

WAKING GIANTS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

1960s Glasgow - a shrouded vista of blackened tenements huddled together in the shadows.

Departing rain clouds have left the slate rooftops shimmering in the blue-white glow of the moon.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The sodium street lights push through heavy curtains.

WEE TAM SUTHERLAND, 10, wakes with a start, his eyes afire as though it was Christmas morning.

Leaping out of bed, he hops around on the stone-cold linoleum floor, shivering and rubbing his arms. His breath crystallizes before his happy face.

In a flurry of pale limbs, he struggles into his clothes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

BIG TAM, 42, snoring like a tractor, stirs beneath the sheets as the door squeaks open.

Stocking-soled, Wee Tam, tip-toes across the creaking floor to the bedside and gently rocks his father awake, whispering...

WEE TAM

Da? Time to go, c'mon!

The man-mountain rumbles.

WEE TAM (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Da, c'mon. It's time.

Big Tam's eyes flitter open and his world gradually comes into focus.

The other mound of cotton next to him, mumbles softly.

His arm slides out from the warmth and drapes his son's shoulders as he prizes himself from the bed.

BIG TAM

Quiet! You'll wake your mother.

Rubbing the sleep from his eyes he plods after his eager little boy, shivering in the still coolness.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

As Big Tam staggers down the hall, the mantle clock announces the hour. His eyes widen.

BIG TAM (CONT'D)

Is that the time? I've still to make my piece yet. You were supposed to get me up half an hour ago!

Wee Tam rushes in from the scullery holding a brown leather satchel bag.

WEE TAM

S'allright da. I've made them for you. Two cheese an' two jeelies an' I've put your suit next to the boiler.

Taking the bag, Big Tam further ruffles his lad's tousled hair.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Wet cobblestones sparkle under the vapour lamps. The 'Two Tams' step from the mouth of their close. The 'suit', we can now see, is a dark blue boiler suit.

With tiny hand in Goliath hand, father and son march proudly up the middle of the lane to the main road ahead where the first bus rumbles past in the dim glow of the dawn.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - DAY

Through the lace curtains, Wee Tam and his Dad can be seen striding along. MARY'S MOTHER calls to her daughter.

MARY'S MOTHER

Mary, come and see! It's the Two Tams! Look!

MARY rushes to the window and swishing the lace aside, plants two pudgy little palms on the glass and gazes longingly as the two generations of Sutherlands go striding by.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Looking up past Wee Tam, we can see Mary at her second floor window.

When at the main road, he twists around and waves. Mary's little hand returns the gesture with gusto. With a smirk, Big Tam playfully tugs his son's arm.

BIG TAM
C'mon you!

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

The world comes alive around them - milkmen, postmen and coal merchants, all wave them on by.

A FISHMONGER, hosing down his shop front, yells...

FISHMONGER
Hey Tam, commin' up the Bardowie
Loch this Saturday?

BIG TAM
Aye. I'll be there.

FISHMONGER (TO WEE TAM)
See if your pop can catch more than
a wee banstickle this time, eh wee
man?

Wee Tam soaks up the playful banter as they head away.

They arrive at an unlit Butchers shop. Light filters through from the back shop where busy shadows flit to and fro.

Big Tam peers into the dimness and raps his brawny knuckles on the door making the pane rattle.

ALASDAIR SCOTT jogs through from the back and unlocks the door, letting them into the shop proper.

ALASDAIR
Well, what'll it be today Tam?

BIG TAM
Better give us a half pound, the
wee man here didn't have any
breakfast.

ALASDAIR
Too excited, eh?

Alasdair nips behind the counter and back through to where apprentices hack and saw the fresh carcasses. He reappears with a squishy white paper parcel and lobs it over the counter to Big Tam.

ALISDAIR
Anythin' else?

BIG TAM
Nah, Wullie's on the eggs. What am I due you?

ALISDAIR
Ach, I'll get it when Genie comes in for your tea the later.

BIG TAM
Right.

He looks down at his eager son.

BIG TAM (CONT'D)
C'mon then, let's get you down that yard before everybody's away!

With a wave, the Two Tams leave the shop.

EXT. RAILWAY MARSHALLING YARD - DAY

The yard is a myriad of crisscrossing shiny steel as the tracks intersect and weave back and forth.

Shunters scoot to and fro, pushing this and pulling that.

The air is alive with hissing and chuffing, clanking and squealing and every now and again, the magical blast of a train whistle rises above the hubbub.

Big Tam leads his awestruck son towards one of the big sheds.

Its doors glide apart, releasing a billowing cloud of steam and soot. All Wee Tam can see inside is a world of swirling darkness. Getting closer, details tantalizingly reveal themselves - a funnel, a pair of buffers. He starts back when a whoosh of steam explodes from the mists. The ground trembles and the rails sing under the grinding brute mechanical force of metal on metal.

Big Tam, with a frying pan-sized hand, holds his eager son back from the ringing track.

Thrusting through the smoky gloom rolls a magnificent steam locomotive, its glorious red livery shining post box red in the cool, clean air. The engineer waves to them from the footplate.

The departing engine's steamy wake clears and a second engine begins to materialise inside the shed. There, bathed in the golden rays of the morning sun, glinting from every polished surface sits *The Evening Star* - his father's locomotive.

It is a leviathan, a hulking great iron beast, but it is still, cold and silent.

Big Tam glances knowingly down at his son. Wee Tam's eyes are as big as plates and his grip on his father's hand tightens.

BIG TAM

There she is. Your favourite.

He lets go of the boy's hand and Wee Tam rushes into the shed towards the mighty engine, running his tiny fingers along the cold polished steel of pistons twice as tall as him.

INT. SHED - DAY

Big Tam catches up just as DAVIE ROSS pokes his head from *The Evening Star's* footplate and yells...

DAVIE

It's about time! I was about to light her myself!

There's a delicate 'toot-toot' from behind, where from the footplate of a considerably smaller loco, the ENGINEER calls over...

ENGINEER

Hey Tam, you got the meat?

TAM

Eh? Oh aye. Here!

Big Tam skillfully lobs the butcher's parcel to the man.

ENGINEER

Give us five minutes.

Steam is already rising from this little engine's stubby funnel as the Engineer ducks back inside.

Davie reaches down from the '*Star*'.

DAVIE

C'mon then! Let's have you!

Even Big Tam is dwarfed by the loco as he hoists Wee Tam up and into the arms of his fireman.

Davie plonks him down next to a specially prepared shovel - a pile of coal entwined with an oil-soaked rag.

Big Tam pulls his hulking form effortlessly into the cab and placing the leather shoulder bag on a wall hook, crouches next to his son.

BIG TAM

Ready?

Wee Tam nods excitedly. Davie takes a box of matches from a locker and removing one, hands them to Wee Tam.

Taking a deep breath, Wee Tam drags the match across the sandpaper. It flares as the head erupts into a flaming fury of pinkish-white that sparkles in the polished brass.

Wee Tam stares intently at the tiny flame dancing on the tip of the match and slowly, at arms length, he lowers it towards the shovel.

His eyes close in prayer.

WEE TAM

Speed ma da wi' care.

Before the match touches the coals, the vapour ignites and the shovel is engulfed in a glorious flame that paints a warm glow on the three men.

Wee Tam peeks up at Davie. The big man smiles and urges him on.

Taking a grip of the handle and the stem, Wee Tam struggles to lift the big metal shovel. His father scoops his big arms around him and together they guide the flames towards the mouth of the cold furnace.

As one, they launch the burning coals into the boiler and are rewarded with the satisfying 'whoof' from the kindling taking light.

Davie takes the shovel.

DAVIE

Man, that's gonna be a fine fire.
Well done wee man.

Once again, they hear the sweet little call of the smaller engine.

DAVIE (CONT'D)

Now away an' get your grub, both of you, while I get this one stoked.

BIG TAM

Smell that wee man?

Wee Tam nods hungrily.

INT. FOOTPLATE OF SMALLER ENGINE - DAY

A dozen rashers of bacon and the same quantity of eggs sizzle away on the big coal shovel resting just inside the mouth of the glowing firebox.

The Tams climb inside and eagerly hold out their chipped enamel plates like a couple of latter day Oliver Twists. The fireman fills a flask of tea with piping hot water straight from the boiler.

The smile on Wee Tam's face says it all. Heaven.

EXT. RAILWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Wee Tam watches entranced, as *The Evening Star* puffs gracefully out of the station, effortlessly pulling a string of elegant carriages behind her.

Passengers wave to the little boy, but Wee Tam doesn't notice them - he's waiting for something else.

Just as the conductor's car clears the lacy glass canopy of the station, a great 'whoo-whooh' goes up from the engine.

Wee Tam jumps for joy when his father's hand waves from the rapidly diminishing green engine.

Another 'whoo-whooh', but this time it sounds odd, distorted, affected. Then again, sounding even more distant than the train - disembodied. And when it blasts for the last time, it is infused with an unmistakable electronic 'beep-beep'.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A digital alarm clock announces 7:00am with annoying persistence. Beep-beep. Beep-beep.

A hand fumbles to switch off the annoying sound.

The bedside table is tidy and organised. A row of pill bottles and an inhaler stand in line next to the clock. Directly behind them, a silver framed photo of a young man and his infant son.

Behind everything are several meticulously arranged greeting cards wishing a happy retirement.

TAM, now in his sixties, slides his legs out from under the duvet. For a moment, he stares into the space a few feet in front of him before letting his gaze travel to the picture frame. A card slightly obscures his view, so he carefully repositions it.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

As Tam drops into his chair at the dining table, his wife MARY places a cooked breakfast before him. He glances anxiously up at her.

TAM

What did he say? Did he say he'd make it in time?

Mary busies herself filling her own plate from the sizzling pan and then sits opposite him.

MARY

Aye. Don't worry!

TAM

What time did he say?

Mary, slightly amused, rolls her eyes at his persistence.

MARY

He didn't. Just that he'd be there in time to hear the speeches and the presentation.

TAM

Did he say if he was bringing the wee man?

MARY

Of course he is!

TAM

Is he driving up?

Almost laughing now, Mary shakes her head.

MARY
Shoosht! Eat your breakfast!

Tam tucks into the hearty plateful. Barely through his first mouthful he pipes up again.

TAM
What time do we need to be there?

MARY
Well, the speeches start at seven, but they want you there at half six to check on the seating and the buffet.

TAM
It's just sausage rolls and sandwiches.

MARY
Aye, but they need you to be happy with it. It's your do!

Mary can sense more questions so gets in there first.

MARY (CONT'D)
What have they got you on today, seeing as it's your last one?

TAM
Perth to Inverness. Should be a nice wee run if the weather stays.

Tam pauses the impending fork-full mid-lift.

TAM (CONT'D)
It's just a shame...

Mary answers absently without lifting here attention from the morning paper.

MARY
What is?

Tam takes a moment to ponder.

TAM
Nothing.

As she turns the page, a sliver of a smile curls Mary's lips.

INT: TRAIN CAB - DAY

Tam sits motionless in the cab of a modern sprinter train. His gaze fixed on a point long past the end of the tracks.

A gentle hum emanates from 'somewhere'. Even the morning sunshine fails to elicit warmth in the soulless grey plastic environment.

Contrasting against all this modern is a worn, leather satchel sitting in the corner.

A whistle blows from down the platform jolting Tam from his reverie.

He slides a large lever forward and the platform outside gradually begins to trundle by.

As the train is about to clear the station, Tam catches something in his peripheral vision - two figures standing at the very tip of the platform - a young man crouched down next to his little boy - the same ones in the silver frame.

Both wave enthusiastically at the approaching carriages.

Tam's face creases into a smile as he sounds the familiar two-tone horn.

FADE OUT.

THE END