

Newcastle University e-prints

Date deposited: 8th April 2010

Version of file: Author final, plot synopsis

Peer Review Status: Peer Reviewed

Citation for published item:

Tina Gharavi. [Ali in Wonderland](#). UK:Tunnel Productions,2010.Feature-Length Screenplay & Feature Film (in Development)

Further information on publisher website:

Publishers copyright statement:

Use Policy:

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not for profit purposes provided that:

- A full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- A link is made to the metadata record in Newcastle E-prints
- The full text is not changed in any way.

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

**Robinson Library, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne.
NE1 7RU. Tel. 0191 222 6000**

When the world makes no sense, where can anyone begin to live?

Ali in Wonderland Synopsis

Nasrine, 16, is picked up by the Iranian police riding a motorcycle with a boy. Her family desperate to find her are inconsolable. Once bribes are paid, her Dad decides to send her and her older brother, Ali, 19, to the UK. Nasrine is defiant- she wants to stay; however, the decision is out of her hands. Nasrine wants to find herself and to become a journalist, against her fathers will. Ali resents being sent away from his comfortable life. During the journey, Nasrine begins to understand now she is free, now she can have an adventure. Ali doesn't respond and continues to be resentful.

In England, life is not what they expected. They are patronized, treated with hostility, and have a hard time making things work. Nasrine goes to school and Ali finds black market work. Nasrine meets Nicole, a unique tour-de-force from the travellers community. Like her, they are misfits. Ali goes to work in a carwash and eventually a pizza shop and meets men from a variety of backgrounds. Ali tries to assert control over Nasrine, but he is incapable of being strong. Nasrine copes better- she is finding her strength and finding out who she is. Both are on their journey to 'find themselves'. Nasrine falls for Nicole's older brother, a blue-eyed charmer and Ali meets Tommy. Ali is finding it increasingly difficult to cope and continues denying his sexuality. The parents are set to come to the UK, however, this looks uncertain as 9/11 has now happened. Now with relative freedom, Nasrine and Ali both explore their new-found relationships as they are relatively free in the West. They struggle to deal with each other's new personas when Ali is tragically murdered.

In the end, Nasrine must decide her own fate- to stay and make her own life or return to Iran where surely she will lose her chance to decide her own future. At the end of the film, Nasrine now much stronger, ventures into a life which is very much in her hands.

About the film

Nasrine could be, and is, any teenager. Events throw her world into revolution as circumstances beyond her control change her life forever. In this coming of age story we meet a young woman who is doing her best to understand herself, find a better world, and to deal with the consequences of the politics around her. Through an uncompromising intimate portrait which recalls such films as *400 Blows* (Truffaut, 1959), Kiarostami's *Under the Cherry Tree*, *Rosetta* (Dardenne Brothers, 1999), and *Whale Rider* (Caro, 2002) we follow Nasrine as she finds out who she is and what she wants from life. The drama deals with conflict from both within the family dynamic and the clash of ideology and cultural identity. Nasrine seeks to gain her own independence and self-determination while Ali begins to discover his sexuality, before a tragic event puts the family's struggles in even greater focus. This is a rite of passage story set in the modern asylum seeker experience.

Using innovative improvisation techniques (borrowing heavily from documentary) to further develop the story, this fresh-faced drama explores universal themes in a powerfully engaging work. Through a series of oblique love stories (her father, a crush, first love, her brother, unrequited love, illicit love to true love). *Wonderland* explores issues of the heart (home, family, and love) and narrates a new coming-of-age story.

The project has recently been developed through a unique interactive platform. The production envisages the distribution of this film (alongside conventional festival and cinema distribution) to be part of an on-line interactive education tool aimed at teachers who are required to deliver Key Stage 3 Citizenship lessons as part of the National Curriculum. This will ensure there is a wide distribution for the project with a specific target audience, as well as maximising its' marketing potential and, ultimately, delivering impact