

= Grace , Replaced =

" Grace , Replaced " is the eighteenth episode of the first season of the American television series Will & Grace . It was written by Katie Palmer and directed by series producer James Burrows . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in the United States on April 8 , 1999 . Actors Molly Shannon , Leigh @-@ Allyn Baker , and Tom Gallop guest starred on " Grace , Replaced " .

In the episode , Grace 's (Debra Messing) job forces her to work overtime , which leads to Will (Eric McCormack) feeling neglected . As a result , he seeks solace in the company of a new neighbor , Val (Shannon) . Meanwhile , Jack (Sean Hayes) is annoyed that he has to perform community service for assaulting a meter maid .

Before the airing , NBC moved the program to Thursdays at 8 : 30 p.m. , after it was a success in the Tuesday lineup . " Grace , Replaced " was the first episode to debut on the Thursday slot . Since then , the episode has generally received positive reviews from television critics . According to the Nielsen ratings system , it was watched by 12 @.@ 9 million viewers , which resulted in the episode attracting its highest ratings of the season .

= = Plot = =

Will (Eric McCormack) feels neglected by his best friend , Grace (Debra Messing) , as she spends a lot of time with her work . When Will calls Grace to confirm for a lunch date , Grace cannot go as she is too busy creating interior designs . Later , while doing his laundry , Will meets his new upstairs neighbor , Val (Molly Shannon) . Immediately , the two take a liking to one another . The next day , Will visits Grace at work and introduces Val to her . After the two leave , Karen (Megan Mullally) ? Grace 's friend and socialite assistant ? tells Grace that she did not like the way Will and Val acted towards one another . Grace , however , refuses to accept what Karen implies .

Meanwhile , after slapping a meter maid , Jack (Sean Hayes) is ordered to work 40 hours of community service , picking up garbage , and while he does this is forced to wear an orange jumpsuit . While doing community service he visits Karen at Grace Adler Designs . While there , Jack goes through a trash bag and sees Soon @-@ Yi Allen 's phone bill . Jack shows Karen the bill which quickly results in the two prank calling Soon @-@ Yi .

At Will and Grace 's apartment , Will and Val play Pyramid against Will 's friends Ellen (Leigh @-@ Allyn Baker) and Rob (Tom Gallop) . Grace , who comes home , is shocked when her Pyramid record with Will ? 2 minutes and 14 seconds ? is the same as Will and Val 's . Before leaving , Grace is horrified that Will called her Val . While at her office , Grace learns that Will is sick . She goes home to attend to him and is surprised to see Val there . Grace tells her that since she is home that Val can go . Val , however , does not leave . This results in the two fighting . The fight , however , is broken by Will and tells them to work the situation out . Grace admits she felt jealous of Val as she believed Val had replaced her , due to her not being there for Will . Will , however , reassures Grace that no one can replace her as his best friend . As a result , Grace and Val make up .

= = Production = =

" Grace , Replaced " was written by Katie Palmer and directed by series producer James Burrows . This was Palmer 's first written episode , and was Burrows ' 18th directed episode . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 8 , 1999 . Before the airing of the episode , it was confirmed that actress Molly Shannon would guest star as Val , a new neighbor in Will and Grace 's apartment building . This episode would be Shannon 's first appearance on the show , with her later guest starring in the episodes " Girls , Interrupted " , " Last of the Really Odd Lovers " , " Fagel Attraction " , and " One Gay at a Time " .

= = Reception = =

" Grace , Replaced " brought in 12 @. @ 9 million American viewers upon its original broadcast in the United States , and making it the seventh highest @- @ rated show during the week of April 5 ? 11 , 1999 . Originally , Will & Grace aired on Mondays , but due to insufficient viewership , NBC decided to move the program to Tuesdays at 9 : 30 p.m. , which was a success as viewers tuned in . The network then changed the time slot from Tuesdays to Thursdays at 8 : 30 p.m. , between Friends and Frasier , with this episode becoming a success as it attracted its highest audience ratings of the season . The previous episode , " Secrets and Lays " , was watched by 9 @. @ 6 million viewers . Many believed this decision was a good one , with a contributor of The Buffalo News commenting that the time slot change suggested that NBC felt that Will & Grace had a better chance of becoming a success than the current sitcom Jesse . In a report in The Star @- @ Ledger it said that the decision of Will & Grace airing on Thursdays was a good benefit on behalf of NBC as the program was " the only watchable comedy " .

The episode received generally positive reception . Alan Sepinwall and Matt Zoller Seitz of The Star @- @ Ledger were complimentary towards " Grace , Replaced " , writing that the episode " is a winner , packed with witty dialogue . " Monica Collins of the Boston Herald said that the episode " is one of the best of the series so far " . The Dallas Morning News writer Ed Bark noted that " Grace , Replaced " was " another energetic , generally amusing " episode . Bark , in regards to Jack and Karen , said that the two together " sometimes are almost more than the scenery can bear . " Aaron Barnhart for The Kansas City Star called the episode riotous , and said that the show " with [its] pop @- @ culture jokes delivered at blistering speed , outsized performances from ' supporting ' players Sean Hayes and Megan Mullally , and a camaraderie between platonic pals Eric McCormack and Debra Messing that would make even Plato blush . " Ted Cox of the Daily Herald was less positive about the episode , reporting that this episode " looked like more of the same " , recounting the show 's past story lines , and past NBC programs . Chicago Tribune 's Steve Johnson opined that the episode " starts strong and then goes awry [...] It 's funny for a while [...] But then it takes it to a ludicrous level , selling out its own internal logic by conspiring to put [Molly] Shannon and Messing into a ... catfight . At its best this series works a groove of pop @- @ culture savvy ; this visit from The Three Stooges by way of Dynasty will have you rolling your eyes in dismay . "

Critics praised Shannon 's performance in the episode . Bark wrote , " ... the talented Ms. Shannon is winningly glossy and brassy [in this episode] . Someday soon she 'll have her own sitcom . Bet on it . " Tom Feran of The Plain Dealer reported that Shannon 's appearance on the show would make " a good introduction for viewers curious about Will & Grace . " The Boston Globe 's Matthew Gilbert enjoyed the actress in " Grace , Replaced " , writing that she is appealing as the Grace replacement .