

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME

Novel by Jason Fabbri

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INT. LAYTON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A BLAND SUBURBAN NIGHTMARE. A sharp, pissed off British woman takes us through the scene.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Welcome to hell.

Photographs of a young woman cover the walls. This is LAYTON'S SISTER.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Blonde, bitchy, basic. She's a pretty big deal. God knows why.

Layton's sister sits with LAYTON'S MOTHER and LAYTON'S FATHER (both very middle-class) on a three seater sofa. They're watching a music competition.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But then, some people love blonde and basic. I should know...

A figure stands behind the tableau on the sofa.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh, that's Layton.

LAYTON (late teens, androgynous, gorgeous) hands their Mother a piece of paper.

CU - It's a GIG FLYER. Pretty amateur but spirited. It announces the FIRST OFFICIAL GIG OF SHIVVR AND THE QUAKES.

LAYTON'S MOTHER
But that's tonight.

LAYTON'S SISTER
You're interrupting the show.

LAYTON'S FATHER
Your brother is going to play a real gig, honey.

LAYTON'S SISTER
Eugh.

LAYTON
Maybe next time, when we're more practised, or like another time, you'd maybe want to come to one?

LAYTON'S FATHER
Absolutely.

LAYTON

Okay. So, next time, I'll put you on a list or something?

LAYTON'S FATHER

I just can't wait to see you all your glory - my son, the musician.

LAYTON

Yeah. And you Mum?

LAYTON'S MOTHER

You haven't eaten dinner Layton - it's utterly wasteful.

CU on the LAST SAD SLICE of cold pizza slumped on a plate. It already has a bite out of it.

LAYTON

That's okay. Dad can have it.

LAYTON'S FATHER

Thanks son.

EXT. THE SUBURBS - NIGHT

Layton walks confidently to the bus stop, posture straightening out with each step.

EXT. BRITISH PUB - NIGHT

Layton outside a CRUMBLING pub. He's surrounded by smoking LOCALS. He's being watched.

A sparkling minivan whirls into the parking lot - 'Jesus Fish' on the back. The doors open to reveal...

THE SCREEN FREEZES.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This seems a perfect moment to introduce the rest of the cast...

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Britt. Mentally 5.

Through a wall of admirers, BRITT (teens, pocket rocket), enthusiastically burps the national anthem. WILD APPLAUSE as he finishes.

TWO BURLY BOUNCERS approach - menace in their eyes - they tap him on the back - Britt turns... to receive... A WELL EARNED HIGH FIVE.

INT. GRANNIE'S BASEMENT - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Grannie. Tries very hard.

GRANNIE (clearly mid twenties, squidgy round the edges) sits in a make-shift recording studio - egg boxes are heavily featured. He's mixing a song - it's good.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Jai. A try hard.

JAI (late teens, emo) watches TWO MEN aggressively chat up a GIRL. He approaches from behind, picks up a bottle, and SMASHES one of them over the head with it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Or a psychopath - but who's counting?

EXT. BRITISH PUB - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I'm sure there's another one?

The band (previously frozen) wait for Felicia to finish.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Dave? No. Daniel?

On the pavement, DONOVAN (teens, sensible) waves at his MUM AND DAD.

DONOVAN
I'll let you know when we finish
guys. Love you.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Oh. Donovan. Utterly forgettable
Donovan.

With painstaking slowness, Donovan returns an entire column of books to the library. They are all on time.

EXT. BRITISH PUB - DAY

Donovan's parents wave from their minivan.

BRITT

Bye, adopted parents!

The wave becomes less enthusiastic.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That kid was adopted under duress.

INT. BRITISH PUB - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A backstage room - which is actually just a toilet. A stream of locals wade through the band to use the urinals.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They were an unlikely group of rock gods, but... no that's it actually.

INT. BRITISH PUB - STAGE - NIGHT

A stage - which is actually just the floor... But the band are terrified and they're playing badly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sadly, their first real audience was growing hostile.

LOCAL 1

You suck!

Layton stops singing. The band follow suit. Jai puts his guitar down, READY TO FIGHT.

But then, Layton takes a deep breath and starts to sing again. The band hustle to keep up. This time it's exceptional. LAYTON IS SOMETHING ELSE.

INT. BRITISH PUB - NIGHT

The gig is over. The band are surrounded by the LOCALS from the pub who are embracing them as their own.

TONY (50s, 7 pints of Fosters a day) throws an arm around Layton.

TONY

Sorry about earlier. Let me buy you a drink.

JAI
You mean earlier when you told us
all we sucked?

BRITT
He'd love one. We'd all love one.
Thanks.

FELICIA (O.S.)
Make mine a gin and tonic.

Tony and the band swivel. We see her first. FELICIA SCALDING.
Weathered, impossibly glamorous (30s).

NARRATOR (V.O) (V.O.)
Felicia Scolding. Looking like shit
- but that was to be expected...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. LONDON CAB - DAY

Felicia sits in the back. A bright, breathy pop song starts
to play. She smiles. THE CABBIE (30s, London boy) makes a
disgusted noise and turns off the song.

FELICIA
Would you turn that back on please?

The Cabbie sighs, but does so. The song finishes.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.)
And that was 'Breathe by 2Tone' our
last song from this week's 'where
are they now?'

Felicia frowns.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A segment dedicated to those stars
from years past...

Felicia pulls out a vape and inhales hard.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...Who really couldn't hold on to a
career...

The cab stops outside a shopping centre.

CABBIE
That'll be twenty-five pounds
please.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.)
 ...But hey, success isn't for
 everybody...

Felicia begrudgingly hands him a twenty and a ten. She waits for her change.

CABBIE
 Thanks.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.)
 ...And some of us just can't stand
 the heat...

The Cabbie makes no move to hand Felicia back her change.

PRESENTER ON RADIO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 But we at Diamond Radio, wonder if
 things are on the up for Ms.
 Scalding? After all, her music has
 been used in a recent viral dance
 that is sweeping the nation.

The Cabbie turns off the radio. He turns around and looks Felicia DEAD IN THE EYES...

FELICIA
 It hasn't made me any money...
 I'm poor.

The Cabbie glances outside to the shopping centre.

FELICIA (CONT'D)
 It's my partner's birthday...
 Forget it. Have a nice day. It's
 been a pleasure.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 And that was just the beginning...

INT. SHOPPING CENTRE - HMV STYLE MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Felicia digs through a bargain bin and pulls out a 2Tone CD with a photograph of a much younger Felicia and her band-mate, NARRATOR (V.O.).

Music starts to play in the shop. It's 2Tone again.

The teenagers in the shop all start to perform a weird dance in unison, as if possessed. Felicia shudders.

A TEENAGE SHOP ASSISTANT (gothy) rolls her eyes.

FELICIA
Teenagers, eh?

A loud silence. Felicia waves the CD at the shop assistant.

FELICIA (CONT'D)
Do you know this band?

TEENAGE SHOP ASSISTANT
No.

FELICIA
We- they were once as big as The
Spice Girls.

TEENAGE SHOP ASSISTANT
Fascinating...

Felicia hugs the CD a little too close to her chest.

TEENAGE SHOP ASSISTANT (CONT'D)
Now, you gotta buy it.

FELICIA
(faux brightly)
Of course. How much will that be?

TEENAGE SHOP ASSISTANT
50p

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That was a new low.

INT. SHOPPING CENTRE - WANKY GADGET SHOP - DAY

Felicia places an expensive looking golf gadget on the till.
THE SHOP MANAGER (50s, very well dressed) starts to gift wrap
it in GOLD LEAF.

FELICIA
How much more will gift wrap be?

THE SHOP MANAGER
Twenty pounds.

FELICIA
Oh, I think we'll skip the gift
wrap this time then.

THE SHOP MANAGER
(brightly)
Of course.

TEAARRRRRR. She rips the paper off.

FELICIA

Thank you.

THE SHOP MANAGER

Of course. That will be 345 pounds.

FELICIA

I thought there was a sale?

THE SHOP MANAGER

There is.

FELICIA

And that's the final price?

THE SHOP MANAGER

Aren't you lucky?... I'm sorry,
your card was declined. Would you
like to try another one?

INT. SHOPPING CENTRE - GADGET SHOP - DAY

A PILE OF CREDIT CARDS lay haphazardly across the counter.
The Shop Manager is still smiling as Felicia tries the last
one with sweating, shaking hands. A pause. BEEP. It goes
through.

The Shop Manager places the gadget into a used take away bag
and hands it to Felicia with the credit card and receipt in a
flourish.

THE SHOP MANAGER

Lucky number 14.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that was when Felicia became
rather angry.

FELICIA

Fuck you.

EXT. LONDON - DAY

Felicia walks home. It starts to rain. She's not dressed for
the weather.

EXT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A beautiful old building. There is a DOORMAN. It is that kind
of place.

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Spacious, but there are cracks in the walls and damp spots. This place needs some serious TLC. Felicia drops her wet coat directly on to the floor. She kicks her wet shoes off and scuffs the wall.

FELICIA

Chad?

We hear a shower running. Felicia tiptoes down the hallway, into her office.

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

A beautiful room that is A HUGE MESS. Clothes and shopping bags cover the floor - Felicia hides the golfing gadget present quickly behind the dusty books in the book shelf. This isn't a couple who read a lot.

Enter CHAD, (mid 30s, gorgeous and glistening with shower water). He wears only a towel. He is clean personified.

CHAD

I'm leaving you Felicia.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Felicia felt that perhaps she could salvage the situation.

She grabs the golfing gadget - there's nothing to wrap it in.

FELICIA

Happy Birthday!

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Some time later. Felicia is a mess. The golfing gadget is in BITS on the floor.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She couldn't. You could say that she handled the affair with dignity...

FLASHBACK WITHIN A FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Felicia tries to SHOVE Chad's present into his arms repeatedly -

FELICIA
Take it - take my last 345 pounds
you parasite.

END FLASHBACK WITHIN A FLASHBACK.

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Felicia is a MESS. We're not sure when she last slept.

CU on laptop screen, mobile screen, tablet screen - poker
games on each one. Every hand is lost.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
She'd rarely had luck with cards.

CU on online poker hand - Felicia goes all in with absolutely
nothing against a three bet. She is called by aces.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But she'd always managed to keep
her head.

Felicia throws her laptop at the wall. It SMASHES.

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Some time later. Felicia is now playing blackjack... And
losing every hand.

FELICIA
Hit me.

Her phone rings. She picks it up. She listens.

FELICIA (CONT'D)
Hit me. No, not you, you idiot.
You, fuck off.

She hangs up.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Stalkers are the worst, aren't
they? And so time consuming.

INT. FELICIA'S APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

The very early morning. We can see the sun. A stack of
different credit cards litter the desk.

FELICIA
I can come back from this.

She grabs her tablet and loads up another poker site.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
She lost another ten thousand
pounds that night.

INT. GROUCHO-ESQUE LONDON BAR - NIGHT

Felicia sits at a table with THADDEUS GOLDBAR, Felicia's
agent (60s, balding, a sweater wearer). She looks like HELL.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The next day. Felicia wasn't
looking her best.

THADDEUS
Felicia, darling, you look
fabulous. Heroin chic is making
such a come back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Lucky for her.

FELICIA
Lucky for me.

THADDEUS
I have the most exciting news.

FELICIA
I hope it's lucrative.

THADDEUS
How much did you lose? You must try
the rooms in Kensington darling.
Anyone who's anyone goes. Russell
goes.

FELICIA
You are truly the worst sponsor.

THADDEUS
Darling, if we must recover, we
must do it in some sort of style.
Otherwise it's just too ghastly...
But to put my agent hat back on-

Thad mimes putting his 'agent's hat on'.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Thad liked to mime things. It was
one of his many flaws.

THADDEUS

You have been offered the very
lucrative position of a judge on
QuickFame.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The ultimate shame. A music
competition. The judge of a music
competition.

FELICIA

How much does it pay?

Thaddeus slides a note across the table.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And just like that, Felicia
Scalding was doing a music
competition.

EXT. BRITISH PUB - NIGHT

Felicia walks home alone. She hears Shivvr and the Quakes
KILLING IT. She smiles.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BRITISH PUB - NIGHT

Felicia stands with the band. They all have drinks - she
doesn't. Grannie keeps nudging the others out of the way so
that he can stand closer to Felicia.

LAYTON

So, who are you?

GRANNIE

What? Guys! She won like ten BRIT
Awards...? Her band 2Tone went
platinum three times...?

SILENCE.

FELICIA

Boys, I'm here to offer you the
opportunity of a lifetime.

BRITT

I'm sorry you're not my type.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

To have a pulse and a vagina was to
be Britt's type.

FELICIA
Do you want to spend the rest of
your life playing to seedy
alcoholics?

From afar, we see TONY push his 7th Fosters away sadly.

GRANNIE
I think we should hear her out
guys.

BRITT
(imitating Grannie)
I think we should hear her out
guys.

Grannie takes Britt's drink away. He nods at Felicia to
continue.

FELICIA
I am the newest judge in the
world's biggest and best music
competition -

DONOVAN
The X-Factor's not back on till
next year.

FELICIA
It's QuickFame.

LAYTON
Don't they usually film the X-
Factor in advance anyway?

BRITT
The live shows are sick.

DONOVAN
They're emotional.

JAI
I like it when people suck.

GRANNIE
Carry on Ms. Scalding - please.

FELICIA
So, as I was saying -

LAYTON
No. Thanks. We don't want to be
part of it.

GRANNIE

You can't make that decision for
everyone Lay.

LAYTON

You're right. But good luck doing
it without a lead singer.