

THE WHITE DRESS
By
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INT. SMALL BEDROOM –DAY

INT. BEDROOM – MORNING

A LITTLE GIRL (8) is asleep in bed; a shrill alarm goes off beside her. The room is dark, grim, untidy and sparsely decorated. The furniture is brown and old fashioned.

There is a Westlife poster on the wall. The little girl rises; she is expressionless as we follow her to the hallway and the bathroom beyond where she washes herself in the sink with a cloth. She winces as the cold water touches her skin.

The bathroom is in disrepair and the shower unit has been pulled out from the wall, there is also a punch hole in the bathroom door.

INT. KITCHEN –DAY

The little girl enters the kitchen and opens the fridge, there is no food. She takes a tin of tuna from the cupboard, opens it and eats out of the tin with a fork.

INT. BEDROOM –DAY

She opens the wardrobe; the only thing hanging in it is a simple plain white communion dress, no fuss and no frills. Under the dress is a pair of worn white shoes placed carefully and neatly under the dress. She strains to reach but gently takes the dress down, removes the hanger and places the dress out flat on the bed.

She is standing in front of a full-length mirror with the dress and shoes on, no expression on her face. She combs her hair carefully, and stares at her reflection emotionless.

INT. HALLWAY -DAY

She is fully dressed in her communion outfit now. As she passes a door that is ajar we hear the sound of bottles clinking and pained moaning. She dashes passed the door and out of the flat quickly.

EXT FLATS -DAY

The Little girl walks through the grounds of the flats and enters a shop. She browses for a while and makes eye contact with the female sales assistant and smiles sweetly. She steals two white ribbons and leaves the shop. She sits on a wall at the side of a road and braids her hair tying it with the ribbons.

POV of little girl she approaches the church. She scans the noisy gathering of people, there are many families and many extremely groomed people, all fussing, laughing, photos being taken, celebratory atmosphere.

Nobody notices her; everyone is consumed in their own day, fixing hair, wiping faces etc. All of these sounds melt in to one strange and distorted sound track as she slowly walks through the gathered crowd and enters the church.

INT CHURCH -DAY

The little girl walks up the aisle unnoticed by everyone including the priest who is busy greeting parents and communicates. She takes her seat beside all the other little girls, they look at her up and down, and they laugh and mock her.

Her outfit is in stark contrast to theirs, the other little girls have gloves, extreme hair dos, fake tan, shining shoes and puffed out dresses.

She hides her handbag behind her. There is a montage of images of her making her communion, she is sombre and takes it very seriously.

EXT CHURCH -DAY

There are more celebrations outside the church, flashes of light from all the photographs being taken.

Money is being stuffed in little girls' hand bags, men are handing out cash, families are piling into cars, and there is exaggerated smiling and laughter.

A man turns to the little girl and hands her £5, he scuffles her hair but never really looks at her in the face. She puts the fiver in her handbag and again walks through the crowd unnoticed and out of the church grounds.

INT CHIPPER -DAY

The little girl is handed over a brown paper bag of chips, she offers up the money, barely reaching up over the chipper counter.

EXT FLATS -DAY

The little girl walks through the flats kicking the ground and eating the chips out of the bag. She is singing a pop song to herself.

She reaches her front door and takes the key out of her handbag and enters the flat.

She again passes the room with the door still ajar, she peeps round the door making sure to be quiet. This time we see there is an unconscious woman on the couch, there are bottles everywhere.

INT LARGE BEDROOM -DAY

The little girl replaces the bag in amongst all the other bags and shoes, she tosses them around to make sure it looks the same as before she disturbed it.

INT SMALL BEDROOM EVENING

The room is darker now, the little girl is sitting on her bed, she is back in her normal clothes. She is staring at the blank wall.

The communion dress is hanging back in the otherwise empty wardrobe, it sways lightly on the hanger.