

= The Finale ( Will & Grace ) =

" The Finale " is the series finale of Will & Grace and the twenty @-@ third episode of the show 's eighth season . It originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company ( NBC ) in the United States on May 18 , 2006 , when it was watched by an average of eighteen million viewers , making it the most watched episode of the final two seasons of Will & Grace . In the finale , Will and Grace have a falling @-@ out that lasts for years . They each have a child with their respective partners , and eventually reconcile when their children ( Laila and Ben ) meet at college . Meanwhile , Karen 's arch @-@ enemy Beverley Leslie makes an offer to Jack which ultimately leads to Jack inheriting Beverley 's fortune .

The episode was written by series creators and executive producers David Kohan and Max Mutchnick , and directed by James Burrows . Filming took place at CBS Studio Center in Studio City , California in April 2006 . The cast members took the news about the show ending well , but they became emotional as the final scene was being filmed . NBC heavily promoted the finale , and the main cast members appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show and The Today Show to bid farewell . An hour @-@ long series retrospective , " Say Goodnight Gracie " , featuring interviews with the cast , crew , and guest stars , preceded the hour @-@ long series finale . Since airing , the finale has received mixed reviews from television critics .

= = Plot = =

Grace Adler ( Debra Messing ) , heavily pregnant , is having bizarre dreams of the future in which she and her gay friend and roommate Will Truman ( Eric McCormack ) are an old couple , raising their child . In her dream , Jack McFarland ( Sean Hayes ) is married to actor Kevin Bacon , and Karen Walker ( Megan Mullally ) ? who has not aged ( her explanation : " Money " ) ? is now in a relationship with her maid Rosario Salazar ( Shelley Morrison ) . In Grace 's real life , however , her and Will 's relationship is complicated . Grace is not sure if she wants to spend the rest of her life living with Will . So , when her ex @-@ husband Marvin " Leo " Markus ( Harry Connick , Jr . ) shows up and proposes to her ? not even aware that she is pregnant with his child ? she immediately accepts .

Two years later , Grace moves with Leo to Rome and lives there for a year . They then move back to New York City , where they raise their daughter Laila . Will and Vince D 'Angelo ( Bobby Cannavale ) have since reconciled , and are raising a son , Ben . Karen and Jack grow tired of the fact that Will and Grace are not speaking with each other , so they lure them to the same place and force them to make up . The four meet at Will and Vince 's apartment , and even though Will and Grace have a pleasant evening together , their relationship is tentative and somewhat awkward . They realize a lot has changed since the last time they met , and thus their relationship is not rekindled . Meanwhile , Karen learns that in her divorce from Stan , she will have no money as Stan 's money was all loaned to him , and he is now bankrupt . When learning that Beverley Leslie ( Leslie Jordan ) and his " business associate " Benji ( Brian A. Setzer ) have broken up , Karen plots to have Jack take Benji 's place , after Jack confesses that Beverly offered to share his entire fortune with him . When Beverly dies after being blown off a balcony from high winds , Jack inherits all of his money .

Around twenty years later , Laila meets Ben as they both move into college . Will and Grace are reunited under these circumstances , and their children eventually marry . Jack and Karen , meanwhile , are now living comfortably with each other and Rosario . While everyone else is older , Karen ? just like in Grace 's dream ? has not aged due to extensive plastic surgery , and she and Jack perform a duet of the song " Unforgettable " . The show ends with Will and Grace watching ER together , reminiscing about how their children are to be wed . Feeling uplifted by the good old times the four friends gather at a bar to toast to their friendship , which then flashes back to the four as their younger selves .

= = Production = =

Will & Grace creators and executive producers David Kohan and Max Mutchnick , who had not served as writers since the season four season finale , wrote the script for the series finale . Regarding the finale , Mutchnick stated : " We wrote about what you want to have happen with people you love . I think Will and Grace end up very fleshed out . They end up as full adults . All the things that matter in life , they end up having . " Three years before the series finale was created , Mutchnick was asked on his opinion regarding how he would like to see the character 's story come to a conclusion , " The truth is that [ Will and Grace ] serve each other 's dysfunction . And the best way for their story to end is to find love . "

The episode was shot in Studio City , California on Stage 17 at CBS Studio Center . It was filmed on April 10 , 11 , and 13 , 2006 . The make @-@ up effects used in Grace 's dream and the scenes fifteen years into the future were done by Academy Award @-@ winning make @-@ up artists . Kohan and Mutchnick joined long @-@ time director James Burrows on the set as filming began . The cast and crew tried to remain cheerful in front of the live audience between takes while the writers gathered in a room to rework lines for potentially larger laughs . However , " there were a lot of snotty , tearful faces all around the set . When we got to the very , very last scene , everybody was just a mess . We started sobbing and hugging each other , " said Megan Mullally , who plays Karen . Eric McCormack , who portrays Will , commented that his saddest moment was " the last time I stood in Will 's kitchen . That was the most colorful position for me , standing there and stirring something . It was my pulpit , the place where I delivered my best jokes . "

The set was already being broken down the day after filming finished . Debra Messing , who plays Grace , said it was " cordoned off like an accident scene . It was a shock to see parts of it gone already . " Each cast member was allowed to keep their favorite souvenir from the set . Messing took the door to Grace 's office ; she wanted to lean it up against the wall at her house as a piece of modern art . Sean Hayes was given a couple of pieces from Will 's apartment : " There 's a leather box that was on Will 's desk that I want to find a place for . " Mullally chose a simple portrait from one of the walls , and McCormack took a small ceramic dog , though he said he would have taken everything if he could .

The cast members of the show took the news about the show ending well . Hayes said : " I 'm proud of being a part of something in history and I 'm proud to have been given a platform to make people laugh . " McCormack added , " We have never taken ourselves or this show too seriously but now that it 's over I take our collective achievement very , very seriously . " The actors were satisfied with the episode and thought the viewers would find it satisfying as well . " It 's daring and ambitious and more far @-@ reaching than most finales go . I think people will be quite surprised , " McCormack said . Messing added : " I think Will & Grace fans will be satisfied . Ultimately , [ the episode ] was done beautifully and it ties up loose ends for all of the characters in a way that 's wonderful . "

= = Broadcast and reception = =

The series finale was heavily promoted by NBC , and the main cast members appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show , The Today Show , and Live with Regis and Kelly to bid farewell . NBC devoted a two @-@ hour block in its primetime schedule on May 18 , 2006 , for the Will & Grace send @-@ off . An hour @-@ long series retrospective , " Say Goodnight Gracie " , featuring interviews with the cast , crew , and guest stars , preceded the hour @-@ long series finale . The retrospective was viewed by an estimated 12 @.@ 7 million viewers , while the finale drew 18 @.@ 43 million viewers and a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 5 / 18 , making it the most watched episode of the final two seasons of Will & Grace .

Since airing , the episode has received mixed reviews from television critics . Richard Keller of TV Squad thought the finale 's theme of Will and Grace 's connection to each other was well @-@ presented by director James Burrows . Keller added , " While not as satisfying as , say , the Friends finale or as crushing as the Seinfeld finale , the series finale to Will & Grace did have its moments and came back to the original concept of friendship among a close group of people . There were some moments where I did laugh out loud , but they were few . " CHUD.com 's David Oliver praised

the finale for not having characters " go on wild tangents that betray who they were during the entirety of the show 's run . " He also commented that Messing and McCormack are " affecting in their performances " and the episode " nicely summarizes [ Will and Grace 's ] friendship over the course of the entire show . "

Setting the finale in several different time periods was criticized by some critics . Jennifer Armstrong of Entertainment Weekly said " we endure a swirl of confusing , unnecessary sequences , from Grace 's dream to current reality to two years later to their kids ' first day of college to their kids ' impending wedding . By the end , instead of being sad to bid adieu , we 're just relieved not to have yet another disbelief @-@ suspending flash @-@ forward thrust upon us . " Jim Schembri of The Sydney Morning Herald wrote : " The time @-@ jumping device is overused and a tad awkward but , by and large , it ? s a noble finale to one of the better standard three @-@ wall sitcoms from America . " Amy Amatangelo of Zap2it commented that Will & Grace " is a show that spent eight seasons predicated on the lasting friendship of Will and Grace , and we 're supposed to believe that they spent over 20 years not talking to each other just because their lives went in different directions ? That there is no way their friendship could have been sustained once they both found the love of their life ? " Amatangelo enjoyed Jack and Karen 's performance of " Unforgettable " , however , but the rest of the finale she " could have done without . "