

MY FAVOURITE TIME OF THE DAY

by

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v3.0

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FADE IN:

1 INT. MANON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (1969) 1

MANON LABONE, 18, lies in bed. She wears a nightie with a neck ribbon, which is undone. From her rhythmic movements it appears she is masturbating under the sheets. A smiling teddy bear sits on the end of the bed, facing Manon.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Her name's Manon... She plays with herself every night.

Manon whimpers with pleasure.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

It's like breathing or going to the loo... just something that her body needs her to do.

Manon's moans and gasps intensify.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

It's her favourite time of the day, from the racket she makes... and that's the problem.

Manon's squeals become progressively louder.

The door flies open, revealing PATRICIA LABONE, 40s, strong-willed and intense.

PATRICIA

Stop that, by the Mother of God --

Patricia turns on the light, strides over and tugs on the covers. Manon clings to the sheets.

MANON

Mum, I was in heaven --

PATRICIA

The only place you're going to is hell -- where you can say 'hello' to your father.

MANON

Don't bring him into this.

PATRICIA

This disgusting behaviour did not come from my genes.

Manon sighs and retrieves the bed covers. Patricia bends over and ties the ribbon at Manon's neck, fixing the bow with a sharp tug.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
It's my job to look over you, and
by the smile on the Virgin Mary's
face, I will.

Patricia strides out. The door slams. A moment later the door reopens, a hand reaches in and turns out the light.

PATRICIA (O.S.)
Sleep tight.

MANON
'Night, Mum... I'm sorry.

The door shuts softly. Manon lies back in bed and sighs. After a moment she unties the ribbon at her neck.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Another battle won. Another war
lost.

2a INT. SHOWER - NIGHT 2a

Water runs down Manon's legs. She moans pleurably. (NOTE: Only shows the bottom two feet of the cubicle, i.e. from the knees down.)

2b INT. LAUNDRY - SAME 2b

Patricia approaches the sink, her hands dirty. The sound of the shower carries gently. Patricia turns on the "COLD" tap and rinses her hands. She looks around.

PATRICIA
(calls out)
Where's the soap?

2a INT. SHOWER - SAME 2a

Manon squeals with delight and drops a bar of soap.

2b INT. LAUNDRY - SAME 2b

Thunder clouds Patricia's face.

2a INT. SHOWER - SAME 2a

Manon slithers down to rest at the bottom of the shower cubicle. She whimpers dreamily.

2b INT. LAUNDRY - SAME 2b

Patricia turns the "HOT" tap on full-bore. Steam billows.

2a INT. SHOWER - SAME 2a

Manon shudders and leaps out of the shower.

3 INT. LAUNDRY - DAY 3

A battered "BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY" card lies next to a stack of medical and home remedy books.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Mum tried everything... Every
medical theory, every old wives'
tale.

Manon forlornly eats an apple behind the pile of books.

A trail of ingredients leads past an arcane-looking recipe book to the sink, where Patricia vigorously stirs a cup of dark liquid. She crosses herself.

PATRICIA
Mother of God, prayers be answered.

Patricia offers the cup to Manon, who stares fearfully at it.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
You do want to be rid of this...
affliction, don't you?

MANON
(gulps)
Yes.

Patricia passes the cup to Manon.

PATRICIA
Every blessed, toe-curling drop.

Manon gingerly tastes it. Surprise lights her face. She downs the cup enthusiastically.

4a EXT. CHURCH - DAY 4a

A rural church obscured by trees.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Time for the heavy artillery.

4b INT. CONFSSIONAL - SAME 4b

Patricia talks to a PRIEST through a wooden lattice.

PATRICIA
Forgive me, Father, for I have
sinned.

PRIEST

What have you done, my lamb?

PATRICIA

I have raised a daughter with a
sinful and perverted habit.

PRIEST

Oh. And what has she done?

Patricia toys with her hands. She clutches them in prayer.

PATRICIA

She plays... with her hands.

PRIEST

She plays handball?

PATRICIA

Girls don't have balls, Father.

5 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

5

A picture of the Virgin Mary hangs above the mantelpiece. Manon watches as Patricia opens a box. She stands a large candle on the mantelpiece and lights it.

PATRICIA

This is a votive candle. We have to
keep one burning all the time.

Manon strokes the long, thick, shiny candle. Patricia swats Manon's hand away then strides off.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

As long as it flames, the Virgin
Mary will watch over you and you
won't touch that... that place.

Manon eyes the Virgin Mary with her beguiling smile.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

One look at that candle and Manon
knew exactly where that smile came
from... It wasn't long before the
candle mysteriously vanished.

4c INT. CONFSSIONAL - DAY

4c

Manon talks to the priest.

MANON

Forgive me, Father, for I have
sinned.

PRIEST

Yes, my lamb. What have you done?

Manon squirms.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
It's all right... tell me.

Manon sniffs.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Come on, girl. In the presence of
the Lord one can but spurt out the
truth.

MANON
I've been playing... downstairs.

PRIEST
The Good Shepherd delights in those
who play, up hill or down dale.

MANON
I've been playing downstairs... in
my room.

PRIEST
Manon... Your room is upstairs.

MANON
I can't help it, Father.

6 INT. MANON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

6

The teddy bear sits on the end of the bed. It wears glasses.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
Mum said that shortsightedness
would set in. It did.

The door flies open. Patricia, also wearing glasses, frog-
marches Manon into the room. Manon wears a miniskirt.

PATRICIA
Come on, lie down. It's bed time.

MANON
Can't I put my pyjamas on?

PATRICIA
Not tonight.

Manon stares in puzzlement at Patricia, who produces two
pairs of handcuffs.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)
I got these from your Uncle Phil,
the ex-copper.
(indicates bed)
Down you go.

Stunned, Manon lies on the bed and stretches her arms towards the headboard. Patricia handcuffs Manon to the bed.

MANON

What if I get an itchy nose?

PATRICIA

It's your other itch that bothers me. D'you want a blankie?

Manon shakes her head.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Sleep tight, then.

MANON

'Night, Mum.

Patricia exits and closes the door. Manon lies in the darkness for a few moments. She looks around and sees --

The teddy bear at the end of the bed.

Manon clasps the teddy bear between her feet. She draws the bear up between her legs and nestles it against her groin.

The teddy bear's big smiley face is deep in Manon's groin.

Manon rocks pleausurably to a gentle rhythm.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

After that night, things were never the same. But never underestimate a determined mother.

7 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

7

Manon and Patricia sit miserably in a sterile room. Patricia toys with a bandana around her head. She removes it, showing her head to be bald.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

With Manon and Dad, she had plenty of things to blame for the cancer.

8 INT. MANON'S BEDROOM - LATER

8

Manon lies stiffly in bed, the ribbon on her nightie untied. The teddy bear sits on the end of the bed.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Perhaps I should tell you about Dad. He had an affair with a woman whose husband was in prison. When he got out he found out about Dad and... [makes squelchy noise].

Manon begins to wriggle and squirm. She emits a pleasurable mew. Vexed, Manon sits up and ties the ribbon at her neck.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Manon tried to stop. Honest, she did.

Manon lies back and tries to sleep. She tosses and turns, then stares at the teddy bear. A thought strikes her.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

The solution, when it came, was beautifully simple.

9a INT. PATRICIA'S BEDROOM - SAME 9a

Patricia lies in bed, listening intently to the silence. Puzzled, she rises and pads out into the --

9b INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 9b

Patricia creeps up to Manon's door and listens. Silence. She hurries away. A few moments later she reappears with a glass. Patricia puts the glass to the door and her ear to the glass. She lowers the glass in confusion.

PATRICIA

Manon? Are you all right?

Silence.

9c INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 9c

Patricia rushes in, totally thrilled. She falls to her knees before the picture of the Virgin Mary and gives thanks.

9d INT. MANON'S BEDROOM - SAME 9d

Manon writhes under the sheets. She clenches the teddy bear in her teeth, muffling her cries of ecstasy. Manon releases the teddy bear and lies back, eyes wide with wonder.

10 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY 10

Manon sits alone, deeply troubled. A door opens and Patricia enters, white as a ghost. Manon looks up in alarm.

MANON

How long? How long, Mum?

PATRICIA

Well stab me in the breast and call me Saint Agnes...

Manon gapes at Patricia.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

It's gone.

MANON

What?

PATRICIA

It's gone into remission. No sign of it. The doctor can't explain.

Manon leaps up and hugs Patricia tightly.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

That was their happiest time, those two years, until...

11 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

11

Manon and Patricia have a tug-of-war over the teddy bear, whose head is just about falling off.

MANON

No, it's all right, Mum.

PATRICIA

You'll pull his head off --

Manon releases the teddy bear. Patricia troops downstairs.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

Lord knows what you've been doing to him... I'll stitch him tonight and he'll be right as rain.

Manon watches with concern.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Manon was with Mum when she died.

12a INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

12a

Manon stares at the picture of the Virgin Mary. Sobs rack her body. She removes the picture, then falls to her knees and cradles the picture as grief overtakes her.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

From then on it was the Virgin Mary who looked over Manon.

12b INT. MANON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

12b

The picture hangs above the bed. Manon's moans carry.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

She had a grandstand seat. She just kept on smiling. That's what Manon likes about her.

13 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

13

Bare winter trees.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Manon eventually cleaned out the
 house. She found some things that
 had been missing for a while.

Manon places a votive candle on a grave and lights it. The
 priest ambles up beside Manon.

PRIEST
 I do like a good candle.

MANON
 Me too.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Mary's still there, above her bed.
 (very sadly)
 But most of the stuff went into the
 attic and never came out again.

14 INT. ATTIC - DAY (1986)

14

Dusty boxes, broken toys and bric-a-brac; a box of candles.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 Manon's thirty-five now and has two
 daughters of her own. She found her
 place in the world.

Amid the debris is a battered cardboard box, flaps open.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 The girls are tucked up in bed now,
 and the house is quiet. I can hear
 everything going on below.

Inside the box, the teddy bear's big smiley face.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
 It's my favourite time of the day.

FADE OUT

THE END