

# **Glassy**

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. LAKE - MORNING

1

AGNI 35, ex-academic, now alternative crusty-punk-lite British Asian male, is pottering around near a deserted garbage and graffiti strewn artificial urban lake. The lake is near a flyover. There are traffic sounds in the distance. The weather is cold and grey.

AGNI  
You're finished, you're finished.  
(Whispers.)

He pauses for a second and then picks up something small. He frowns down at the thing (which remains unseen by the audience).

2 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

2

MARLA 35, scientist, vaguely Arabic, Persian or Mediterranean, trendy - jeans, trainers, band teeshirt and BRIGHT GREEN EYES. She has a slight accent. Both she and Agni are in a small room with worn furniture. A few unpacked cardboard moving boxes can be seen in the corners and there is a tiny sad-looking Christmas tree on the coffee table.

AGNI  
You're finished, you're finished.  
(Whispers.)

MARLA  
Uh?

Agni hands her a piece of BRIGHT GREEN SEA GLASS.

AGNI  
I found this.

MARLA  
Beautiful. Like driftwood, only glass. Washed in from god knows where. Evocative, don't you think?

AGNI  
Evocative? Of what?

MARLA  
Far, far, faraway places. You're the poet.

Marla grabs his hand and drops it back in Agni's palm.

MARLA  
It's also a bit radioactive.

He flinches and she giggles.

AGNI  
Hey!

MARLA

Only mildly silly. Where did you find it?

AGNI

Calstone.

MARLA

Bloody hell! It's freezing out there. Look at you. You're actually paler than me now. What were you doing at Calstone?

AGNI

Thinking, trying to take my mind off...

He shrugs.

MARLA

The writing? Oh wait, were you trying to get inspired?

AGNI

The writing? What's there to write about? Since Glastonbury, nothing interesting's happened. Nothing ever happens. Not here. Agni waves vaguely.

MARLA

Sorry.

AGNI

Inspired? I wish I was. Besides, two piece of poetry published since I started. Hardly a glittering literary career. Maybe I should be stacking shelves at the supermarket. Growth area for jobs you know.

MARLA

You need a project that doesn't involve freezing to death. Maybe you should, dare I say it, unpack. Again, how long have you been here? She points at the unopened boxes.

He stalks into the kitchen without replying.

3 EXT. MUDDY FIELD. DAY (PAST)

3

Flashback to Glastonbury Festival. Agni is slightly more conventional looking (he is in transition from being a recently made-redundant academic to a punky-looking poet. Both he and Marla are dirty, happy and stoned as they stagger around gracelessly to the music. On stage is a west African kora player. Agni collides with Marla.

AGNI

Ouch, sorry!

MARLA

Oof! Hey! Oh, hi! Marla gives Agni  
a BIG SMILE.

AGNI

Er. Hi.  
(1 beat.)

Agni replies with a small, awkward (stiff) smile.

Marla leans closer to Agni so that she can be heard more  
clearly over the music.

MARLA

Marla!

AGNI

Um. Agni.

4 INT. TENT - NIGHT (PAST)

4

Agni and Marla are stoned and a bit drunk. They are chatting  
and giggling in a small tent. The space is well-lit by a  
camping lantern. There is some smoke in the air. It feels  
cosy.

AGNI

So... Um... What do you do?

Marla chokes on her can of beer and giggles.

AGNI

Hey!

MARLA

Sorry, sorry. That's like "Do you  
come here often?" Okay, serious for  
a moment. I'm... Da, da daaa! A  
theoretical fizz-fizzy, damnit,  
physicist.

AGNI

O-kay.

MARLA

Maths, I do maths! How about you?

AGNI

I'm doing just fine thanks.  
(Slurs.)  
They both burst into laughter.

MARLA

No!  
(Shouts.)  
What do you do?

AGNI  
You'd never believe me.

MARLA  
You'd be surprised.

AGNI  
What?

MARLA  
Nothing. Go on.

AGNI  
I'm a mus-muso-muss-muss.

MARLA  
A "muss-muss"? More laughter.

AGNI  
I am, I was a museum manager, a  
curator.  
(Slowly, deliberately.)

MARLA  
Wow, that actually sounds  
interesting.

AGNI  
Was, was.

MARLA  
Was?

AGNI  
Oh yeah, I was fired a few months  
ago.

MARLA  
Oh dear. I'm sorry.

AGNI  
No problem.

MARLA  
Did they catch you snogging a  
mummy?

Marla giggles and Agni smiles.

AGNI  
No. Budgets. They closed the  
museum.

MARLA  
Sorry.

AGNI  
'Sokay.

MARLA

What kind of museum was it?

AGNI

Sudfield University Museum of  
Archaeology.

MARLA

Sod-?

AGNI

Sud- no, actually you're right.  
Sod's the right word. Sodfield!  
Where was I?

MARLA

You were telling me about your  
museum - Sud-or-Sodfield...

AGNI

'Xactly, that was the problem. It  
was a nowhere university. Heh, heh,  
heh - Sodfield University of  
Nowhere and No Money Museum.

MARLA

What kind of stuff did you have in  
the museum.

AGNI

Actually pretty old. Neolithic,  
Chalcolithic...

MARLA

Neolithic, I've heard of, that's  
new stone age isn't it? But  
Chalcolithic?

AGNI

It's the cross-over point when we  
moved from stone to copper. It's  
not usually associated with British  
finds, except... Well in our-my  
collection.

MARLA

Hey, have you been to the Brit-

AGNI

British Museum? Those bastards!  
Where do you think my collection  
ended up when they closed my  
museum?

MARLA

Wait, I have an idea. Let's have a  
toast.

She raises her can and Agni follows suit.

MARLA  
British Museum bastards!

AGNI  
British Museum bastards!

The smack their cans together, beer goes everywhere and they collapse laughing.

5 INT. TENT - NIGHT (PAST)

5

When we resume Agni and Marla are talking more quietly, almost conspiratorially.

MARLA  
But if you could do anything?

AGNI  
Anything?

MARLA  
Anything.

AGNI  
Something arty.

MARLA  
What?

AGNI  
Literature... Poetry. I would write poetry.

MARLA  
Huh. What kind?

AGNI  
Coleridge.. Stoned weirdo poetry.

MARLA  
We're stoned right now.

AGNI  
True, but I don't think Samuel Taylor Coleridge spent much time in a tent.

MARLA  
Or Glastonbury!

The quiet is broken for a moment as they both shout: Glastonbury! They both laugh again.

MARLA  
No, but seriously, if you could do anything...

AGNI  
 Seriously, it really would be  
 poetry. I used to write as a hobby.

MARLA  
 Okay.

AGNI  
 Wasn't that bad either, some of it  
 was published. But that was a long  
 time ago.

MARLA  
 Hmm.

AGNI  
 Hmm?

MARLA  
 We'll have to see what we can do  
 about that.

AGNI  
 What do you mean.

MARLA  
 Wait and see. Wait and see. Now  
 drink up!

6 INT. STAGE - NIGHT (PAST)

6

Agni and Marla are in the wings of a small outdoor stage.  
 There's a sign on stage that says "Poetry Slam". Agni is  
 waiting to go next.

MARLA  
 Go on, you can do it.

AGNI  
 Are you sure?

MARLA  
 Yes.

AGNI  
 Maybe...

MARLA  
 Go on!

Marla gives him a shove and Agni stumbles to the centre of  
 the stage and stands behind a mic. There's a smattering of  
 subdued applause. He fiddles with some papers.

AGNI  
 Thanks, thanks. Um, I call this one  
 "The Thin Veil".



7 INT. TENT - NIGHT (PAST)

7

After the reading, they are back in the tent. They are sitting comfortably against a big pile of sleeping bags. It is their last night at Glastonbury. They are talking - sober this time.

MARLA  
That went really well.

AGNI  
You are surprised?

MARLA  
Actually no.  
(Quietly.)

AGNI  
Um, well, it could have gone worse.  
Thanks for pushing me out... I  
don't think I could have done it on  
my own.

MARLA  
Maybe you could.

AGNI  
No, I'm pretty sure I have you to  
thank for kicking me out there.  
Marla looks down for a moment.

MARLA  
Da nada.

AGNI  
Marla?

MARLA  
Hmm?

AGNI  
Where are you from?

MARLA  
Oh, lots of places. Some quite far,  
quite...

AGNI  
No, I meant here, where do you  
live? In the UK, I mean?

MARLA  
I am, how do you say it? "Between  
places". I'm renting some hovel in  
Cambridge. It's a pain.

AGNI  
A pain?

MARLA

A pain. I work on two projects - one in Cambridge, the other in Oxford. I am literally an Oxbridge girl. But travel is... Pants.

AGNI

Um.

MARLA

What?

AGNI

Live with me.

MARLA

Whoa!

Agni holds up his hands.

AGNI

No, no, I meant I need a room-mate to help with the rent. You see where I live is half-way between Oxford and Cambridge. It would be...

MARLA

...Convenient? Oh, well, we'll see. You took me by sunrise.

AGNI

It was just a thought.

MARLA

No it wasn't.

AGNI

No it wasn't.

Agni looks away for a moment and then turns back.

AGNI

Smooth.

Marla snorts with laughter. She reaches up to her neck, removes the sea-glass pendant and holds it out to him.

MARLA

Here, this is for you. Agni makes no move at all.

AGNI

(1 beat.)

Um.

MARLA

Relax it doesn't mean we're married!

AGNI

Um.

MARLA

I saw you looking at it. It's just a present. You English!

She places it gently in his hand and he puts it in his pocket. She half-smiles (sad).

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

8

Back to present and a few minutes after we first left them. Marla is buzzing round the living room, Agni in the kitchen from which loud tea-making noises issue - banging mugs etc.

AGNI (O.S.)

One lump or two?

MARLA

Hmm? Two.

Marla searches round for her cigarettes and finds them. Agni hands Marla a mug.

AGNI

Peace offering.

(1 beat)

Sugar, fags? Don't you care?

MARLA

Oh, life's too long-er-short? I always get that mixed up. Anyway, forget that and listen. Why don't you come to Cambridge? There's a Christmas do. You can be my plus one.

AGNI

Further east. I hate East Anglia, next thing you know we'll be in the Wash.

MARLA

Or Oxford? There's one there two.

AGNI

West? What then? Stuck up some mountain in rural Wales?

MARLA

I think your geography might be a bit off. You really are becoming a grumpy, old... Never happy.

(Trails off quietly.)

AGNI

Do I have...

MARLA

Yes you do! You can't stew forever.

AGNI

Marla... Fine, fine, I'll come.

MARLA

Great!

AGNI

Humph.

(1 beat.)

MARLA

Agni?

AGNI

What?

MARLA

You didn't say, Oxford or Cambridge? Your choice.

AGNI

Well, I've never been to Oxford.

MARLA

Oxford it is! Phew you really make this hard work.

AGNI

I know. Sorry.

MARLA

By the way, that sea glass you found is a bit weird, you know?

AGNI

Why? Isn't that just the sort of junk you'd find around Calstone?

MARLA

No, I mean the weathering.

AGNI

Weathering yeah...

MARLA

I used to live by the seaside. Did, I ever tell you that? Bottles would wash up and I'd wonder what exotic places they came from. One day I swore I would visit those places.

(1 beat.)

I wished so hard that I could visit those faraway places.

(1 beat.)

Marla shakes her head.

AGNI

And...

MARLA

And...?

AGNI

The point being about the weirdness.

MARLA

The weirdness? Oh, the weirdness being - you only find glass like this by the sea. It requires the mechanical action of tide, sea, pebbles and sand. Agni sighs.

AGNI

I know this. So?

MARLA

So how does that happen in a land locked lake?

AGNI

Obvious. It's jewellery or a souvenir. Someone must have dropped it.

MARLA

"Must have"? What kind of Indiana Jones museum curator are you?

AGNI

One from a small museum at a lesser tin-pot red-brick uni. Look, maybe it was wrapped in some of that silver wire? Like they do with all that fancy New Age crystal crap they were selling at Glastonbury. I might go back, see if I can find some more.

MARLA

Well, while you avoid working on your poetry, I'm off to Cambridge.

AGNI

Uh?

MARLA

Work. See you tonight. And wrap up if you go back to Gallstone.

She leaves.

AGNI

Calstone!

(MORE)

AGNI (cont'd)  
 (Shouts.)  
 Calstone.  
 (Quietly.)  
 Calstone.  
 (Whispers.)

9 EXT. LAKE - DAY

9

WIDE-ANGLE ENCOMPASSING THE LAKE, TIGHTENING TO A CLOSE-UP OF AGNI'S SLACK, EXPRESSIONLESS FACE.

AGNI  
 You're finished, you're finished.

10 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

10

Agni and Marla are on the sofa with bowls of soup on the coffee table.

MARLA  
 Did you find any more bits of pretty glass?

AGNI  
 No.

MARLA  
 Well, it got you out, I suppose that's something.

AGNI  
 Ugh.  
 (Grunts.)

MARLA  
 Hey, half-empty guy, have some soup!

AGNI  
 Thanks. TV stopped working.

MARLA  
 What? Oh god, I suppose that means we'll have to... Chat.  
 (Laughs.)  
 Seriously though, are you going to carry on with the poetry or get a job? I don't want my share of the rent creeping up, or find us both evicted.

AGNI  
 I know, I know.

MARLA  
 If you're interested I could ask around at the uni.

AGNI  
Academic nepotism?

MARLA  
Of course.  
(Winks.)

AGNI  
Then, of course yes, by all means  
yes. Yes.

MARLA  
So that's a yes then.  
(Giggles.)  
Okay, I'll see what I can do.

AGNI  
I think I need a change, academic  
to weirdo poet seemed like a great  
idea at the time, but now...

MARLA  
...your poetry is dark, depressing  
and makes people want to kill  
themselves?

AGNI  
I was going to say that I don't  
know what possessed me at the time.  
I mean poetry?

MARLA  
It's what you wanted.  
(Whispers.)

AGNI  
And, actually, ok, yes, so maybe it  
is a bit depressing too, and maybe  
I'm sick of it.  
(1 beat.)  
Marla looks down.

MARLA  
I know, I know.  
(Quietly.)

AGNI  
You know, you always seem to know  
exactly what I'm thinking. What I  
want.

Touches his shoulder.

MARLA  
Telepathy. Runs in the family.  
(Brightly.)

AGNI  
Er?

MARLA

Or I just read your so obviously cheerful disposition. Honestly, you've been walking round looking doomed - it isn't that hard reading you.

Marla looks at her watch.

MARLA

Well, it's getting round that time.

11 INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

11

Agni and Marla are buckling up in her car.

AGNI

Are you sure you want to take your car?

MARLA

I have to stay sober and butter up the faculty. Contracts to renew and all that.

AGNI

Thank god, I can drink.

MARLA

Yes, you probably should. It might cheer you up.

Agni flips down the passenger-side visor mirror and stares expressionlessly at this face.

AGNI

Let's go.

12 INT. FUNCTION ROOM

12

The Christmas party is in full swing.

MARLA

Don't look so glum, chum. There's wine. Go and have some.

AGNI

It's in a box. That one's actually called "Plonk". Look, you can see, it's right there on the side of it.

MARLA

Since when were you a wine snob?

Agni heads over to the the wine, while Marla waves and heads over to a nerdy looking group of her colleagues. Agni finds a spot not far from Marla, sips his wine and watches her.



MARLA

If I told you how I did it, you  
wouldn't need me! Laughter from  
the group.

Marla then goes to talk to an well-dressed, older and male.  
The conversation is intent and the man touches and strokes  
her arm. Marla returns to Agni.

MARLA

Just keeping the troops in-line.

AGNI

That bloke was all over you.

MARLA

Jealous?

AGNI

Wha- no, I mean...  
(1 beat.)  
Agni frowns.

AGNI

I'm not sure.  
(Quietly.)

MARLA

Come on, let's get something to  
eat. I'm hanking.

13 INT. PUBLIC HOUSE. NIGHT

13

Agni and Marla are seated with coffee at a corner table.

AGNI

They like you.

MARLA

People like me. You like me.

AGNI

What exactly do you do for them?

MARLA

It's pretty complicated.

AGNI

Oh, thanks!

MARLA

I'm helping them re-purpose an old  
cyclotron.

AGNI

Er?

MARLA

I told you, but since you asked -  
I'm using maths to tweak the energy  
output of the clunky old thing.  
Turn it into a mini LHC.

AGNI

Why?

MARLA

You really want to know?

AGNI

Atom smashing? Some sub-atomic  
particle thingy.

MARLA

Basically, but that isn't the  
reason. We're playing with atomic  
fusion. On a tiny-scale. More of a  
simulated model.

AGNI

Sounds complicated. How did you get  
the job?

MARLA

Hm. Okay, look, you really want to  
know?

AGNI

Yes, of course.

MARLA

I just pitched up one day and was  
lucky enough to find that they  
really needed my help. Happens to  
me a lot. Right place, right time.  
You should know.

AGNI

What do you mean?

MARLA

Look how we met. Right place, right  
time to encourage you. That's me.  
I'm helpful.

AGNI

Hmm.

MARLA

Hmm?

AGNI

I thought you were going to mention  
quantum states.

MARLA

What have you been reading?

AGNI

There was something in the Guardian.

MARLA

Of course there was, there always is.

AGNI

The reporter said "at quantum states, reality bends" which is kind of funny.

A tourist group apologises for interrupting and takes some photographs over Agni and Marla's heads.

AGNI

Didn't you see it? The photo on the wall behind us.

MARLA

The pic of some old guys. You're rambling. Did you drink that entire box?

AGNI

This place. You don't recognise it do you?

Marla shakes her head.

AGNI

It's the Eagle and Child, it's where the Inklings met.

MARLA

Inky-who?

AGNI

Inklings. J.R.R. Tolkien? C.S.Lewis? A bunch of fusty old academics who wrote all this, fantastic-fantasy-er-fantastical magic stuff. Magic's a bit like quantum theory isn't it? Except without the unicorns.

MARLA

Unicorns. Typical. That's what everyone who isn't a physicist thinks. We're not talking about fairies. We're talking about much, much tinier things.

AGNI

Fairies?

MARLA  
Forget the fairies! Stupid little  
Tinker-Bells anyway.

AGNI  
Fine, I wish I never asked.

MARLA  
Your wish is my command.

Marla snorts with laughter.

MARLA  
Change of subject.

AGNI  
Sure.

MARLA  
I never asked you before, but what  
does "Agni" mean.

AGNI  
"Agni"? Well, my mother told me it  
was the name of a fire god. Spirit.  
Something. Why?

MARLA  
Fire spirit?

She stares at him hard.

MARLA  
(1 beat)  
Finish your coffee.

AGNI  
I have.

MARLA  
What?

AGNI  
I have finished my coffee.

Marla frowns and fidgets.

AGNI  
Y'okay?  
(Slurs.)

MARLA  
Hm. Yes, yes.

AGNI  
'Sgood.  
(Slurs.)

MARLA

I think you need more coffee. One  
for the road?

Without waiting for an answer, she rises, turns and walks to the bar; each step accompanied by the graceful sway of her hips. Agni stares entranced as he watches her move.

14 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING 14

The room is empty. Agni finds a note weighed down with the piece of sea glass. He reads from the note.

AGNI

"Visiting friends in London. Back  
later. Marla."

Agni, frowning, turns the sea glass piece over in his hands.

15 EXT. LAKE - MORNING 15

AGNI

You're finished, you're finished.

16 EXT. MUDDY FIELD. DAY (PAST) 16

Flash-back to when Agni first met Marla at Glastonbury. They have just bumped into each other. But this time the CAMERA CLOSES on the same piece of BRIGHT GREEN SEA GLASS which is wrapped in silver wire and is part of a necklace tied around Marla's neck. The BRIGHT GREEN SEA pendant matches her BRIGHT GREEN EYES exactly.

17 EXT. LAKE - MORNING (PAST) 17

Flash-back to just before Agni first finds the sea glass at the lake. Agni takes the piece from his pocket and hurls it to the ground. (1 beat.) He straightens, stiffens and looks ahead in a rigid robotic manner. (1 beat.) He bends and picks up the sea glass. He looks at it wide-eyed. (1 beat.) He places the sea glass back in his pocket and walks away.

18 EXT. LAKE - MORNING 18

AGNI

It was yours. It was yours all  
along.

(1 beat.)

It was you who pushed me out on  
stage. It was you who came to live  
with me when I asked.

(1 beat.)

I must have known. Deep down.

(1 beat.)

I'm finished, I'm finished.

Agni fishes in his pocket, takes out the piece of sea glass and drops it. Agni giggles.

AGNI  
 Not fairies.  
 (1 beat.)  
 Agni giggles again.

The giggle freezes into a fixed, blank grin.

AGNI  
 Glassy.  
 (1 beat.)

AGNI  
 Plonk.

Agni suddenly jumps into the lake.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. LAKE - MORNING

19

Marla, wearing mirrored sunglasses, is watching Agni from a distance. She looks away when he disappears under the water.

MARLA  
 I'm so sorry. I liked you, I really  
 liked you and that doesn't happen  
 often, but it's what you wanted.  
 (3 beats.)

A small boy approaches, he has something hidden in his hands.

MARLA  
 Hello sweetie, what have you got  
 there?

The boy shows her.

MARLA  
 Is it the very last piece of my  
 shiny bottle?

The boy shrugs and tries to hand it to her.

MARLA  
 No, you keep it. It's a present.

The boy frowns at her, looks at down at the sea glass in his hand and then up at her again.

MARLA  
 Just keep it safe for me.

The boy puts the sea glass into his pocket. Marla crouches down in front of him, removes her sunglasses...

REVEALING UNNATURAL BRIGHT GREEN EYES (FX)

, and smiles. She places her hands on his shoulders and looks into his eyes.

MARLA

My name is Marla and I'm going to  
make all your wishes come true.  
(1 beat.)

She looks away.

MARLA

(1 beat.)  
We all get what we wish for. In the  
end.  
(Quietly.)

FADE OUT.

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