

# **GLASNOST**

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A short screenplay for the LSF '50 kisses' competition 2012

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EXT. BENCH OUTSIDE CAFÉ - DUSK

An elderly couple on a bench facing a small café, the old man's arm around the woman as they gaze through the windows.

INT. CAFÉ - DUSK

The café is bustling with students. ANGLE ON: JACK, 18, big eyes, hunched shoulders, alone. He has a book open, but he's not reading it. He's looking over to the counter at:

ALICE, 17, pretty, smiling as she serves a line of customers.

ON JACK'S EYES: swimming in overwhelmed, terrified devotion.

ON ALICE'S HANDS as she makes a coffee. Delicate fingers. TIGHTER ON her lips as she speaks to someone.

JACK (O.S.)  
(quietly, with conviction)  
Today. I'm gonna to do it today.

JACK'S P.O.V.: The busy café is suddenly empty. Empty of sounds, empty of people. Save for Alice, ethereal, serving her (invisible) customer, smiling. She and she alone exists. BACK TO: the loud, crowded room. There's no line anymore. Jack looks around him, summoning the courage. A rugged, good-looking boy looks over. Jack quickly picks up his book and pretends to read again. Clenches his eyes tight shut.

Jack approaches Alice. She smiles, looking down at the book.

ALICE  
Russian literature?

JACK  
Worse. Poetry.

ALICE  
No wonder you always look so bloody serious.

JACK  
Look I know you might think this a bit strange but I'll never forgive meself if I don't ask, so...

ALICE  
Ask me what?

JACK  
Would you... like to go out wi' me?

She smiles. Then laughs. Then GUFFAWS. Jack is crestfallen. Alice shouts to the rest of the café, pointing at Jack.

ALICE  
This guy just asked me out. This guy!

The rest of the café fall about laughing, screeching, cackling, all pointing at Jack as the sounds distort. SNAP BACK TO: Jack's eyes are shut. They open. Everything is normal. Jack looks at the window. Large drops of rain on the steamed glass. CLOSE ON one single drop.

JACK

Okay, I'll do it. When that drop reaches the bottom I'll do it.

The raindrop trickles down, stopping, starting, joining with another raindrop. It slows, then freezes, trapped in time.

ELDERLY JACK (V.O.)

The chance to act rumbled closer like an enormous steel tank, slow, unstoppable. Watch it come and crush me.

The raindrop, heavy with the increased weight, glides down over a horizontal slat and free-falls in slow motion... A loud CRASH. Reveal: Alice has dropped a tray next to JACK, cups smashing on the floor. Adolescent laughter, screams and jeers. Humiliated, Alice starts to clean up the mess.

ELDERLY JACK (V.O.)

The world was awash with the smell of tea. I saw it all through a silver gauze and I - all I knew was that I fell in love when your face flushed red.

Jack stoops down, picking up the broken crockery. Below table-height, time seems to slow down. The noise from the students is all but washed out by an enchanting, otherworldly music.

JACK

Happy it's Friday?

TIGHT ON Alice's lips.

ELDERLY JACK (V.O.)

And your  
'Very'

ALICE

Very.

ELDERLY JACK (V.O.)

Was very warm, very... rare.

Alice looks up at JACK. Their eyes meet. She smiles.

EXT. CAFÉ - DUSK

The old man gently kisses the old woman, stands, helps her to her feet, and they slowly shuffle off down the road.

PAN ACROSS to the café: derelict, boarded up, devoid of life.