

GRAND

Written by

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FADE IN:

Early morning.

Dublin city streets, almost empty.

The river and its many bridges.

The Georgian redbricks and the modern glass and steel.

The low-rise skyline.

The upward Spire on a bare O'Connell Street.

The beauty and decrepitude of the city as it braces itself for another day.

EXT. DUBLIN INNER CITY - COUNCIL FLATS - EARLY MORNING

The flats have various doors and different windows, all striving to be individual.

Cannabis leaves are graffitied on the walls, as well as the long faded words DEALERS OUT. A large tricolour flag is painted onto a wall.

SHAYLA (19) is pushed out the door of an upper floor flat by her mother, CARMEL (40s). A man, DECO (30s, thuggish), stands behind Carmel in the hallway.

CARMEL  
You little slut!

SHAYLA  
Lemme go!

Carmel slams the door behind Shayla. Shayla kicks and bangs on the door.

Curtains in a neighbouring flat twitch. A LADY ON THE ROCK statue looks out from a window.

SHAYLA (CONT'D)  
I want me stuff!

Carmel opens the door abruptly and throws some items of clothing and music speakers out into the landing. Carmel slams the door again.

Tearful, Shayla begins to gather up her belongings. Noting that the speakers are broken, Shayla flings them at the door.

The door of a neighbouring flat opens.

An elderly woman with curlers in her hair peers out over the door chain.

NEIGHBOUR  
What's going on?

SHAYLA  
Ask me hoop!

The neighbour shakes her head, tuts, and closes the door in disgust.

Shayla takes her belongings and makes her way from the flat complex.

EXT. DUBLIN CITY STREETS - EARLY MORNING

Shayla wanders through the near-empty streets, clutching her belongings in her arms.

She arrives at a locked up greasy spoon cafe and waits impatiently outside.

The owner, ANNE (late 50s), arrives.

ANNE  
You're early. For a change.

SHAYLA  
Will you just open up!

ANNE  
Ah, still the same auld Shayla.  
(fumbles with keys)

SHAYLA  
Come on.

ANNE  
What's all this?

SHAYLA  
You're not me ma!

ANNE  
Ah Jaysus. I'm only asking is all.

Anne gets the door opened.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

VAL (late 60s) is sitting on the edge of her bed wearing a threadbare nightdress, topped with a tatty dressing gown.

The bedroom is cramped and cluttered with various items: boxes, books, clothes, religious iconography.

There is a statue of the virgin Mary on her bedside locker.

Val holds rosary beads and recites the rosary to herself.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE - MORNING

Anne writes the daily special on a blackboard.

Shayla empties the dishwasher from the day before.

Filtered coffee percolates.

Anne pours herself a cup of coffee.

SHAYLA

I've a mouth on me too.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Val places her rosary beads in her locker and removes a tube of ointment.

She raises her nightdress and rubs the ointment into her knees.

EXT. VAL'S STREET

A postman walks along Val's street.

There are identical two-up two-down redbrick terraced houses on both sides of the street.

He stops at Val's house and puts a letter through her letter box.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

A letter falls through Val's letter box, landing on a well worn doormat.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

The noise of the letter box interrupts Val as she applies ointment to her knees.

She looks to a statue of the Virgin and rolls her eyes.

She finishes applying the ointment and stands to leave the room.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - STAIRS

Val slowly makes her way downstairs, passing old photos from different eras that hang on the wall as she does so.

Her battered slippers fall heavily on the worn and dusty carpet.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE

Three BUILDERS stare at the menu hanging above the counter, in an disorderly queue. One of the builders is JOHNNO (21, shy, gawky, thin).

Shayla stares back at the first builder in the queue.

BUILDER 1

Emmmm.

SHAYLA

Jesus! You get the same thing every day.

BUILDER 1

Ehhhh.

SHAYLA

Ah here.

BUILDER 1

Breakfast roll. With a-

SHAYLA

Cuppa tea. I know.

(to queue)

Are yous all having the same?

QUEUE

Yeah.

SHAYLA

Grand. Go on, I'll drop them over.

BUILDER 2

(winking at Shayla)

Here love, put a bit of extra sauce on mine.

BUILDER 1

Yeah and he might give you a bit of his sausage.

The rest of the builders laugh except Johnno.

Anne peers over from the grill.

JOHNNO  
Leave her alone.

SHAYLA  
Fuck yiz. Sit down and I'll serve  
you when I'm ready.

QUEUE  
(laughing)  
Ohhhh.

Shayla makes eye contact with Johnno.

Johnno smiles at her. Shayla blushes.

Anne grabs Shayla by the arm.

ANNE  
Watch yourself! You can't be  
carrying on like that.

SHAYLA  
He only smiled at me.

ANNE  
I meant the cursing!

SHAYLA  
Sure it's only them.

ANNE  
I'm trying to run a business. I  
don't need you effing and blinding  
at customers.

Shayla holds her order up to Anne's face.

SHAYLA  
Three breakfast rolls.

Anne snatches the order out of Shayla's hand.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE

Val stands at her front door, which opens directly into the  
living room of her two-up two-down house.

A letter sits on her doormat. She eyes it suspiciously then  
picks it up.

Piles of junk mail are stacked up behind her front door.

A holy water font hangs beside the front door.

Val opens the letter as she walks to an armchair.

There are stacks of newspapers and magazines around the room.  
Cardboard boxes full of old letters and documents.  
Ornaments and furniture.  
Photos on the walls and on cabinets.  
A sacred heart icon hangs on the wall with a votive light  
beneath.  
Pictures of the virgin and other saints also adorn the walls.  
Val stops walking for a moment as she reads.  
She then walks to an armchair and sits.  
She re-reads the letter.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE

Shayla serves the builders their tea.

SHAYLA  
Rolls will be a minute.

Shayla walks away as the builders ogle her.

BUILDER 2  
Not a bad looking young one.

JOHNNO  
Jaysus, you're old enough to be her  
da.

BUILDER 2  
Got your eye on her Johnno?

BUILDER 1  
Sure he wouldn't know what to do  
with her.

JOHNNO  
(blushing)  
No! I'm just saying. Your young one  
is the same age.

BUILDER 2  
Ah jaysus! I'm only having a look.

BUILDER 1  
(nodding to Anne)  
You'd have more of a chance with  
herself.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Val dresses herself. Her clothes are plain and somewhat old fashioned.

She removes her rosary beads and a small prayer book from her locker. She folds the letter and places it in the prayer book.

EXT. VAL'S STREET

Val walks down her street.

NEIGHBOUR  
Morning Mrs. Finnegan.

Val ignores her neighbour. The neighbour rolls her eyes.

Val continues down the street hurriedly.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE

Anne is sweeping outside the cafe.

Across the road she sees Val enter a church.

Anne shakes her head and laughs to herself.

The builders exit.

BUILDER 1  
See you Anne.

BUILDER 2  
Thanks love. See you tomorrow.

JOHNNO  
See you.

ANNE  
See you lads. Be good.

INT. CHURCH

Val sits alone in a pew. The church is almost empty, except for a few elderly parishioners.

Val fingers through her prayer book, stopping at the folded letter. She stares at it until she is startled by the chime of the altar bell.

The parishioners stand as the priest walks to the altar. Val follows suit.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

Val is sitting in a pew near the back of the now empty church. The priest, FR. KEOGH, is walking briskly down the aisle.

VAL

Fr. Keogh, have you got a minute?

FR. KEOGH

Ah. Mrs. Finnegan. I'm afraid I don't. I've a funeral to go to over in St. James'.

VAL

But I've had an awful land Father!

FR. KEOGH

(continues walking)  
And I'm in an awful rush Mrs. Finnegan.

VAL

Oh yes father. It's just-

FR. KEOGH

(stops walking)  
You frequently have a land, Mrs. Finnegan.

VAL

Yes Father but this time-

FR. KEOGH

What was it last month? The council workers were dragging muck through your house? And the month before that, you wanted me to write a letter to get council workers in your house.

VAL

Yes but-

FR. KEOGH

Could you not get someone else? I'm not a social worker, Mrs. Finnegan. The world is full of good people willing to do God's work.

(walks down the aisle)

Would you not have a chat with Sr. Assumpta?

VAL  
Sr. Assumpta?

INSERT - SR. ASSUMPTA

A pious and miserable withered old nun with a scowl.

BACK TO SCENE

FR. KEOGH  
A true bride of Christ.

VAL  
(hesitantly)  
No. I'll... I'll sort it out myself  
father.

FR. KEOGH  
(over his shoulder)  
As you wish.

Fr. Keogh walks out of the church.

Val stands in the aisle alone holding her letter.

EXT. CHURCH

Val walks down the steps of the church.

She sees Anne across the road, cleaning the inside of the  
cafe window.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE

Anne cleans the inside of the cafe window and dusts a neon  
OPEN sign. She notices Val staring over.

ANNE  
There she is now

SHAYLA  
Who?

ANNE  
Val.

Anne waves to Val.

SHAYLA  
Who?

ANNE  
Fruit scone and a pot of tea.

SHAYLA

Oh yeah.

Anne waves again.

EXT. CHURCH

Val clutches her prayer book and suddenly bursts into action. She ignores Anne and walks up the street.

INT. CAFE

Anne shakes her head as she watches Val rush away.

SHAYLA

What's up with her?

ANNE

Your guess is as good as mine.

EXT. STREETS

Val marches along the streets until she arrives at her own house.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Val moves some dusty boxes and other items off a small table. Val is puzzled by the empty table.

She looks to the telephone outlet on the skirting board and follows the phone line to the couch.

The phone line vanishes beneath a pile of coats and scarfs.

Val removes the coats and scarfs until she reaches the phone.

She then gets her prayer book and sits on the couch with the phone on her lap.

She removes the letter from the book.

INT. ANNE'S CAFE - TOILET

Shayla enters and sits on the toilet.

INT. VAL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Val is on the phone.

VAL  
I'm aware of what it says. I have  
it here.

Val listens to the reply.

VAL (CONT'D)  
Well it's very unfair-- I know  
you're not directly responsible--  
No I don't want to be transferred.  
Don't put me on hold!

Val slams the phone down

VAL (CONT'D)  
Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

Val sits and bites her lip.

She jumps up and goes to the pile of junk mail behind the  
front door.

She sifts through the junk mail- takeaway menus, special  
offers, charity collections. She stops when she finds what  
she is looking for.