

KISSING FISH

Screenplay

By

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FADE IN:

1.EXT. A GOLD COAST BEACH, EARLY MORNING - DAY

TITLE KISSING FISH comes on along a wide expanse of ocean.

A FEW PEOPLE walk along the beach. Follow the beach and the ocean up towards a rocky headland. CROWE (man in his early 40s,) stands alone fishing near the rocks.

Close by Crowe the figure of JACK (man in his 50s, unshaven) lies asleep on his stomach in the sand. He is wearing old tattered clothes, and he is covered in sand.

A close up of Jack's face on the side in the sand.

Crowe gets a bite and starts to reel in his catch. It is a medium size fish. He grabs it and quickly takes the hook out of its mouth. He kisses the fish then throws it back out to sea.

Crowe puts some more bait on his hook and casts his line out to sea.

Jack moans and rolls over onto his back. He is clutching an empty bottle of Jack Daniels in his hand. He shakes his head and rubs his eyes against the bright light of day.

JACK

(to himself in loud voice)
Can't a man get a fuckin' decent
sleep?

2.EXT. A GOLD COAST BEACH, MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Crowe looks over towards Jack, shakes his head and keeps fishing.

Jack stumbles to his feet and dusts the sand from his clothes. He walks over towards Crowe and stands swaying as he watches him fishing.

Crowe reels in another fish. Takes the hook out of its mouth, kisses it and throws it out to sea.

Jack blinks his eyes in astonishment and shakes his head.

JACK
(yelling at Crowe)
What are ya! Some kind of guru
or Jesus freak?
(Burp)
Thinkin' ya one of the apostles
fishin' all the time?

Crowe looks over and smiles at Jack.

CROWE
Not feeling too good are you
mate?

JACK
betta than some (hiccup)
friggin' idiot standin' there
kissin' bloody fish.

Crowe ignores Jack and keeps fishing.

3.EXT. A GOLD COAST BEACH, MORNING - CONTINUOUS

The ocean is shimmering with sunlight. Waves are crashing on the rocks near Crowe with a view of the rocky headland behind.

Jack staggers over some rocks and sits down close to Crowe.

CROWE
So, what's your name mate?

JACK
Just call me Jack.
Like me best mate 'ere.

Jack rubs the bottle of Jack Daniels and grins.

Crowe reels his fishing line in and the bait has gone. He puts his fishing rod down and sits beside Jack. Crowe holds out his hand, they shake hands.

CROWE

Pleased to meet you Jack. My Name's Jim Crowe.

JACK

So, why do ya catch 'em and throw 'em back? (hiccup)
What makes ya wanna kiss the friggin' smelly things?

CROWE

(twitching his nose)
You don't smell too bloody good yourself you know!

Jack smooths his hair back and glares at Crowe.

JACK

Well! Why do ya do it?

CROWE

I get great pleasure from fishing. So, I thank them for allowing me to catch them.

(beat)

I don't want to kill them, and eat them... So I let them go.

Jack scratches his head.

JACK

Crowe, you are crazy!

CROWE

Why? We have been given the superior intelligence to catch them. They don't catch us!

JACK

No bloody kiddin'!

4.EXT. A GOLD COAST BEACH, MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Crowe looks out to sea and watches the waves are rolling into shore.

CROWE

Sometimes when we love something
we just have to let it go.

JACK

But ya can't compare fish to
People. I hate fish, don't eat
'em, so why would I wanna kiss the
buggers?

Crowe turns around and faces Jack.

CROWE

So..your greatest love is the
bottle of Jack. Hey, Jack?

Jack looks at Crowe and screws up his face.

JACK

No. I friggin' hate it.

Jack turns his face away and looks out to sea.

JACK (cont'd)

My greatest love was my wife.

(beat)

But.. I'm so lonely after she died.
It was cancer..

(beat)

And, my only daughter is a heroin
Addict.

Jack puts his hand up to his face and stares at the sand.

CROWE

We can only do the best we can
for our children. Ultimately they
have to walk their own path.

JACK

I've nothin' ta live for, no
friends, no family.
I tried everything to help her,

Got her into re-hab. Didn't last.
She's only twenty.. my Mandy.
(beat)
There's nothin' I can do to help
My daughter.

Crowe places a hand on Jack's shoulder.

CROWE
Maybe you can't, but you
can help yourself.

Jack pushes Crow's hand from his shoulder and yells at
him.

JACK
What! Through fuckin' kissin'
fish?

CROWE
No, through waking up sober
to watch your first sunrise.

Jack sways from side to side laughing.

JACK
Haaa! Haaa! Haaaa!
Mate, I'm a nightrise, not a
bloody sunrise.

Jack gets up and starts to walk away. He stops and looks
back at Crowe.

JACK (Cont'd)
I tried alcoholics anonymous.
The twelve step program's no good,
never worked fa me.

Crowe stands up and walks over to his fishing rod, picks
it up and looks over to Jack.

CROWE
Your first step should be
meeting me down here tomorrow
at sunrise. Sober.

(Beat)
I have a spare rod, I'll bring
it down for you. Say 5:am?

Jack laughs, then staggers a little as he walks away.

JACK
No friggin' way!

5.EXT. GOLD COAST BEACH - DAY

The High rise buildings of Surfers Paradise are looming in the distance. PEOPLE are walking along the beach and some are swimming.

Jack walks past people who look at him strangely.

Jack takes no notice and continues walking up the beach.

A FISHERMAN is standing close to the shore with his rod.

Jack swaggers up to him.

JACK
Hey, mate! When ya catch the fish
do ya kiss 'em?

The fisherman gives Jack an incredible look.

FISHERMAN
Why would I kiss a bloody fish
You wacko!
I catch 'em to eat 'em.

Jack laughs and continues to walk up the beach.
He turns left and walks up towards the beach road.

6.EXT. AN OLDER STYLE HOUSE - DAY

The house is in need of some repair; with a high timber fence with a mailbox near the gate. The grass hasn't been cut and the front garden is overgrown.

Jack goes to the mailbox and takes out a letter. On the back is written the name Mandy. Close up of name Mandy.

Jack opens the front door and walks inside.

7.INT. INSIDE THE OLD HOUSE - CONTINUATION

The living room is a mess with papers and beer cans and two empty bottles of Jack Daniels on the floor. Clothes are tossed over the furniture.

Jack walks over to a sideboard and looks at a photo of his wife and daughter. He looks down at the letter in his hand. Jack picks up the photo and kisses it, he holds it close to his heart and starts to cry. Tears roll down his face.

Jack puts the photo down. He then walks over to a cabinet that contains several bottles of vodka and Jack Daniels. He picks up a bottle of Jack Daniels and starts to unscrew it. He stops.

Jack puts the bottle down and looks at the letter. He opens it. It is only one page. Written in handwriting.

Close up of the letter.

FEMALE (V.O.)

Dear Daddy,. I'm dying.. I can't
beat this demon inside of me.
Please, please promise me that
you will live. Be strong Daddy,
live for me, and watch all the
beautiful sunrises that I have
never seen.
I love you.. Mandy.

Tears stream down Jack's face as he holds the letter tight in his hand.

Jack picks up the bottle of Jack Daniels and throws it at the wall.

The bottle smashes in pieces.

8.EXT. GOLD COAST BEACH - SUNRISE

The sun rises over the ocean. It is a glorious sight as it slowly rises.

The long stretch of beach is mostly deserted.

Looking towards the rocks at the end of the beach there are two men fishing.

Closer up and the men are Crowe and Jack. Jack is dressed in nice clean clothes; he wears a cap on his head.

Jack gets a bite on his line and reels in the fish. He takes the hook out of the fish's mouth and kisses it. He looks at the fish and smiles, a wide-open smile. He kisses the fish again.

JACK(to the fish)
That's for you Mandy.

Jack gently places the fish back into the sea.

Crowe looks at Jack and smiles.

FADE OUT.