

EXT. BRIGHTON PIER FORECOURT - DAY

The pier gates are locked. CONNOR KING, 14 today, is standing there shaking them. He looks around bewildered. There is nobody around, just some seagulls circling.

A clock on the pier says 11.55.

Connor takes out his phone and tries to make a call, but nothing works.

A seagull on the pier gate roof seems to be watching Connor. It screeches and other gulls join in.

There's movement from the security guards hut and a short, bearded guy appears, out of breath. His name is Gloria according to the name badge on his oversized jacket.

CONNOR

Hi. I'm here for my birthday party. Connor King.

Gloria waddles towards Connor carrying a scanning device and a syringe full of green liquid.

Connor backs away, alarmed, but Gloria comes closer and waves the scanner in front of his face.

GLORIA

No temperature. That's good

He puts the scanner in a pocket but points the syringe at Connor, who tries to back away further. Gloria sniggers and shuffles over to a model police bike, a children's ride, stuck just in front of the pier. He opens the petrol cap and squeezes the green liquid into it.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

That got you worried didn't it? Just have to keep the sound muffled and this does the trick. Them seagulls get a bit loud, a bit fractious. They don't like the sound of sirens.

Gloria sniggers again and this sets the gulls off, screeching as if they enjoyed the joke.

Connor gets an invitation from a pocket and passes it to Gloria. It says Pier Party Pass on the front. The back of the card is covered in small print.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

So you're Jack's nephew are you Connor? Fourteen today eh! Nice present: unlimited free rides and as much as you and your mates can eat and drink from the food outlets on the pier.

CONNOR

My uncle said I could bring three friends, but I'm not sure where they've got to.

GLORIA

These must be the other ones. Your gang eh?

Connor looks relieved as GEMMA, DJ and SPARKS hurry up the forecourt to greet him.

Connor's eyes focus on Gemma, and he smiles at her. DJ and Sparks notice this and exchange glances with a bit of a giggle.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Right. Welcome to Brighton pier. Shall we get on now?

Gemma passes a present to Connor, a small package in glitzy paper. He looks at her.

CONNOR

Yo

GLORIA

Yo yo

The pair of them start laughing at their private joke. Connor opens the present, a yo-yo.

DJ addresses Gloria who is looking on curiously

DJ

He's never without his yo yo, are you Connor.

DJ looks around noting there are still no people around apart from them.

DJ (CONT'D)

Bit quiet today isn't it?

Gloria's sharp eyes land on DJ.

GLORIA

Only kids allowed out today. Didn't you see the news?

DJ shakes his head and shrugs. Gloria gets out a set of keys, like jailers keys and opens the pier gates.

The three teenagers walk on to the pier, excited at the prospect of the free rides.

Gloria calls to them as she locks the gates behind them.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I'm letting the boss know you've arrived for your birthday bash. Look out for General Gully. He'll be sure to give you the full tweekment."

They walk past the outlets for doughnuts and ice cream.

SPARKS

I'm starting with a cheeseburger and chips.

GLORIA

Hot dog for me! And candyfloss

SPARKS

Or nine doughnuts, jam.

DJ is jumping on and off benches as he walks along the pier, showing his parkour skills. He lands beside an ice cream stand, unmanned. The freezer unit opens when he pulls it.

DJ

Cornetto anyone?

Sparks nods and DJ grabs a strawberry cornetto, which he tosses to Sparks as he vaults over the freezer.

CONNOR

Hope you've got your frequent flyer pass for A & E.

DJ leaps from one railing to another.

DJ

What are you on about?

CONNOR

How many times have you been up there this year?

DJ

Only twice, and both of those were because someone got in my way.

DJ jumps to the ground ending in a forward roll. He leaps up in front of Connor.

DJ (CONT'D)

Hey Connor have you ever watched the birds.

GEMMA

Stupid question. You know Connor's always out bird watching.

DJ

The film, Connor. Alfred Hitchcock. It's in black and white. This place reminds me of it.

They all paused and looked around. Sparks was holding her cornetto, unopened still. There were a lot of seagulls. They were perched on roof tops and pillars.

CONNOR

Yeah. So there's lots of seagulls, because we're by the sea. Come on let's go.

Music springs from the speakers on the pier. Gemma laughs and grabs Connor's hand, pulling him forward. The rides light up and the carousel starts moving as they approach it, although there is still no one to be seen.

The teenagers jump when a huge guy leaps out in front of them. Dressed as a pirate with dreadlocks, a patch over one eye and an enormous seagull sitting on his shoulder.

GENERAL GULLY

Happy birthday Connor. Welcome to Brighton pier.

General Gully scans them quickly and picks out Connor. He shakes his hand and seems to sniff him too.

CONNOR

Hi. That's some seagull you have there.

GENERAL GULLY

Don't you worry about my little friend here. Meet Scarface guys.

The scar on the gull's face increases his thuggish appearance.

GENERAL GULLY (CONT'D)

He looks a bit scary but is gentle as a lamb. Aren't you mate?

The teenagers do not look convinced but nod anyway.

GENERAL GULLY (CONT'D)

My mate Jack tells me it's your birthday today. You lot are all 14 right?

Again the group all nod.

GENERAL GULLY (CONT'D)

A particularly good age 14. Perfect. Let's make this a day none of us will forget.

The general roars with laughter and Scarface takes off, flying in a few circles, crying loudly before landing on a carriage on the Waltzer ride.

GENERAL GULLY (CONT'D)

Which ride are you going on first?

CONNOR

Waltzer. Ok everyone?

Yeah. Come on.

SPARKS

Sparks grabs DJ and pulls him over to the ride. She spins a couple of carriages round before settling on the one she and DJ plan to ride in. DJ leaps over the back of the carriage to sit in it.

Connor and Gemma get into a different carriage and Connor pulls down the safety bar. He looks nervous.

The general unlocks a kiosk housing the controls for the ride. A lever above a dashboard says pull to start.

GENERAL GULLY

Pull down the safety bar.

Sparks and DJ pull down the bar. Then Sparks starts to lick her icecream, offering DJ a lick. Connor is already holding tightly to the bar in his carriage. He and Gemma sit quietly, waiting.

SPARKS

Lets go.

General Gully pulls the lever and the ride starts slowly. Scarface hops from the general's shoulder on to the top of the lever.

SPARKS (CONT'D)

Faster

GENERAL GULLY

Are you sure

The General points at a poster that says Screech if you want to go faster. He waves and walks away, leaving Scarface sitting on the ride control lever, making the ride accelerate.

DJ, Sparks and Gemma start to scream as the ride picks up speed. It gets faster and faster.

Seagulls screech louder and louder until it becomes one continuous noise.

Connor knows something is wrong and tries screaming for help. His voice is drowned out. He is dizzy and feels a blackness coming on. He sees Gemma has lost consciousness.

CONNOR

Wake up Gemma. Wake up!

A cold white blob hits Connor in the face and bounces off. A second later the ride slows abruptly.

The cold white blob, a strawberry cornetto, is lying on the ground near the ride. Scarface has left the control lever in order to pick up the icecream.

Gemma stirs and opens her eyes. They try and lift up the safety bar, but it is locked. They cannot squeeze themselves out either.

There is a battle going on between the seagulls and Connor realises he has to do something quickly.

Slipping his hand into his pocket he withdraws the yo-yo from it.

Scarface rises from the ground with the icecream in his beak. He returns to perch on the lever, but it does not go down, because he's the wrong end.

Connor takes aim with his yo-yo and it flies out, missing the seagull by a wide margin as they whizz past.

Scarface looks at the ride and deliberately takes a step forward down the lever, causing it to accelerate again.

Connor frantically retracts the yo-yo and tries again. Once more he misses Scarface.

Again he retracts the yo-yo and sends it out once more. There is a thud and the ride slows again as Scarface flies into the air squawking. The yo-yo returns with icecream on it.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

We've got to get out. There must be a way.

Gemma struggles, but can't escape.

DJ slides under the bar and makes his way across the waltzer, which is still moving, although slowly. He jumps off the ride and runs to the control box, pulling the lever up completely and pressing various buttons.

Sparks also slides out. She looks as if she's enjoying herself.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Help! We can't get out.

Sparks runs over and presses a button marked 'emergency release button', which is behind the carriage. The safety bar rises easily.

SPARKS

That was awesome.

Connor looks aghast and Gemma shakes her head as they dismount the ride and make their way off.

GEMMA

Is everyone ok?

Connor nods, but not very convincingly.

CONNOR

Where did the general go?

GEMMA

You've gone green Connor. And you're shaking. Come and sit down.

DJ climbs on the roof of the nearby amusement arcade and looks around but there are still only birds to be seen.

Then he spots General Gully and Scarface at the top of the helter skelter. 'Gulls just wanna have fun' stops playing suddenly and General Gully is heard through a megaphone

GENERAL GULLY

Connor, my buddy, my mate. I'd best say sorry. I hear the lever stuck on the waltzer. Always happening. Still no bones broken eh. Them seagulls, they get carried away you see. They just love a good birthday party.

Connor shook his head and looked round at his friends.

CONNOR

I'd almost forgotten it was my birthday and this was meant to be a treat.

Gemma and Sparks laugh, but DJ just shrugs.

General Gully appears at the ride with Scarface on his shoulder again.

GENERAL GULLY

How about our nice new Amazon water ride. It'll be ever so soothing."

Connor looks at his mates who seem ready for another ride.

GEMMA

I love water rides Connor.

Connor nods and Scarface flew off towards the water ride.

The ride is surrounded by images of lush Amazonian plants with exotic animals peeping through the greenery.

The teenagers wander across following Scarface.

FADE TO BLACK.