

## Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Part II

Karel Reisz , Dir. (1960)

The scene opens in the pub. Arthur's Aunt Ada is sitting at the bar gossiping with her son, Arthur's cousin Bert. It's lunchtime.

When Arthur walks in, they greet him warmly and with surprise.

Arthur orders drinks for the three of them.

"How's your mum these days?" asks Aunt Bea.

"She's alright."

Arthur inquires about Johnny, a relative who's moved to Australia. Ada says he's thriving, though he never could manage in England. But he was a good worker, Arthur says.

"He had to be," she replies, "He had it hard when he was a kid. Me and your mum had a struggle to bring you lot up, Arthur. Those were rotten days."

"I know," he acknowledges. "It won't happen again, though. I can tell you that."

Bert reports a conversation that he had with a fellow miner: "He said 'You can't beat the good old days.' So I got hold of my pick and I said to him, 'You tell me anything else about those good old days, as you call them, and I'll split your stupid head open.' I would, too." They all laugh.

A pretty girl sitting at the back of the pub with some older ladies catches Arthur's eye.

Aunt Ada notices at once. "Look at him," she says, referring to Arthur, "He can't take his eyes off that young girl over there."

"Not me," he replies, "I'm courting already. I was looking at the calendar."

"I'll believe you," she replies, much as Brenda had done the night before.

A boy pokes his head into the pub. "Are you coming, Mum?" he pleads.

"All right, I'm coming" she tells him.

"Are you coming, Bert? Or will you stay with Arthur?" To Arthur, she adds: "If I don't go home, they'll be coming to fetch me for fear they should starve."

On his way out, Bert asks Arthur, "How about a bit of fishing this afternoon up at the canal?"

"Okay, we'll get the bikes out."

While Arthur is chatting to the barmaid, the young woman who'd sparked his interest approaches.

"What can I get for you?" the barmaid asks.

"Two packets of crisps, please."

"Are you sure you can afford it?" Arthur asks, teasing her.

Then he asks, "Is it somebody's birthday?"

"It's my mum's anniversary if you want to know."

"I don't see your dad."

"Because he's not there."

"Is he coming?"

"I shouldn't think so. He left her 15 years ago today. And she's just having a drink to it."

Arthur laughs heartily.

"Well, I'm glad someone thinks it's funny." She's evidently unimpressed by Arthur's comments.

But when he offers to buy her a drink, she accepts.

They introduce themselves. She's Doreen (Shirley Anne Field) and works at the hairnet factory. She's been there since she left school. Arthur claims to be in the engineering trade.

"What do you do in the week, Doreen? Do you ever go to the pictures?"

"Only on Wednesdays. Why?"

"Oh, that's funny. I go on Wednesdays too. Which one do you go to?"

"The Granby, as a rule."

"I'll see you next Wednesday then, at 7:00."

"Fast worker, aren't you?" she retorts, but she doesn't refuse, provided that they won't be sitting in the back row.

Arthur protests that he can't see the screen clearly unless he sits in the back row. Doreen suggests that he might need glasses.

Once the date has been confirmed, he warns her not to be late.

She replies, "I won't. But if I am, you'll just have to wait, won't you?"

As Doreen walks away, Arthur gazes after her. He blows out a little smoke from his cigarette, with evident self-satisfaction. From behind him, we hear the cheers of the men playing darts.

Later that day, Arthur and Bert set off on their bikes for their fishing expedition. It's a gray day, made gloomier by smoke from the factory chimneys.

The two men sit at the edge of an industrial canal across from the grim mill buildings; it's not exactly an outing in nature. Yet, cinematographer Freddie Francis has perfectly captured what this spot is: an escape from town. On the far side of the canal, bare trees are reflected in the water. Two boys cycle by; otherwise the place is deserted.

*CAPTION: Even the electrical tower looks beautiful in Freddie Francis' photography.*

The cousins talk about Doreen. Bert can't understand why she'd want anything to do with a crazy guy like Arthur.

"They all want a good time," answers Arthur.

"This one looks different. First kiss and she'll expect an engagement ring," he predicts.

"I take a tip from the fishes, never bite unless the bait's good. I won't get married until I'm good and ready."

"You've got to get married some time, haven't you?"

"Why don't you try it, then?" Arthur challenges him.

"I haven't found anyone who'd have me yet!" Bert jokes back.

Arthur sums up his attitude: "It costs too much to get married, a lump sum down and your wages a week for life."

"Most blokes haven't got anything else to work for, have they?"

"I have, though. I work for the factory, the income tax and the insurance. That's enough. They rob you right, left, and center. After they've skinned you dry, they call you up in the army and get shot to death."

"That's how things are, Arthur. It's no good going crackers over it. All you can do is go on working and hope that one day something good will turn up."

“Maybe, but you’ve got to be as cunning as those bastards. Take a few tips from the fishes,” says Arthur, as he prepares the bait for his hook. “They all get caught in the end, though, don’t they? Can’t keep their chops off the bait.”

“She wasn’t a bad-looking girl, though, was she?” he observes, going back to the topic of Doreen.

“Aye. Still going out with the married one, are you? It will be good when you’re married. Her poor husband will be able to get a bit of rest then.”

“Serves him right for being so slow. He should make her like being in bed with him, then she wouldn’t go out with a bloke like me.”

“You’ll get your face bashed in one of these days,” Bert warns him.

“Don’t worry. I can look after myself.”

“Just you be careful then and use a bit more sense.”

It’s early morning in Nottingham. The work whistle blows; it’s time for everyone to leave for work. Some dogs bark.

Arthur leaves the house, followed by his dad. As they pass, the neighbor he’d collided with on Saturday night turns and scowls at him.

Arthur says to his dad, “There’s old Ma Bull.”

“Aye, she’s got nothing else to do, the busybody,” replies his dad.

“Spreading tales about me going with married women and boozing. It’s all bloody lies.”

“Make sure it is lies, though.”

Arthur walks his bike out of the alley and starts off along the quiet cobblestone street.

As he rides along, we hear the shouts of children playing in the street. Men walk with lunch boxes slung over their shoulder. Arthur has a desolate expression. He’s not looking forward to another day of work.

The factory is full of noise: the clang of metal and the steady hum of the equipment. Men tend their machines and walk to and fro in the aisles.

We see Arthur at his lathe. He shuts it off and, with a sigh, wipes his hands on a rag.

The bell sounds for lunch. In her white uniform, the tea lady briskly pours cups of tea from a large urn.

Arthur jumps at the sound of a sharp meow. A cat at his feet has killed a rat. He pets the cat, pushes it aside and picks up the rat. After a quick look around, he undoes one of his shirt buttons and tucks the rat surreptitiously into his shirt.

He goes over to the coat rack, takes his gas mask bag\* and puts it over his shoulder. He gives the rat a little squeeze as he plots his next move.

*\*Bought inexpensively as army surplus, these bags were very popular in Britain at the end of World War II. They were a familiar sight even in the 1970s; boys used them as satchels for their school books.*

Arthur spots two ladies at their posts. First one leaves, presumably for her break. Then the younger one picks up her cup and a newspaper and passes by Arthur, who has taken out a comb. Running it through his hair, he smiles at her.

Then he goes to the woman's post, pulls the rat from his shirt and lays it out on a tray of nails.

At the tea lady, Arthur runs into Jack and they settle down to eat lunch together. Arthur looks over his shoulder to see whether the woman has returned.

When he sees her coming back, he grins with anticipation. He's not disappointed: the woman screams in horror and rushes away.

As they chat, Arthur warns Jack not to drink the company's tea. He says it's poison.

Jack replies, "If it's good enough for the others, it's good enough for me."

"Don't be like that, Jack. Think of number one."

Meanwhile, Mr. Robboe, the supervisor, has approached them.

He asks Arthur, "Did you have anything to do with the rat on that woman's bench?"

Arthur replies with his mouth full of sandwich, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"I bet it was you, young rogue."

“Mr. Robboe, I’ve got so much work to do that I can’t move from my lathe. I don’t go around tormenting women. You know that.”

“You’re a bit of a Red, if you ask me. That’s what you are.”

“That’s slander. I’ll see my lawyers about that. I’ve got a witness here,” Arthur says sarcastically.

“I’ll get the bloke that did it,” Robbo replies and walks away.

“What a life,” Arthur complains to Jack, “I get blamed for everything.”

“He came up to me earlier on,” replies Jack, “He said I was to go on nights in the frame shop.”

“I wouldn’t like that.”

“I don’t mind. It’ll be a change.”

“That’s not the first time that bastard’s called me a Red. Not that I wouldn’t vote communist if I thought I’d get rid of blokes like him.” He then reveals that he did vote for them in the last election. He wasn’t even 21, but his father was in bed with a bad back, so he went and voted under his father’s name.

Jack replies, “You could have gotten years in jail for that if they caught you. You were lucky.”

“I told you I was. That’s all these loony laws are for: to be broken by blokes like us.”

Jack warns him, “You might get caught one of these days.”

The bell rings. Break time is over.

As he stands, Jack says, “Perhaps you won’t be so cocky once you’re settled down.”

“I won’t be doing that for a while.”

“There’s nothing wrong with married life” says Jack, “I’m married. I went into it with my eyes open.

Married life’s all right if you’re good to each other and you don’t get too bossy.”

“I’ll believe you, then,” replies Arthur. “Thousands wouldn’t.”