

TALKING TRASH

Written by

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Based on, If Any

Address  
Phone Number

A yawning schoolgirl GRACE (15) in uniform sleepwalks into a kitchen past her DAD (48). He is in orange overalls.

DAD  
Morning Grace.

A cavewoman grunt from Grace who pours steaming water from a kettle into a mug. She presses the teabag against the side of the mug. Her dad indicates a selection of cereal boxes on the table.

DAD (CONT'D)  
Eat something.

Another grunt as Grace flings the teabag through the air at a distant flap bin. She misses by a distance. It smacks the wall and hits the floor.

She doesn't blink an eye or move towards it. She just sits down and empties the last of a milk carton into her mug.

Her father crosses to the teabag, picks it up and patiently wipes the wall and floor with a cloth. As he does, we see that the bin area is very organised and very tidy.

There is a general waste bin, a green recycling bin and a composting bin. Her father puts the teabag in the compost.

As he does, Grace passes by and dunks the empty milk carton in the general bin. A beat and then her dad retrieves the milk carton from that bin and puts it in recycling.

Grace looks down at him critically and then extends a hand expectantly. Her father stands up and takes out his worn wallet. He places a twenty euro note on her flat palm. Grace beckons for another - and gets it.

She beckons for one more but her dad zips his wallet - closed for business. Grace looks offended and wounded. How can I possibly exist on this???

Dad buttons up his overalls as he exits the house and he walks towards a big refuse collecting lorry. The type that tips bins into the back.

The company logo is emblazoned on the truck - GREEN SHOOTS RECYCLING. He hops up into the cab as Grace pulls out the front door behind her.

The door of the truck stays open and as Grace passes, a hand emerges to encourage her up into the truck. Grace ignores the proffered hand, snorts and walks on. From the cab ...

DAD  
Eat something.

Grace walks on, closing a long coat around her uniform.

3 INT. LOCAL CORNER SHOP - DAY 3

Grace pays at a counter and gets ....a pouch of tobacco.

4 EXT. STREET BY COMMUNITY HALL - DAY 4

Grace hugs herself as she walks along. She walks by a community hall. There is a poster up - 'PANTO AUDITIONS - FRIDAY'. Another snort and Grace rips a strip off the bottom of the poster without breaking stride.

5 EXT. BUS STOP - DAY 5

Grace makes a roach with the paper from the poster. She pockets all the smoking paraphernalia as she gets on the bus. We see her pay cash for her ticket.

6 EXT. LUAS STOP - DAY 6

Grace feeds money into a machine for a Luas ticket.

7 INT. LUAS - DAY 7

Grace stands on the LUAS.

8 EXT. LUAS STOP IN CITY CENTRE - DAY 8

Grace disembarks in town. She walks on...

9 INT. TARA STREET DART STATION - DAY 9

Grace feeds coins into machine for another ticket.

10 INT. DART - DAY 10

Grace sits on the DART.

- 11 EXT. DART STATION - BLACKROCK - DAY 11  
 Grace walks out of the station. A few girls with the same uniform disembark from the same train. They all head in the same direction.
- 12 EXT. BUTLERS PANTRY CROSS AVENUE - DAY 12  
 Grace steps out eating a bagel. She turns the corner towards SION HILL SCHOOL and then freezes. Her dad's truck is collecting bins on Cross Avenue. **She could have taken a lift with him.**
- 13 EXT. CROSS AVENUE - DAY 13  
 Her dad inches the truck along - two younger guys hop on and off the back - attaching and emptying bins.  
 Grace looks flustered and scurries towards school. She ducks and dives between all the Mercs and BMWs dropping off kids. It grates with her when an Indian friend MIA (15) hails her and halts her for a beat....
- MIA  
 Hey Grace...
- GRACE  
 Huh? Hi Mia. I need a smoke...
- Grace hurries into the school.
- 14 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL - DAY 14  
 Grace smokes by big bin dumpsters. (These dumpsters are a distinct colour that different from her dad's company ie RED)  
 Grace smokes tucked into the sheer shadow of the building. Above her, the building houses the principal's office. Grace is literally smoking under this office but Grace knows she is undetectable.
- 15 EXT. CROSS AVENUE - DAY 15  
 Her father's truck steadily trudges on. The work is steady, methodical and tidy.
- 16 INT. CAB - DAY 16  
 Her dad takes a moment to stare at his daughter's school.

He seems wistful and curious. So close but yet so far....

His thought process is interrupted by a second garbage truck turning onto the avenue. This one is red and noisy and spews smoke. And is moving at unadvised speed considering the built up area.

The driver in the red cab gives Dad the finger as he swerves the truck into the school.

Dad just smiles. Even more when we reveal the two guys on the back of the red truck are also flipping him the bird as they wipe frame past him too.

17 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL - DAY 17

Grace is just stubbing out her cigarette when the red garbage truck streaks in.

18 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY 18

The principal VERA COLLINS (54) looks out at the truck from the back window of her office. From her vantage point she is utterly unimpressed. She folds her arms as she watches....

19 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL - DAY 19

...the truck jolts to a sudden halt but the two young guys on the back use this momentum to hop on smoothly.

Grace heads inside as the young men loudly go about their work. They are sloppy, noisy and untidy. They don't care when bins spill. They abandon emptied bins at askew angles.

They clamber back on and steam off at inappropriate speed.

20 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY 20

Vera still looks down on them, deeply unimpressed.

VERA  
(to herself)  
I told them about speeding...  
(to an unseen secretary)  
Sharon, which bin collectors were  
next in that bidding tender...?

Vera's mind is made up.

21 INT. CANTEEN - DAY

21

Grace is sitting with a cluster of friends at a table. She empties out her bag looking for something. She stacks a Zippo lighter out on the table. It has a Swiss flag on it. Mia picks it up.

MIA

Your dad is still in Switzerland?

GRACE

Yeah. Most of the time. Embassy business. I'm not really allowed talk about it...

MIA

But he bought you a lighter...

GRACE

I told him it was for girl guides. He's very hands off. Wants me to be independent.

MARY (15) is far more sceptical/ less impressed than Mia.

MARY

That's why a diplomat's daughter is never dropped off. And never seen in an official car. Or any car...

Grace squints a smile.

GRACE

All part of being independent. My father doesn't want me having air and graces...

MARY

That's why he called you Grace then.

Vera passes the table and then comes back.

VERA

I want to see your dad Grace. We are having a 'bring your parent to school' day.

GRACE

He's busy. Away.

VERA

You haven't heard the date yet...

GRACE  
He's always busy...

MARY  
Always away.

VERA  
I want to see him. Failing that I  
can set up a field trip to the  
embassy.

Vera walks on. Grace looks rattled and struggles to hide it.  
She searches for distraction as her face reddens.

GRACE  
Who wants lunch in Loving Spoon?  
I'm buying...

An impressed trill from her pals.

22 INT. LOVING SPOON CAFE - DAY 22

Grace sits lost in deep worried thought as her friends chat  
and eat around her. She looks zoned out and freaked out.

23 EXT. STREET BY COMMUNITY HALL - NIGHT 23

Grace is still deep in pensive thought as she walks along in  
a trance.

24 EXT. COMMUNITY HALL - NIGHT 24

Grace is trudging by when the door of the hall spills open  
and an enraged amateur actor NED (50) reels out pursued by a  
apologetic director FRANK (38)...

NED  
I can play straight, damn you.

FRANK  
It's nothing to do with gay or  
straight. That has nothing to do  
with it Ned. Nothing. I know you  
can play anything...

NED  
I played the Dane...

FRANK  
In 1990....

NED  
What the devil are you getting at?

Grace is parked there looking at them. Frank sees the conversation is being observed. He stares at Grace but she ain't for moving. Frank steps in to spare Ned's feelings.

FRANK  
It's just....the age difference.  
You're old enough to be her father.

Ned absorbs this blow with sudden sullen silence. Frank avails of the opportunity to slink back inside, apologising all the time.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
If we had cast her older, you'd be  
right in the running Ned. Next  
year.

The door closes leaving Ned and Grace there on the street. Ned only becomes aware of Grace now. She is staring so hard that he feels compelled to speak.

NED  
What do you want...?

GRACE  
I want to cast you...

NED  
Cast me onto the rocks? That  
already happened

GRACE  
No. Hire you...

NED  
As what???

A smile from Grace. Ned awaits enlightenment but he is intrigued.

25

EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

25

Grace approaches her house with a newfound pep in her step. She looks at the hulking garbage truck parked at the house and still smiles as she heads inside....

Her father yawns as he exits past her. He is wearing a security guard uniform. He catches her smiling...

DAD  
You're in a good mood...

He seems happy just to see her happy. He points inside.

DAD (CONT'D)  
There's a casserole on the hob.

He walks on.

DAD (CONT'D)  
I'd prefer no smoking at all but if  
you have to - smoke outside.

The smile flickers off on Grace's face but returns again as she heads inside.

26 INT. KITCHEN - NEXT DAY 26

Grace is in casual clothes but her hand still extends for money. Her yawning father obliges with more notes...

27 EXT. SUIT HIRE SHOP - DAY 27

Ned waits outside as Grace strolls up. He wears a crumpled old suit.

NED  
See. I have several suits...

GRACE  
No. You need to look sharp.

28 INT. SUIT HIRE SHOP - DAY 28

Ned twirls in a tight fitting suit.

NED  
This is very generous...

GRACE  
I'm only hiring it Ned.

Ned admires his reflection.

NED  
I look like James Bond.

GRACE  
(not as impressed)  
A hairy James Bond....

29 INT. HAIRDRESSERS - DAY 29

Ned is having his head washed in a sink. Grace pays the hairdresser by the cash register.

GRACE  
Trim those eyebrows too.

30 EXT. HAIRDRESSERS - DAY 30

Ned emerges - looking spruced up with slick hair. Grace passes him a briefcase.

GRACE  
Got this in the charity shop.

NED  
Great. This is all good character stuff. I like to build a character from the inside out....

GRACE  
Don't care Ned. Just build it by next Wednesday. You doing your Switzerland study...?

NED  
It could be my specialist subject on Mastermind. Ask me anything.

GRACE  
What's the airport in Zurich called?

A fatal pause out of Ned.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
NED! What am I paying you for? My principal is going to grill you.

NED  
I'll be ready.

GRACE  
You better be. And be on time.

Grace looks at his bare wrists....

GRACE (CONT'D)  
You don't have a watch. My dad would have a good watch....

Grace groans.

31 INT. PORTACABIN AT REFUSE COLLECTING COMPANY HQ - DAY 31

Grace's father is finishing his lunch sandwich. He scrunches up some tinfoil that held the homemade sandwich.

He looks at his watch and folds the paper he is reading. A supervisor sticks his head around the door.

SUPERVISOR

Hey, there's a new stop on your route that will interest you...

Grace's father looks mystified.

32 EXT. SCHOOL - NEXT DAY 32

Grace is eating her nails pacing in front of the school. She constantly looks at her phone.

Ned arrives, suited and looking very presentable but he is carrying a huge Toblerone.

GRACE

Thank God Ned. What's with the chocolate?

NED

It's a prop...

GRACE

It looks a bit mental. Put it in the briefcase.

Ned obeys. Grace starts leading him towards the school, still nervous.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Don't stop and talk to my friends. Let's get in and out.

They head in. As they cross out of frame, unnoticed by them - Grace's father's truck inches down the avenue.

33 INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY 33

Grace tows Ned in her slipstream. They pass Mary in the corridor with her overweight balding father. Mary looks Ned up and down as they steam by.

She gives a thumbs up of approval to Grace. This gives Grace a slight fillip - maybe this will work. Grace looks at her phone.

GRACE  
We're still early. Take a phone  
call Ned.

NED  
My phone isn't ringing.

Grace dabs her phonescreen. A phone rings in Ned's briefcase.

GRACE  
It is now. Follow me.

Ned digs out the phone untidily and clasps it to his ear.

34 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL BY BINS - DAY

34

Grace is having a sneaky smoke to soothe her nerves as Ned poses with the phone glued to his ear.

GRACE  
Very one sided call Ned. Say  
something...

NED  
I don't have a script for this.

GRACE  
Improvise. Ad lib...

NED  
Neither are my strengths.

GRACE  
Now you tell me...

Across from them, Grace's dad's truck turns the corner. Grace doesn't cop it for a second but when she looks properly - she gets a real jolt. She jumps in her skin.

She drops her cigarette in a blink and starts pushing Ned back inside...

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Let's go Ned.

35 INT. CAB - DAY

35

Grace's dad strains his eyes too - is that who he thinks it is? He's nearly sure - but who is she with...?

36 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL - DAY 36

Grace's dad parks the truck untidily for once. He climbs down in a slight daze. He mutters to his co-workers...

DAD  
Back in a sec. Think I just saw my  
daughter....

His two colleagues are surprised to see him enter the school.

37 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY 37

Grace's dad walks along the corridor. He looks and feels alien in this hall but his weird feeling only deepens when he sees a 'BRING A PARENT TO SCHOOL' poster. He edges on.

38 EXT. GLASS CORRIDOR BY SCHOOL HALL - DAY 38

Grace and Ned wait. Both a bag of nerves. Grace's dad can see them at an angle as he approaches down another corridor.

NED  
I'll duck to the loo.

Grace points absentmindedly back towards her real dad's direction without looking up.

GRACE  
That way. Hurry...

Ned scurries off towards Grace's dad. He backs up as Ned blazes by him and enters a bathroom off the corridor.

39 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 39

Ned is giving himself a pep talk in the mirror.

NED  
You got this. You're a diplomat.  
You're diplomatic.

Ned looks at himself in the mirror but suddenly he has someone else looking at him in the mirror.

DAD  
What the hell is going on here?

Ned spins. He looks terrified.

40 INT. HALL - DAY

40

Grace is already seated in a bucket seat in front of Vera. A second bucket seat sits empty...

VERA  
I'm so glad he made it Grace...

GRACE  
I told you he would....

VERA  
Ah here he is now...

A sharp suited man walks over towards them toting a briefcase. Grace's dad sits down in the chair beside his daughter. He flattens the suit against his tummy and straightens his tie.

Grace contorts and nearly convulses in her seat.

DAD  
You must be Mrs Collins.....

VERA  
I am. Pleasure to finally meet you.

Grace can't help but hiss....

GRACE  
What are you doing here???

Vera clearly hears it.

VERA  
You knew he was here Grace.

DAD  
It's parents day. Where else would I be?

VERA  
Switzerland usually.

DAD  
Oh yes. Zurich. The embassy. I think I'm going to knock that on the head. All that pen pushing diplomacy. Draining....

VERA  
A change of career????

DAD  
Yes. I feel like getting my hands  
dirty. Something a bit more  
physical...

GRACE  
Where's Ned????

VERA  
Who's Ned?

DAD  
Uncle Ned is having a rest....

GRACE  
Is Uncle...Ned...still alive?

VERA  
We're here to discuss you Grace. I  
surprised your French grade isn't  
better. Do you speak French at work  
Mister Harper?

DAD  
(without missing a beat)  
Toujours....

VERA  
You seem to be Grace's hero. She  
wrote this English essay about you.  
I hope she wasn't too modest to  
share it with you....

Vera extends a few sheets of paper towards her dad. Grace  
snaps and intercepts it.

GRACE  
This is bull...

Grace crumples the pieces of paper and fires them in the  
vague direction of a distant bin.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
That was private...

Silence and then her father is stern.

DAD  
That was rude. And put that in the  
bin Grace....

He points at the balled paper on the floor. A tense silence  
holds until Grace stalks over to it. She plucks it up,  
furious.

GRACE

Oh I'll put it in the bin alright.  
Bin man....

She power-walks out.

41 EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL - DAY

41

In orange overalls, Ned sits glumly sharing the Toberlone with the two bin workers from the truck. Grace pushes out the door and fires a dirty look at Ned.

GRACE

You are not getting paid Ned...

Grace looks into full recycling bins filled with paper.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And you two haven't even emptied  
the bins yet....

BIN WORKER 1

We need your dad to tip the bins.  
We're not qualified to operate...

Grace isn't listening. She flings in her crumpled essay. Quick as a flash, she squirts lighter fluid all over the top of the bin....

NED

What are you doing Grace?

Grace lights her zippo and tosses it into the bin. The bin erupts in fire just as her dad and Vera emerge.....

Everyone rocks back from the ferocity of the sudden fire. Grace's dad is the first to react...

DAD

There's an extinguisher in the cab.

Vera pulls a fire alarm by the door. The sharp sound drowns out everything.

42 INT. JUVENILE COURT - DAY

42

The sudden solemn silence of court. Grace hangs her head. Her father sits behind her.

The judge consults different documents.

JUDGE

Considering your behaviour, your school has shown incredible restraint in only suspending you...

Grace's chin rests on her chest.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

There will be no suspended sentence in this court due to the reckless endangerment of people and property. Now I'm occasionally described as an old school judge probably because I believe the punishment should fit the crime.

Grace's head raises to hear.

43

EXT. WIDE OPEN GREEN AREA - DAY

43

Grace wears a luminous orange vest over her clothes as she picks up rubbish off a heavily littered green area.

Plastic wrappers blow around in the breeze. Paper scatters in every direction. Crumpled drink cans are smashed into the mud. Grace pulls one of these embedded cans up and drops it into a bag that she pulls behind her.

Suddenly her father stands there.

DAD

Need a hand???

GRACE

You do enough during the week.

DAD

Big job though. Surprised it's just you at it...

GRACE

They were a couple more. They bugged off when their hours were up. I want to finish it.

Her dad unveils a claw stick that can clasp items without bending.

DAD

This will save your back.

He pinches a bit of plastic without bending down and drops it in her bag. He passes it to her.

GRACE  
Cheers dad.

Dad unveils a second claw stick.

DAD  
Thought we could brush up on some  
subjects in case you fall too far  
behind.

Her dad starts picking up with his pincher stick.

DAD (CONT'D)  
How about geography?

GRACE  
Let me guess? Switzerland?

44 EXT. CROSS AVENUE - DAY

44

Grace's father's truck chugs along close to her school. It stops completely and then Grace in uniform clambers down out of the cab.

She takes a few steps and then some foil wrapped sandwiches are tossed out the window by her dad. She catches them.

DAD  
Your lunch....

GRACE  
Cheers dad. Have a good one...

She waves to her dad and the two boys on the back. Grace doesn't care about the looks from Mary and others as the truck lurches out from between a Merc and a Bemmer.

45 EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

45

Grace is crossing the school yard in a good mood but it sours when she sees a random girl BECKY (16) ditches a smoothie in the vague proximity of a bin.

GRACE  
Becky. Rinse that out and bin it  
properly. That's recyclable...

Becky isn't thrilled but she eventually obeys under Grace's scrutinising stare and tapping toe.

Grace smiles as she enters the school.

