

Ricky turns the handle and opens the door, allowing a gentle breeze to escape. The men sniff the air.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

It smells old.

The party enter the passageway and close the door behind.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE #1 - CONTINUOUS

Centuries-old stone lines the arched tunnel with electrified lamps running the length of the passageway. With enough space for two to walk side-by-side, Ricky and Buddy walk behind the others. Peter's nose twitches before sneezing.

PETER WRIGHT

It says these tunnels go back to the thirteen hundreds.

He pulls out a hanky and wipes his nose.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

Amazing.

RICKY NEWMAN

I'm glad we had those drams. It's fair warmed me up.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Yeah, it's a bit chilly down here.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE #1/FORK - MOMENTS LATER

The party reach the fork in the passageway. Ricky and Peter study their maps then stare down each path.

RICKY NEWMAN
It doesn't really indicate what we'll find in either passage.

PETER WRIGHT
You think it'll make any difference?

RICKY NEWMAN
C'mon, we'll just take this one, for what it's worth.

The three men take the passageway to the left and continue.

INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGE #1 LEFT - MOMENTS LATER

Danny pulls out his mobile and checks the time.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
That's ten minutes. Not a lot to see, so far.

Ricky sighs.

RICKY NEWMAN
Yeah, it's not exactly...

Suddenly the men can see the passageway widens to reveal a cavern.

RICKY NEWMAN (CONT'D)
Hold on. We've got something.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

A large cavern leads to a closed door at the top of some stone steps. On either side are stored old wooden boxes and discarded bric-a-brac. Everything is covered in dust and looks like it hasn't been touched in years.

The men study the boxes which have years stamped on them ranging from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century.

RICKY NEWMAN
Props?

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Yeah. Definitely.

Danny walks towards the door to open which instantly releases a blinding light that engulfs the cavern.

Danny steps back, turning his head away before retreating. They stand in a line staring into the light.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT (CONT'D)
Wow!

Peter raises his hands to protect his eyes from the bright light.

PETER WRIGHT
Jeez, that's blinding. Maybe we should try the other path?

RICKY NEWMAN
The man said we can't go back.

PETER WRIGHT
It's already giving me a headache.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Don't be a wimp.

PETER WRIGHT
Just saying.

Ricky begins to climb the steps with his dog but the animal is reluctant as he begins to howl.

RICKY NEWMAN
C'mon Buddy. It's fine.

PETER WRIGHT
I don't think he's keen.

RICKY NEWMAN
You want to give up before we've even started?

Danny advances then glances back at Peter.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
If it's too much, we can go back but let's see what's in there.

Peter sighs and follows his friends as they enter the light.

EXT. EDINBURGH ROYAL MILE - DAY

The three men find themselves standing outside a shop. The sun is shining and tourists bustle among the street entertainers. Noise and laughter engulf the street as the three men look in amazement. They have changed into animated characters with their surroundings in technicolour. They advance into the street.

Danny looks behind to see where they came from. A sign above the shop says 'EDINBURGH'S SMALLEST SHOP'. The shop is closed.

Nearby, a breakdancer is dancing to a ghettoblaster playing AxelF to a crowd of onlookers.

PETER WRIGHT

Holy crap!

The three men stare in amazement at each other, studying their hands and feeling their faces.

Ricky laughs in disbelief.

RICKY NEWMAN

Are we...

Danny tugs at Ricky's jacket.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

What the heck is this?!

Peter is breathing intensely on his inhaler.

PETER WRIGHT

Eh, guys this isn't right.

Ricky looks around at the people passing by in awe with his mouth open.

RICKY NEWMAN

Far out.

He shakes his head trying to fathom the situation.

RICKY NEWMAN (CONT'D)

I mean really far out!

DANNY ALLBRIGHT

This doesn't make sense.

PETER WRIGHT

Think I'm gonna freak out.

Ricky gathers himself and grabs Peter, who has his breathalyzer fixed to his mouth, by the shoulder.

RICKY NEWMAN
Slow, deep breaths.

The two men stare at each other with Ricky trying to calm his friend down.

RICKY NEWMAN (CONT'D)
That's it. Easy does it.

Danny is ignoring his friends as he intently stares at his surroundings.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Guys. It's 1984!

Ricky is too busy calming Peter.

RICKY NEWMAN
(to Peter)
You're doing good.

Danny Allbright pulls out his mobile.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
(to himself)
No signal.

Peter has managed to compose himself and is breathing slowly.

PETER WRIGHT
(to Ricky)
Thanks.

RICKY NEWMAN
No prob.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Guys, I think we're in an alternative universe!

His two friends turn to face him with incredulity.

RICKY NEWMAN
You think?

Danny points up at the banners promoting the Edinburgh Festival.

DANNY ALLBRIGHT
Look.