

TALKING TRASH

Written by

James Phelan

Draft 2

Address  
Phone Number

1 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 1

A yawning schoolgirl GRACE (15) in uniform sleepwalks into a kitchen. She straightens a slightly askew photo on the wall. The slightly fading photo is a smiling woman MUM in her mid 30's. Grace's DAD (48) smiles when he sees the adjustment. \*

DAD  
Morning Grace.

A cavewoman grunt from Grace who pours steaming water from a kettle into a mug. She drops a teabag into the mug. Her dad has orange overalls tied around his waist. \*

DAD (CONT'D)  
Eat something.

Grace flings the teabag at a distant flap bin. She misses by a distance. It smacks the wall and slides down to 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 picks up the teabag and patiently wipes the wall with a cloth. We see that the bin area is very organised. There is a general waste bin, a green recycling bin and a compost bin. Her dad puts the teabag in the compost. \*

As he does, Grace passes by and slamdunks 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 at him critically and then extends a hand expectantly. Her dad stands up and takes out a 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. Grace looks offended and wounded. \*

2 EXT. SAME HOUSE IN HOUSING ESTATE - DAY 2

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 and his overalls - 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, a hand emerges to encourage her up into the truck. Grace ignores the proffered hand, closing a long coat around her uniform. She walks on.... \*

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 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. In the \*  
 background a LUAS approaches... \*
- 9 INT. TARA STREET DART STATION - DAY 9 \*  
 Grace feeds coins into a machine for a DART ticket. We hear a \*  
 the squeal of train brakes.... \*
- 11 EXT. DART STATION - BLACKROCK - DAY 11 \*  
 Grace walks out of the station as a DART departs the station \*  
 behind her. A few girls with the same uniform mill around. \*  
 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 \*  
 her 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 scurries \*  
 towards school. She ducks and dives between all the Mercs and  
 BMWs dropping off kids. An Indian friend MIA (15) hails her.
- MIA  
 Hey Grace...
- GRACE  
 Oh...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 same building houses the principal's office. \*
- 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 stares wistfully at his daughter's school. His thoughts are interrupted by a second garbage truck turning onto the avenue. This truck is red, noisy and spews smoke. And moves 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 stubs out her cigarette as 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 sits 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. 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  
All part of being independent Mary. My father doesn't want me having air and graces... \*

Vera stops at the table pointedly. \*

VERA  
I'd like to see your dad Grace. We are having a 'bring your parent to school' day. \*

GRACE  
He's busy Miss Collins. Away. \*

VERA

You haven't heard the date yet...

GRACE

He's always busy...

VERA

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

\*

\*

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

\*

GRACE

Who wants smoothies at Loving  
Spoon? I'm buying...

\*

An impressed trill from her pals. The distraction works.

\*

23 EXT. STREET BY COMMUNITY HALL - EVENING 23

\*

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

\*

24 EXT. COMMUNITY HALL - EVENING 24

\*

Grace trudges 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 Ned. It just doesn't look  
right....

\*

\*

NED

What the devil are you getting at?

\*

Grace just stands there, increasingly interested.

\*

FRANK

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

Ned absorbs this blow with sudden sullen silence. Frank  
slinks back inside, apologising all the time.

\*

FRANK (CONT'D)

Sorry Ned. Maybe next year....

\*

The door closes, leaving Ned and Grace there on the street.  
Ned only really becomes aware of Grace now.

\*  
\*

NED  
What do you want...?

GRACE  
I want to hire you...

\*

Grace smiles. Ned awaits enlightenment but is intrigued.

\*

25 EXT. GRACE'S HOUSE - SAME EVENING

25

\*

Grace approaches her house with a newfound pep in her step.  
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.  
(as he leaves)  
No smoking inside. If you burn the  
house down, your mother will come  
back and haunt me...

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

Grace thinks about this and finally musters a smile.

\*

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

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

\*

NED  
See. I have a suit...

\*

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, suitably spruced up with slick hair. Grace passes him a briefcase. \*

GRACE

Got this in the charity shop.

NED

Great. 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

Ask me anything. \*

GRACE

What's Zurich airport called? \*

A fatal pause out of Ned.

GRACE (CONT'D)

NED! What am I paying you for? My principal is going to grill you. And sharpen your timekeeping too. \*

Grace looks at his bare wrists and groans. \*

GRACE (CONT'D)

You don't have a watch. My dad  
would have a good watch... \*

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. 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

What's with the chocolate Ned? \*

NED

It's a prop...

GRACE

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

Ned obeys. Grace leads 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 father. Mary looks Ned up and down. She gives a thumbs up of approval to Grace. This gives Grace a slight fillip. 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. Ad lib...

\*

NED

That's not really my strength.

\*

GRACE

Now you tell me...

Across from them, Grace's dad's truck turns the corner. Grace doesn't notice at all. She stubs the cigarette out on the wall. She pushes Ned back inside...

\*

\*

GRACE (CONT'D)

Let's go Ned.

35

INT. CAB - DAY

35

Grace's dad strains his eyes. He looks very confused...

\*

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.

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

39 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 39

Ned gives 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 toting a briefcase. Grace's dad sits down in the chair beside his daughter. He straightens his tie. Grace contorts and nearly convulses in her seat. \*

DAD  
You must be Miss Collins.....

\*

VERA  
I am. Pleasure to finally meet you.

Grace can't help but hiss at her dad....

\*

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.

GRACE  
(can't help asking)  
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  
Did Grace share this essay she  
wrote about you?

\*

\*

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

GRACE

That's private.... \*

Grace crumples the pieces of paper and fires them in the vague direction of a distant bin. Silence and then her father is finally stern with her. \*

DAD

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

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

GRACE

Oh I'll bin it 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 flings her crumpled essay into full recycling bins. Quick as a flash, she squirts lighter fluid all over the top of the bin. Grace lights her zippo and tosses it into the bin. The bin erupts in fire as her dad and Vera emerge. Everyone rocks back from the ferocity of the heat. Grace's dad runs to his truck. \*

DAD

There's an extinguisher in the cab.

Vera pulls a fire alarm by the door. \*

42 INT. JUVENILE COURT - DAY

42

The sudden solemn silence of court. Grace hangs her head. Her father sits behind her. The judge exudes utter disapproval. \*

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. Now I'm often  
described as an old school judge  
because I believe the punishment  
should fit the crime.

\*  
\*

Grace's head raises to hear her punishment.

\*

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. Suddenly her father stands there.

\*

DAD

Need a hand???

Grace shakes her head.

\*

DAD (CONT'D)

You do need a claw though...

\*

\*

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

\*

DAD (CONT'D)

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. Grace smiles. Grace pinches  
a sheet of paper blowing on the breeze. Something about the  
photo on it makes her look closer. She unfurls it. It's a  
flyer for Ned doing a one man show. Her dad looks over her  
shoulder and reads it.

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

DAD

A one man show of 'Seven Brides for  
Seven Brothers'??? How is Ned going  
to do that?

\*

\*

\*

\*

GRACE

Let's go find out...

\*

\*

INT. THEATRE SPACE - NIGHT

A small theatre space with a healthy if patchy turnout. Grace and her dad stand and clap like seals as Ned takes a bow...

Ned sees them in the audience and smiles. Especially when Grace throws a rose onto the stage that lands at his feet.

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.

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 eases out from between a Merc and a Bemmer.

45 EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

45

Grace crosses the school yard in a good mood but it sours when she sees a random girl BECKY (16) ditch 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 spots Mia taking the wrapper off a packet of cigarettes. She takes them off her pal and dunks them in a bin.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Don't even open those Mia. Waste of time and money.

Grace smiles as she enters the school. Across the road...

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

...her dad is smiling too.

