

The Simple Things

EXT. BRIDGE STREET, GALWAY. VERY EARLY MORNING

The town is bathed in soft fog. EMILY, 26 but younger looking, totters drunkenly towards the bridge. She's more elegant than beautiful, like Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany's.

A busker plays a tin whistle by the bridge, a used coffee cup filled with change between his battered purple Converse, a card reads "Please Give to the Blind".

Emily stands, transfixed. She removes her money and her watch and puts them in the cup. She takes off her Manolo Blahniks and walks away, leaving her shoes behind.

The busker continues to play; there's a loud splash; a car comes to a screeching halt; legs run by.

MALE VOICE (OFF SCREEN)
Jesus Christ! She jumped off the
bridge! Call the police!

Another splash. Shouts. A far away siren.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Emily sits, chain smoking, doing a cross word puzzle and suduko. She continues the puzzles as she talks to, DR. NOEL SHEPARD, early 40's, and DR. ALICIA AGUSTAN, mid-50's.

AGUSTAN
Perhaps you'd like to discuss your
drinking?

EMILY
There's nothing to discuss. I'm not
used to drinking and had too much.

AGUSTAN
Or your drug use?

EMILY
I don't do drugs.

AGUSTAN
Even occasionally?

EMILY
No.

(CONTINUED)

AGUSTAN

How are things in your professional life.

EMILY

They're good. I have a great job.

AGUSTAN

Anything you'd like to expand on?

EMILY

No, but thanks for asking.

SHEPARD

You want to put down that paper a second?

Emily looks at him but then back at the paper. She continues to fly through the crossword and sudoku. The doctors look at each other. Agustan gets up to leave. Shepard stays seated.

SHEPARD

Listen, kiddo, you can bullshit us as much as you want but we got your toxicology results back. You tested positive for cocaine. And for heroin. That's a dangerous mix! You come home from London for a weekend and slip over a bridge? Bullshit. Ya wanna know what else?

Emily doesn't even look up.

SHEPARD

I'm intrigued, I really am. We want to help. But we can't figure out a damn thing about you, unless you decide to open up and let us in. But that's not you is it? So you continue to do your little puzzles, but there's a much bigger problem you should be working on right now.

Shepard joins Agustan at the door and they leave. Emily continues working on the puzzles and finishes them, then flings the pencil at the door.

INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN. MORNING

Emily finishes breakfast and lights a cigarette, putting the lighter down. As she smokes she bites strips of skin from her fingers. A hand reaches in and snatches the lighter.

PYROMANIAC (OFF SCREEN)

Watch me burn, bitch, watch me
burn!! Watch me burnnnNNNN!!!

Emily's face dances in light and shadows as the mad man is engulfed in flame, burning and bellowing off screen.

DOCTOR (OFF SCREEN)

Fire! Fire! Someone get an
extinguisher!

An off screen extinguisher shoots foam, covering Emily, who sits dumbstruck, blinking through the white blizzard.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Emily smokes and bites her nails or tears skin off her fingers throughout.

EMILY

Ya know what my big title
is? Executive Director / Vice
President, Foreign Exchange Sales
and Trading Technology. Sounds
great, right? But do you know what
I actually do? I design apps that
our traders use to monitor orders
and view risk. That's it. My job is
to make trades easier. If I never
existed it wouldn't make any
difference. The trades would happen
anyway. You want to know something
else?

AGUSTAN

Go on...

EMILY

You know how long it takes for the
shares of the average Fortune 500
company to change hands completely?

AGUSTAN

25 years?

(CONTINUED)

EMILY
About 4 months.

SHEPARD
Seriously?

EMILY
Yeah. Check the paper.

AGUSTAN
And this is important to you?

EMILY
It's important to everyone!

AGUSTAN
I see.

EMILY
Do you? Any shop or restaurant
anywhere in the world that changed
hands every 4 months; people
wouldn't set foot inside it but no
one cares when it happens to a
hundred billion dollar company?
It's a joke. I'm a joke. My life is
worthless.

AGUSTAN
How would you define worth?

EMILY
What about the man from earlier?

AGUSTAN
He doesn't concern us now. Let's
get back to your job...

EMILY
He concerns me!

AGUSTAN
Please, Miss Watson, let's try to
keep this on track shall we? You
were talking about work...

Emily looks at her with a look of complete disdain and stubs
out her cigarette, she gets up to leave.

AGUSTAN
Please, Miss Watson, take your
seat.

Emily picks up the seat and smashes it against the wall.

INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN. MORNING

Emily eats breakfast, sitting at a table on her own, reading CP Violation. Her fingers and nails are raw from biting. She finishes her meal and lights a cigarette but this time with matches, putting them carefully back in her pocket.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

AGUSTAN

Ideally where do you see yourself?

EMILY

Over a bridge! That's why I'm here.

AGUSTAN

Could you elaborate?

EMILY

I mean, Jesus, look around! What don't you get about this? People starving on the streets and other people getting paid millions to sell shit no one really needs...

AGUSTAN

You seem quite angry, Miss Watson?

EMILY

Seems, Madam? Nay it is! I know not seems! I *am* angry! And I can't understand why everyone else isn't too! All you need do is...

SHEPARD

Do you like Shakespeare?

EMILY

What?

SHEPARD

Shakespeare? Do you like his work?

EMILY

I suppose. But so what? That's not the point.

AGUSTAN

Indeed, Dr. Shepard, I believe Miss Watson is right in this instance. That's certainly not the point, not the point at all.

(CONTINUED)

SHEPARD

I think it might be. Maybe you should look around, Emily. You don't belong here. Yet here you are. In a nut house.

EMILY

(laughs) Jesus! Can you say that?

SHEPARD

I can say anything I want. I'm wearing a white coat!

EMILY

(laughs again) Listen, I get what you're doing, I really do. But take a look around and tell me, honestly, how can I not be angry?

SHEPARD

Anger isn't the problem. Anger's just an emotion, like happiness or sadness or fear. Nothing is ever good or bad but thinking makes it so. Not even anger...

INT. HOSPITAL PAPER KIOSK. MORNING

SHEPARD

Morning, a powdered donut, please.

CLERK

Jesus! You and your donuts! That's one forty five please, Shep.

Shepard smiles and turns to go but then remembers...

SHEPARD

Can I get the Financial Times too?

CLERK

Checking on your millions, eh?
That's two oh five.

INT. HOSPITAL SHEPARD'S OFFICE. MORNING

The office is little more than a broom closet with a notice board, covered in news paper clippings. Someone knocks.

(CONTINUED)

SHEPARD

Come in.

Dr. Agustan pops her head in the door.

AGUSTAN

Dr. Shepard? Do you have a minute?

SHEPARD

Alicia. Yeah. Come in. Have a seat.

AGUSTAN

That's quite alright. This won't take a moment. I just wanted to have a word about Miss Watson.

SHEPARD

What about her?

AGUSTAN

I wonder if you're on the right track with her?

SHEPARD

I wonder too. But it's worth a shot, Alicia. With the kind of money this kid's pulling in, unless she figures it out quick we're going to lose her.

Agustan glances at the notice board.

AGUSTAN

Perhaps you're right, Dr. Shepard, perhaps you're right.

She pulls her head back and is about to leave the office.

SHEPARD

Alicia?

AGUSTAN

Yes, Dr. Shepard?

SHEPARD

She's right, you know. About the 4 months.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

SHEPARD

So any thoughts on channeling that anger? It says in your file that you play piano?

EMILY

It's always just made sense to me. A bit like maths.

SHEPARD

What about writing? You like Shakespeare.

EMILY

I like his plays, I suppose.

AGUSTAN

Is Hamlet your favourite?

EMILY

Do you even know why we're talking about Shakespeare?

SHEPARD

Emily, let it slide. Shakespeare isn't really the issue, it's just an example. If music isn't an outlet then maybe writing is?

INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN. MORNING

Emily sits across the table from JAMES, late 20's, who has a large selection of rubber bands on his left wrist.

JAMES

What brings you here?

EMILY

I heard the food was good.

JAMES

They lied!

EMILY

So how about you?

JAMES

I'm schizophrenic.

(CONTINUED)

EMILY

Woah!

JAMES

What?

EMILY

I dunno. I'm just not used to that sort of honesty, I suppose.

JAMES

Well, there's a certain freedom in being crazy, yeah? What about you?

Emily plays with her food a moment, her left hand shoots to her mouth, the nails are now covered in plasters.

EMILY

Suicide.

JAMES

Wrists?

EMILY

Nah. Drowning.

JAMES

Supposed to be a calm way to go.

EMILY

I heard that too. Can I ask you a question?

JAMES

Shoot.

EMILY

What are the rubber bands for?

JAMES

They're for flicking. Like this.

He pulls the bands out and lets them snap back.

EMILY

Jesus! Doesn't that hurt?

JAMES

It's a bitch.

EMILY

Then why do it.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

It was Shep's idea, yeah? When I flick the bands it makes the voices go away. I don't really need 'em now. They have me on pretty strong meds. I'm cool when I'm on 'em, but sometimes I stop taking 'em and the voices come back.

EMILY

Jesus!

JAMES

Yeah. Sometimes. Sometimes the devil too.

EMILY

Seriously?

JAMES

Um hmmm. So the bands help. The meds and doctors too.

James finishes eating and stands to leave and leans in close. Emily moves back scared, thinking of the pyromaniac.

JAMES

I hope you're real, I sure had a good time talking to you!

Emily, relieved, laughs out loud. James shuffles off towards the ward. Dr. Shepard walks by, a donut in his mouth.

EMILY

Doc?

SHEPARD

Emily! How's it going today?

EMILY

I'm doing better, I suppose. I had a think about what you said. I'd like to give it a go. Writing, I mean.

SHEPARD

Really? That's excellent! I'll have the nurse bring you some crayons.

EMILY

(Incredulous) Crayons?

(CONTINUED)

SHEPARD

You don't think we'd give you
anything sharp, do you?

It takes Emily a second to cotton on but then she laughs.

INT. HOSPITAL EMILY'S ROOM. MORNING

Emily is packing. She looks healthy. Dr. Shepard passes.

EMILY

Shep!

SHEPARD

I heard you were getting out. Lucky
you - I'm stuck here till I'm 65.
(a beat) I spoke to that reporter.
They're going to print your piece.
It'll be in the paper on Thursday.

EMILY

Thanks, Shep, I mean it. Thanks for
everything.

SHEPARD

No worries, kiddo, one last
thing...

EMILY

I know, doc, what good's a life
that fills your pockets but empties
out your soul, right?

INT. HOSPITAL SHEPARD'S OFFICE. MORNING

Shepard is sitting with Thursday's paper, donut in mouth.

EMILY (VO)

What is depression? How do I
describe it to you? I could tell
you I was swallowed by sadness...

Telephone rings. Shepard jumps; looks at the phone but
ignores it. He goes back to the paper. Phone rings again. He
looks again. It rings a 3rd time. And is answered outside.
He returns to his paper. Another doctor pops his head in.

DOCTOR 2

Shep! Call on line 12.

(CONTINUED)

SHEPARD

Who is it?

DOCTOR 2

Dunno but he asked for you by name.

Shepard picks up the phone.

SHEPARD

This is Dr. Shepard.

(a few beats)

SHEPARD

Yes. Released just a few days ago.

(a few beats)

Shepard puts down the phone without saying goodbye. And picks up the paper. There's a knock on the door.

AGUSTAN

Dr. Shepard. Time for rounds.

SHEPARD

Yeah. Yeah. OK. Just a minute.

Shepard stands. Then sits down again. He picks up the donut, looks at it and flings it against the wall. It explodes in a cloud of dust. He just sits there for a few moments. Then he gets up, walks over to what's left of the donut. Picks it up and puts it in the bin. He looks around for paper to clean the wall but can't find any. He goes to his desk, picks up the newspaper and carefully takes out the piece by Emily, tacking it to the notice board, then uses the rest of paper to slowly, methodically clean the wall. He looks around the office. And then leaves.

The notice board is covered with news paper clippings of suicides, Emily's piece about depression tacked carefully to the centre.