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Friends, family, neighbours — thank you for standing here with us beside Orla’s grave in Rahoon.

I’m Declan, Orla’s younger brother,
the one who leaned on his big sister for straight talk and quiet courage.
To most of us she was Orla Murphy, born 3 January 1972, taken from us on 10 April 2026, just 54.
To many she was “Miss Murphy.”
To us she was Orls.

She arrived first to Bríd and Seamus — who we like to think are minding her now —
then Fiona and I followed, and the tone of the house was set early:
fairness counted,
honesty mattered,
and you showed up on time or you had a very good reason.
Orls never needed to raise her voice to make that clear.

She trained in Mary Immaculate College and came back west to Galway City,
where she taught generations of primary school children how to read stories
and, more importantly, how to love them.
She organised book swaps that felt like treasure hunts,
and trad sessions in the hall where a shaky reel was applauded like the National Concert Hall.
Outside school she volunteered with local literacy groups,
sitting at kitchen tables and in community rooms,
turning letters to words and words to confidence.
If you met one of her pupils years later,
they’d remember a quiet nod, a dry joke, and the feeling that they could actually do it.

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At home, she was the aunt who arrived with scones, a crossword done in pen, and a sensible plan for the rest of the day.
Eoin and Nuala adored her because she took them seriously and still managed to make them laugh.
She'd play the tin whistle at family gatherings,
never showy, always the tune first.
On Sundays she'd roast a chicken as if it were a small ceremony,
and snip herbs from pots she'd coaxed through Galway rain and stray cats.

My own favourite memories are the rainy ones.
Me on the sofa, tin whistle in hand, producing notes that might frighten crows.
Her beside me, patient as a saint, saying only,
"You're grand — again,"
and we'd start from the top.
That was Orls:
steady,
fair,
witty in a way that took the heat out of a moment,
endlessly patient,
even with an off-key brother.

People will miss her good sense.
She had a way of turning a hard day into a list you could actually finish.
A cup of tea appeared,
a plan followed,
and somehow the sky lifted a shade.

She loved Galway because it was itself,
and she loved people the same way.
Minding the neighbour's child as your own wasn't a favour for Orla; it was the point.

We remember her today as a daughter of Tuam,

a teacher of Galway, Create your own personalised speech at eulogyai.ie
a sister to Fiona and me,
and the best of aunts.
She made reading magical,
she kept time by care rather than clocks,
and she left more confidence behind than she ever claimed.

After the prayers,
those who wish might lift a quiet tune here at the graveside.
Keep it simple.
She’d like that.

Goodbye, Orls.
We’ll keep the kettle on,
mind one another properly,
and try to be as fair and as steady as you were.
Thanks for the courage,
for the straight talk,
and for telling me, even when I was miles off, that I was grand.

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