

Grace

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - DAY

GRACE, 20s, walks the streets. In her hand, a plastic bag.

GRACE (V.O.)
Some people just wanna be
different. Stand out.

A MAN steps out from a supermarket, new picture frame in hand. He throws the placeholder picture. Grace grabs it.

EXT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY

Grace passes by, a GUY comes out, a huge tattoo over his torso. ANOTHER GUY follows with a fresh nose piercing.

GRACE (V.O.)
They dress up, dye their hair,
color their skin or wear make-up,
just to make you look twice.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Grace stops outside as the bell rings and all the KIDS come rushing out in uniform, smiling.

GRACE (V.O.)
Not me. All my life I've just
wanted to be like everyone
else. Go to school. Live in a
house. Have a mom and dad. Have a
future.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Grace sits in a cardboard box in the rain, trying to sleep.

GRACE (V.O.)
Sometimes I think about what coulda
happened if I hadn't been alone.
Maybe I'd be happy...

She takes out the placeholder - a happy family.

GRACE (V.O.)
Then again, life's a bitch.

She falls asleep, a content look on her face.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Grace sneaking around in the masses, something's up.

GRACE (V.O.)
Life's simple. Predator and prey.

She looks around, suddenly makes a move to one of the VENDORS, steals an apple and bolts.

VENDOR
HEY!

She rounds the corner only to come face to face with a COP!

COP
Hold it!

She smacks him with her bag and bolts. The cop runs after her into...

INT. MALL - DAY

Grace stops, looking around in panic as the running footsteps of the cop get closer and closer.

INT. PET SHOP - DAY

STEVE, a middle-aged guy in glasses, well-dressed, is doing calculations.

INSERT:

"AUGUST -4000\$"

He sighs and shakes his head. He looks over to his dog, OZZY, an old mutt, asleep on the floor.

Suddenly GRACE bursts in.

STEVE
Hey! Who the hell are you?

GRACE
Nunya.

STEVE
Nunya who?

GRACE
Nunya business, old man.

The cop runs past outside, Grace ducks behind an empty cage.

GRACE

What the hell is this place?

She looks around - the shop is in a state of disarray, stacks of boxes on the floor, filthy and dark.

STEVE

(smiles wide)

This fine establishment happens to be my store, George's Petshop. Got our own brand of dogfood too.

GRACE

Oh. Pleasure, George.

STEVE

(dead serious)

George is dead. I'm Steve.

Steve coughs suddenly. Violently. Grace suddenly looks concerned.

GRACE

Jesus, looking to join him? Sit down, man. It's Grace by the way.

Steve sits behind the counter, pale and sweaty. The door chime, an elderly lady CUSTOMER. Steve glances.

STEVE

Grace... Do me a favor?

GRACE

Whoa, wait a minute --

STEVE

Either that or you take your chances with Dirty Harry outside. Want a way off the streets, kid? Life's a simple choice when it comes down to it.

Grace frowns, then snaps to and jumps behind the counter.

GRACE

May I help you, ma'am?

The customer points at a box of "GEORGE'S DOGFOOD" on the shelf, asking questions. Steve is behind the counter whispering instructions to Grace as --

GRACE (V.O.)
 And as easy as that, I became a
 part-time employee for a run-down,
 zero profit, dogfood peddling pet
 shop.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Steve setting the table for three - Grace sitting at the
 table and Ozzy jumping up on the other chair.

GRACE (V.O.)
 In return, the old man put me up,
 throwing in breakfast, lunch and
 dinner for good measure. Not that
 he didn't do the same for his old
 ragged mutt of a dog, Ozzy.

Ozzy hungrily eating straight from his own plate. Grace
 looks at it with disgust, pushing the plate away.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grace lays down on the couch with a blanket. Ozzy lays down
 on top of her. She pushes it away, annoyed.

INT. PET SHOP - DAY

Grace cleaning up the place, hard at work, Ozzy stubbornly
 following her around everywhere. Steve's carrying boxes,
 looking like shit, coughing his lungs out. He sits down to
 rest for a minute.

GRACE (V.O.)
 Life was rough, but together me and
 the old man started pulling it
 together. George's Dogfood was,
 believe or not, popular for a time.

CUSTOMERS buy box after box of George's dogfood. Steve
 loading up the cashier with money.

Ozzy sleeping by Grace's feet by the counter.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Grace sound asleep on the couch, Ozzy on top of her.

GRACE (V.O.)
 Life was good. Until...

Suddenly she wakes up by the door SLAMMING.

She walks over into...

INT. STEVE'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Steve's car is out. She hears it drive off. A door in the back left open ajar. Strange whining noises coming from it.

INT. STEVE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Grace walks down the dark stairs, the noises getting louder.

GRACE

Hello? Steve? You down here?

She fumbles in the dark for a light switch. She turns it on, suddenly seeing --

Cages and cages of stray dogs, all in bad or worse condition.

Ahead, a large metal table covered in all kinds of cutting tools. A chopping board with a meat cleaver stuck to it.

Piles of George's Dogfood boxes next to it.

With a look of horror, she staggers back, bumping into -- STEVE.

STEVE

With the chance of sounding like a bad Bond villain, I see that you stumbled onto my hidden lair.

GRACE

YOU SICK FUCK!

STEVE

(shrugs)

Eh, what can I say? I have hospital bills to pay. And the dogs seem to like it.

GRACE

You seriously think you can get away with this?

STEVE

Well... I have, haven't I? With your help, George's Dogfood is finally a hit!

GRACE

Didya throw in George too, you sick bastard?

STEVE

God no, what do you think I am,
some kind of monster? AIDS took
that boyloving pederast.

Steve picks up a butcher knife, inching closer and closer to her.

STEVE

You might be ripe enough for my
pups though...

Grace steps back, bumping into the metal table. She notices a big bucket of blood below it. A beat. She picks it up and chucks it in Steve's face, throwing him off as he tries to wipe it from his eyes.

Grace rushes over, opening all the cages, letting the dogs out to attack him. He screams in panic and pain, being overtaken, Grace runs out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Grace again walking the streets with her bag, only this time followed by a huge following of stray dogs.

GRACE (V.O.)

Some people just wanna be
different. Stand out.

EXT. DOG SHELTER - DAY

She stops in front, a sign on the door. "HELP NEEDED".

GRACE (V.O.)

Having had a taste of normalcy... I
knew I wanted something
else. Life's what you make of it.

She walks into the store, followed by all her pack.

FADE OUT

THE END