

Entry for 50 Kisses Competition
The London Screenwriters' Festival

No Matter What

by

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INT. OPEN PLAN OFFICE – DAY

CLARE, a not unattractive woman in her late 30s/early 40s, watches as a bunch of roses is delivered to the desk of her neighbouring COLLEAGUE, who responds with obvious surprise and excitement. Clare smiles benignly and goes back to work at her computer.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING – EARLY EVENING

Clare walks out of the office building, passing a MAN greeting a WOMAN who is also exiting the building. The man holds out a bunch of flowers and looks quizzically at the woman. After an extended moment of consideration, the woman shrugs and takes the flowers. They hug and walk away together, talking with easy familiarity.

EXT. BUSY URBAN STREET – EVENING

Clare passes a restaurant excessively decorated for Valentine's Day. Couples are already seated inside at tables for two, chatting and drinking champagne. Two men are standing outside – GARY is holding a blindfold that he has just removed from STEVE's eyes, whose expression turns immediately from hopeful to angry.

STEVE

Here?! This is your surprise?! You told me this was the restaurant where you met **him**. Why would you bring me here??!

Clare walks past, inadvertently grimacing slightly.

INT. SUPERMARKET – EVENING

CLARE is in the queue for self checkout holding a basket with a couple of grocery items. Behind her, two schoolgirls – JODI and AHALYA – are comparing text messages on their phones.

JODI

Kisses don't mean nothin'. My nan puts kisses.

AHALYA

You're just jealous 'cos your nan's the only one putting kisses on you today.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN holding a bottle of champagne approaches the staff member who is monitoring the use of the self checkout.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

Is this the cheapest you've got? You must have cheaper ones than this!

STAFF MEMBER

(glumly)

Whatever's on the shelf's what we got. Cheaper ones prob'ly sold earlier.

The middle-aged man tuts and walks away.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET – EVENING

Clare walks along the pavement, standing aside briefly for A YOUNGISH COUPLE walking past in the other direction with arms linked, dressed for an evening out and chattering intimately to each other. Clare turns up a pathway and reaches into her handbag.

INT. RESIDENTIAL HOUSE, ENTRANCE HALL – EVENING

Clare walks in through the front doorway holding her keys. She scans the pile of mail which includes red/decorated envelopes, extracts one windowed envelope (clearly a bill) and proceeds up the stairs.

INT. FLAT – EVENING

Clare, now in more casual clothes, puts a bowl of pasta on the dining table and sits down. She eats it while leafing casually through a newspaper.

INT. HOSPITAL/NURSING HOME CORRIDOR – NIGHT

Clare, now wearing a coat over her casual clothes, walks along the corridor, clearly knowing where she's going.

INT, HOSPITAL/NURSING HOME ROOM – NIGHT

Clare walks into a room where a FRAIL WOMAN in her 60s is lying asleep in bed. Clare takes off her coat and sits down on the chair beside the bed. She puts her hand gently over the woman's hand where it's lying on the bedcovers. There are occasional noises from outside but the room is peaceful. Clare leans down and lifting the woman's hand slightly, softly kisses it. The woman wakes a little and, seeing Clare, moves her other hand to slowly stroke Clare's hair. She continues as, somewhere outside, romantic music plays and a champagne cork pops. But the room inside is quiet.