

The World Changed Colour

By Daniella Alma

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Cast of Characters

MICHELLE : 30's

GRACE : 30's

Place

East London, Park.

Time

Present. Early Evening. 5 PM.

It is early evening in East London. Winter is coming to an end, the sun is bright and slowly beginning to set. Michelle, 30s, headstrong with an aloofness, and Grace, 30s, bubbly with a sense of fairness, takes a casual stroll through a park toward an area of rocks that they sit together on. They're dressed in hoodies, parka jackets and leggings. Both are fresh faced and youthful looking but you can tell that the years have had more than its time with them.

MICHELLE: I'm gettin' a bike.

GRACE: Yeah?

MICHELLE: Yeah. Gotta get the license though.

GRACE: Oh -

MICHELLE: Yeah, I'm talkin' bout a proper bike, Grace.

GRACE: What? You mean you gettin' a motorbike?

MICHELLE: Yeah, to ride out to Frensham on Sundays...feel the water, take a swim, only takes an hour on the M25 and the ride's alright. Gotta get to the empty flat, it's just sittin' out there, so I've been thinkin' bout it.

GRACE: Sounds alright! Long as you take me with you.

MICHELLE: I take you everywhere.

GRACE: (Laughs.) You think Scotty gets jealous?

MICHELLE: Probably. But he knows I love you so he don't care.

GRACE: I love him too, he's a good lad.

MICHELLE: Yeah.

GRACE: What'd we do without 'em? Much as they make us wanna bury 'em, they're alright lads.

MICHELLE: Yeah.

GRACE: Ten years...

MICHELLE: Long time.

GRACE: Ten fuckin' years...

MICHELLE: Yeah.

GRACE: And we said we'd never get married!

MICHELLE: That's how it always works.

GRACE: We're out of our fuckin' minds Mitchie! And look at us, we're fit as shit n' still here, lucky bastards.

MICHELLE: They are, they know it. They don't get it easy though, do they?

GRACE: Nah. No way...gotta keep 'em on their feet...someone's gotta have a wanderin' eye and it won't be *him* havin' it, couldn't deal with that.

MICHELLE: Nah, I know.

GRACE: Can't trust 'em girls these days, they're dyin' for it. Since the pandemic, nothin's on time with Fred, they all hover 'round him outside the art school, gettin' inta deep conversation with him while he's waitin' out there for me to exit class. Grown women too, just desperate for somethin'...and I ask him, "What they askin' you 'bout?" and he just says, "Ohhh ya know, 'bout if I'm also a painter, that kinda thing"...

MICHELLE: It's made everyone lonely I guess.

GRACE: Yeah.

(Silence between them. Grace looks up at birds flying.)

...Ahh, I know the sun's out and all...but, d'you think we're gonna last? Really Mitch, where'd you think we'd all be in ten more years?

MICHELLE: I dunno.

GRACE: You and Scotty are gonna win them dance championships!

MICHELLE: Nah, don't be silly.

GRACE: You are Mitch...Fred and I said, since the day we saw that final, we said you're both gonna win gold someday!

MICHELLE: I dunno...I mean, I'd be happy 'bout it an all...more money I guess, he's more driven than me 'bout it. I just, I dunno...guess it'll be fun and all. Haven't been thinkin' bout that lately, I just wanna get on my bike and ride to Frensham on Sundays.

GRACE: With me!

MICHELLE: Yeah, course.

GRACE: *(Laughs.)* And with a bottle of Jack D's in the back!

MICHELLE: Now ya talkin'.

GRACE: (*Laughs.*) And no bloody kids!

MICHELLE: Yeah, exactly!

GRACE: (*Giggles.*) We're idiots, aren't we?

MICHELLE: Don't blame us for it.

GRACE: (*Instantly serious.*) No one can afford em' anyway!

MICHELLE: Fuckin' world is coming to an end *anyway*.

GRACE: Yeah.

MICHELLE: I feel it.

GRACE: Yeah.

MICHELLE: All pointless.

GRACE: I guess.

MICHELLE: Not the same anymore.

GRACE: Nah, it's not. Remember back when, when you could do anythin' and get away with it. It's all plastered ova' that social media shit now, innit?...we never really took photos at the clubs, did we?

MICHELLE: Nah, never. Maybe one or two on 'em shitty phones we had.

GRACE: Yeah. The Nokias!

MICHELLE: Nah, you could never take a sharp photo with 'em. Yeah, it all changes anyway, don't it? Everythin' changes.

GRACE: Yeah...

(*Silence between them.*)

...I was thinkin' about somethin' the other day.

MICHELLE: What?

GRACE: I was...I don't - I just felt a bit down, for you, you know, for you.

MICHELLE: Why?

GRACE: Cos, you ain't been the same since your sister passed. I know it's only been a year, I just, I dunno, have I been there enough for ya Mitchie? Tell me if I haven't.

MICHELLE: Why you askin' me that?

GRACE: Cos I want ya to be honest with me, if I haven't, I want ya to be honest with me.

MICHELLE: I mean, you've been there when I've asked ya to be there Grace. It's just been hard to talk 'bout.

GRACE: You don't ever wanna talk 'bout it...

MICHELLE: I wanna forget 'bout it. I don't want it draggin' me down anymore. I got a life too, ya know. Fuck, I mean, we're all gonna be there someday, I either jump in there with her or live this out.

GRACE: Yeah. Life is so fucked up, ain't it?

MICHELLE: Yeah. I wish I had more time with her, that's all. I just wanted to tell her once how I felt, just once. I didn't wanna argue with her, I didn't wanna fight, I just wanted to look into her eyes just once and tell her I loved her. In my way, I wanted to tell her in my way. She couldn't even give me that.

GRACE: She wasn't well Mitch.

MICHELLE: Yeah.

(Silence between them.)

...I never thought there'd be a day when I'd just give up on people. I don't mean you, Scotty or Fred, I love you, you're my family...I just, I just think I gave up on everyone else. I stopped tryin', you know? And I always said to myself, don't let it happen Mitch, cos once that light goes, you'll never get it back. But since that day, somethin' *did* change in me Grace. It's like the world changed colour. On the morning of her funeral, I just, I couldn't look at anyone anymore, all I wanted to think about was her and then I couldn't come up with any memories, cos she robbed us of 'em. I tried to go back to when we were kids, maybe then I'd have somethin' but couldn't find anythin', a few photos, a few cards, a few words here and there...in all our thirty years. And you wonder, what - what did it all mean?

GRACE: *(Wraps her arms tenderly around Mitchie.)* When you goin' for these bike lessons?

MICHELLE: Well, Scotty got us on the dole and I got the rest of winter free now, I'm thinkin' of just callin' up and startin' next week.

GRACE: How many days is it?

MICHELLE: Just gonna start with like one a week, ya know?

GRACE: I'm comin' with ya then.

MICHELLE: You wanna ride too?

GRACE: Yeah, we'll get a bike each. It'll be good for us. Fred knows a dealer that ain't far, he can get 'em real cheap. We'll start savin' now!

MICHELLE: You sure?

GRACE: Yeah, I wanna go Fresham on Sundays too.

MICHELLE: (*Laughs.*) It's Frensham, not Fresham silly!

GRACE: Whatever it is, that's where I wanna go.

MICHELLE: (*Smiles. Puts her arm around her, soft embrace and then releases.*) Why'd you always wanna do everythin' I wanna do?

GRACE: Cos you ain't just my best friend Mitch, I love you, like as in soul to soul, I love you like that...

MICHELLE: I think we gotta get totally lashed up tonight!

GRACE: Yeahh!

MICHELLE: Fuck this night!

GRACE: Let's get the lads!

MICHELLE: Yeh alright, we'll make a trip to O'Leary's!

GRACE: Oh man, if they'll accept us! It's always madness over there.

MICHELLE: Nah, they forget 'bout the bad times - long as they're makin' money, the hell do they care!

GRACE: Alright, let's start heading back then...I got this dress I wanna put on.

MICHELLE: What you dressin' up for?

GRACE: Ya know what for, I told you this, ever since turning 30, my libido's gone through the roof...

MICHELLE: Oh yeah, I know -

GRACE: I don't know what it is, I can't even handle it, makes me insane, I get crazy Mitch...so whatever it takes, if it takes a short dress to get Fred goin', then let's get goin', cos I ain't gettin' any younger!

MICHELLE: Ah - you ain't gettin' any older either. Ya just fine...he'll come around. Shit, he's had a year himself too, right?

GRACE: Yeah, poor boy.

MICHELLE: He gets lost in his thoughts sometimes.

GRACE: Yeah...

MICHELLE: Was watching him the other night, got me bit worried, he was like zoning out when we were in the garden.

GRACE: He blames himself for losin' the job.

MICHELLE: Hate that he does that. I really hate it, it was them fuckers, them nasty ungrateful fuckers that couldn't handle him doin' it better than they could!

GRACE: We'll get him back. *(Pause.)* He just needs time, that's all. He'll be alright again.

MICHELLE: He always finds a way, don't he?

GRACE: He does. He's like a bull when he puts his mind to it, he's just gotta put his mind to it is all. I'm not thinkin' about time with him anymore, I just wanna let him be, find his ground a bit, ya know? Like we all do, we just gotta...*(Takes a moment. Suddenly sad.)* Ahh Mitch, I don't wanna lose him.

MICHELLE: Why you sayin' that?

GRACE: I just think sometimes, maybe he's just had enough of me.

MICHELLE: What Fred? Fred loves ya!

GRACE: He does. I just, I can't stand how distant he's been gettin' lately and I know, I know it's all cos of that damn job and I keep remindin' myself to not worry 'bout it but I do. I worry about all of us, the four of us. I can't ever imagine ten years of bein' with him goin' down the drain, don't - I'm not - not sayin' we're losing each other, not, not being dramatic 'bout it all, I just miss him Mitch. I miss how he was before everything, before the shut downs, before losing the job...I miss how carefree he was, he gave me more attention then too. You know...we had sex differently then. Now I feel like he's always avoidin' me, you know - he just wants to be in his thoughts and stuff. I know, I know he'll come 'round, I know he will, I guess I just, I gotta understand, it's hard ta understand but I gotta find a focus on other things, let him be who he wants to be for a while, ya know?

MICHELLE: We're definitely gettin' lashed up tonight.

GRACE: Don't we know it.

MICHELLE: Eight ways out of last Tuesday!

GRACE: (*Laughs.*) Always sound like ya Dad when you say that.

MICHELLE: He use to play guitar ya know?

GRACE: Yeh, I know.

MICHELLE: When I was a kid, I use ta listen to him playin'...

GRACE: Yeah...

MICHELLE: Nicest instrument in the world that is.

GRACE: The guitar?

MICHELLE: Yeah, nothin' sounds like the guitar. (*Mitch gets up from the rock.*) Come on, let's head back. (*She stretches.*) Fuck me, exhausted - need some iron, gonna crack a Guinness open when we get back.

GRACE: Well, we ain't gonna take forever to get to O'Leary's...I'm ready ta go soon as I get that dress on! And wait till ya see the heels I just bought ta go with it, one drink in and he's gonna go crazy the old bastard!

(*They laugh, walk off and continue to converse in small talk together....as the lights dim.*)

LIGHTS OUT

THE END