

10,000 CIGARETTES

by ALEX BROUN

CHARACTERS

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 2

GLORIA 3

GLORIA 4

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10,000 CIGARETTES

[SPOTLIGHT ON GLORIA 1.]

GLORIA 1

49, 50, 51 -

[SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON GLORIA 2.]

GLORIA 1 & 2

[JOINING IN]

52, 53, 54 -

[SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON GLORIA 3.]

GLORIA 1, 2 & 3

[JOINING IN]

55, 56, 57 -

[SPOTLIGHT COMES UP ON GLORIA 4.]

GLORIA 1, 2, 3 & 4

[JOINING IN]

58, 59, 60!

GLORIA 2

Ta dah!

[THEY ALL LIGHT CIGARETTES, TAKE A LONG DRAG. SIGH.]

GLORIA 1

So this guy at the funeral –

GLORIA 4

Guy is too kind –

GLORIA 2

This jerk –

GLORIA 1

This jerk reckons that I can't go one minute

GLORIA 4

Without lighting a cigarette.

One minute! GLORIA 3

Ha. Showed him. GLORIA 2

So time to celebrate ... GLORIA 1
*[THEY ALL TAKE ANOTHER DRAG OF THEIR CIGARETTES.
EXHALE. SIGH.]*

That is one of the great things about – GLORIA 2

the magic white cylinder. GLORIA 4

It’s perfect for any occasion. GLORIA 3

“Talking with friends” – GLORIA 1

the chat cigarette. GLORIA 2

“Out with colleagues” – GLORIA 3

the social cigarette. GLORIA 4

“Having a few drinks” – GLORIA 2

the boozy cigarette. GLORIA 1

“Having a few more drinks” – GLORIA 2

the boozier cigarette. GLORIA 3

GLORIA 1
“Taking a quick break from work” –

GLORIA 4
the sidewalk cigarette.

GLORIA 2
Not “smoko” or “fag break”

GLORIA 3
– sidewalk cigarette.

GLORIA 1
Much more style –

GLORIA 4
which is what cigarettes are all about –

GLORIA 1
S –

GLORIA 2
t –

GLORIA 3
y –

GLORIA 1
l –

GLORIA 4
e.

ALL
Style.

GLORIA 1
“What a great meal. I’m stuffed” –

GLORIA 4
the apres dinner cigarette.

GLORIA 3

Cigarettes always taste better after an excellent dinner –

GLORIA 2

That is if it's possible for cigarettes to taste better than they already do.

GLORIA 3

“Nothing happening”

GLORIA 1

– the bored cigarette.

GLORIA 2

“Impressing the new man” –

GLORIA 4

the looking cool cigarette.

GLORIA 3

“Breaking up with the new man” –

GLORIA 1

the broken hearted cigarette.

GLORIA 4

“Out for a country drive”

GLORIA 3

– the cruise cigarette.

GLORIA 2

“Pack of Holiday Slims thanks.”

GLORIA 1

The cheap cigarette.

GLORIA 3

“I love you, you're my best friend”

GLORIA 4

– the shared cigarette.

GLORIA 1

“I'm broke and this is my last one” –

GLORIA 2
the definitely not shared cigarette.

GLORIA 4
“Relaxing in the pergola” –

GLORIA 1
the out door cigarette.

GLORIA 3
Isn't it interesting how many times smoking is linked with relaxing here ?

GLORIA 2
“My parents don't know I smoke”

GLORIA 1
– the illicit cigarette.

GLORIA 4
“On a yacht” –

GLORIA 3
the wind and waves cigarette.

GLORIA 4
“On a plane” –

GLORIA 1
the dangerous cigarette.

GLORIA 4
“In a petrol station” –

GLORIA 2
the very dangerous cigarette.

GLORIA 4
I don't like the term

GLORIA 2
fag,

ciggie, GLORIA 3

smoke. I prefer to call them by their full name – GLORIA 1

cigarette. ALL

Derived from the fact that it is a smaller version of its antecedent – GLORIA 3

Anti – who? GLORIA 2

Cedent. GLORIA 3

Ancestor. GLORIA 4

Which was? GLORIA 2

The cigar. GLORIA 1

But whereas cigars are GLORIA 4

big, GLORIA 1

heavy GLORIA 2

awkward. GLORIA 3

The cigarette is – GLORIA 4

dainty,	GLORIA 1
elegant,	GLORIA 2
convenient	GLORIA 3
and fits perfectly between my	GLORIA 4
dainty,	GLORIA 1
elegant	GLORIA 2
conveniently-well-shaped-for-holding-a-cigarette	GLORIA 3
fingers.	GLORIA 4
I remember my first cigarette. That moment of –	GLORIA 1
Realisation	GLORIA 3
Inhalation	GLORIA 4
Excitation.	GLORIA 2
An awakening of	GLORIA 1
Spirit	GLORIA 4

Awareness.	GLORIA 3
Lungs	GLORIA 2
An Epiphany. I used to hide around the corner and watch him	GLORIA 1
Standing on the verandah,	GLORIA 2
Leaning in the doorway,	GLORIA 3
Hair slicked back –	GLORIA 4
Dark blue singlet	GLORIA 1
And gripped in his	GLORIA 2
Strong tanned fingers	GLORIA 3
The constant flickering glow.	GLORIA 4
I pinched one of his	GLORIA 1
Kents	GLORIA 2
From the crush top pack	GLORIA 3
on the kitchen table	GLORIA 4

Lit it on the stove

GLORIA 1

And after just one puff –

GLORIA 2

I knew

GLORIA 4

Between coughs

GLORIA 3

I had discovered a secret

GLORIA 1

friend

GLORIA 3

conspirator

GLORIA 2

lover

GLORIA 4

God.

GLORIA 3

[BEAT.]

You can also just call them by their brand.

GLORIA 1

That is also acceptable,

GLORIA 4

As in?

GLORIA 2

“Hand me a Lucky Strike.”

GLORIA 1

“Care for a Dunhill.”

GLORIA 3

GLORIA 2
“Got any Camels.”

GLORIA 4
“Would you care to share a Citane?”

GLORIA 1
Which brings us to another of the great attractions of cigarettes.

GLORIA 3
Their international –

GLORIA 2
flavour.

GLORIA 1
Cigarettes from all over the world –

GLORIA 2
many of which I have tried

GLORIA 4
one time or another.

GLORIA 4
English brands –

GLORIA 2
Dunhill,

GLORIA 1
Benson & Hedges,

GLORIA 3
Subtle

GLORIA 2
Smooth

GLORIA 4
Rich

And Classic.	GLORIA 1
Parliament –	GLORIA 3
Very classy.	GLORIA 2
Barclay,	GLORIA 4
Bond Street;	GLORIA 3
American Brands –	GLORIA 1
Salem,	GLORIA 2
Winston,	GLORIA 3
L & M,	GLORIA 4
LA Lights,	GLORIA 2
West Coast	GLORIA 1
Mustang Filters	GLORIA 3
East Coast	GLORIA 1
Kool,	GLORIA 4

Kent,	GLORIA 2
The family blend	GLORIA 3
Newport,	GLORIA 1
Winchester.	GLORIA 4
The heavyweights –	GLORIA 2
Philip Morris,	GLORIA 3
Rothmans;	GLORIA 4
Asian Brands –	GLORIA 1
Eve 120's,	GLORIA 4
Djarum Filter.	GLORIA 2
Kim Slims –	GLORIA 3
I love Kim Slims!	GLORIA 2
Mild Seven –	GLORIA 1
Asian cigarettes have the coolest names!	GLORIA 3

Not to mention Rollies. GLORIA 2

Drum. GLORIA 1

Champion Ruby. GLORIA 3

Doctor - Pat. (*BEAT*) European Brands – Capri, Cartier, Merit, Monte Carlo, Pall Mall – let me know if I forget any here. More - GLORIA 4

I can't think of any more. GLORIA 3

More - as in the brand. GLORIA 4

Oops. GLORIA 3

Multifilter – GLORIA 1

Dull name GLORIA 4

but not bad, GLORIA 2

Surprisingly. GLORIA 3

Vogue Slims, Virginia Slims and one of my personal favourites – Yves Saint Laurent. Picture me in a small corner shop in Paris. GLORIA 4

At the counter, GLORIA 3

dressed in white, GLORIA 1

hat,
GLORIA 2

scarf,
GLORIA 3

sunglasses,
GLORIA 1

Dior from head to toe.
GLORIA 4

To die for.
GLORIA 3

GLORIA 4
“One packet of Yves Saint Laurent. Merci.”

GLORIA 1
Which brings me to another of my favourite things – the cigarette fantasy.

GLORIA 2
I’ve got a cigarette fantasy! I smoke ten thousand cigarettes – all at once.

GLORIA 4
Simultaneously?

GLORIA 2
No. One after the other. Now I know that sounds like a lot of cigarettes but actually - look at this.

*[GLORIA 2 TAKES OUT A PACKET OF CIGARETTES AND
PLACES THEM ON THE FLOOR.]*

GLORIA 2
Now that is twenty five cigarettes –

GLORIA 3
A quarter of a century –

GLORIA 2
Not very big is it ? In fact it’s tiny. So you times that by four, you get ...

one hundred. GLORIA 3

GLORIA 2
[INDICATING SIZE WITH HANDS]
Still quite small. Times that by 10

One thousand. GLORIA 3

GLORIA 2
Still not a lot and then by ten again –

Ten thousand! GLORIA 3

By ten! GLORIA 2

One hundred thousand! GLORIA 3

By ten! GLORIA 2

One million cigarettes!
[PAUSE.] GLORIA 3

GLORIA 1
In this fantasy I am in the most luxurious palace.

Silver and gold GLORIA 4

Heavy oak furniture, GLORIA 3

polished marble floors, GLORIA 1

high ceilings, GLORIA 2

tall windows, GLORIA 4

framed portraits. GLORIA 3

History, GLORIA 1

majesty, GLORIA 2

class. GLORIA 4

This house is not my house – GLORIA 1

it is the fabled Shrangri-la of cigarette lovers GLORIA 4

across the globe. GLORIA 3

The Palace of Cigarettes. GLORIA 2

Le Palais de Cigarette. GLORIA 4

Cigarette heaven. GLORIA 3

Once I enter Le Palais de Cigarette, a butler – GLORIA 1

very regal, GLORIA 3

English accent – GLORIA 2

GLORIA 3
with a voice that sounds like vintage port meets -

GLORIA 2
Golden syrup.

GLORIA 1
Greets me.

GLORIA 4
“Good evening Ma’m.”

GLORIA 1
He bears an engraved silver tray

GLORIA 3
and on the tray is

GLORIA 2
one lone cigarette

GLORIA 1
and a silver lighter.

GLORIA 3
Silver -

GLORIA 2
Not gold.

GLORIA 1
Stylish -

GLORIA 4
Not ostentatious.

GLORIA 1
Now at first I’m a little less than pleased by this.

GLORIA 2
“One cigarette – is that it ?”

GLORIA 3

But I have no need to worry.

GLORIA 1

I light up my cigarette and he leads me up an ornate staircase

GLORIA 4

“To a hall which opens on to hundreds and hundreds of rooms”

GLORIA 1

The hall seems to go on and on – forever.

GLORIA 2

He leads me towards a door.

GLORIA 4

I knock on the solid heavy timber

GLORIA 3

And in a second the door is opened

GLORIA 1

and I’m confronted by

GLORIA 2

“A cowboy in leather boots and a red check shirt.”

GLORIA 1

He takes me in to the room which is

GLORIA 2

“An old style Wild West Saloon”

GLORIA 1

and sits me down at a battered wooden table.

GLORIA 3

He pours me a shot of –

GLORIA 2

“Makers Mark.”

GLORIA 1
and he pulls out a dusty packet of

GLORIA 4
Marlboro's

GLORIA 2
"tucked underneath his bootstrap."

GLORIA 1
He offers me one and lights it

GLORIA 2
"With a wax tipped match."

GLORIA 1
We sit and drink and smoke and chat about his life and times and then

GLORIA 3
before I know it

GLORIA 1
I'm back in the hall,

GLORIA 2
Butler by my side.

GLORIA 4
"This way Ma'm."

GLORIA 2
Then I'm knocking on another door and I'm back stage –

GLORIA 4
At the Moulon Rouge

GLORIA 3
Surrounded by hundreds of gorgeous showgirls

GLORIA 2
In the most incredible costumes.

GLORIA 1

We huddle in the corner of their cramped dressing room,

GLORIA 4

Puffing on Gauloises,

GLORIA 3

Giggling

GLORIA 2

And gossiping

GLORIA 4

About the glamour of the stage

GLORIA 1

And the mysterious stranger who always sits at the back table,

GLORIA 3

face half covered in shadow,

GLORIA 2

who is rumoured to be

GLORIA 4

a very wealthy Crown Prince

GLORIA 3

with an eye on one of the showgirls.

GLORIA 1

“Me!”

GLORIA 2

“No me!”

GLORIA 3

“No me!”

GLORIA 4

“No – me.”

Now I'm on the set of a
Fellini movie
with the most beautiful woman of all time –
“Claudia Cardinale”
In my humble opinion.
We're in her dressing room
“Smoking a Zenit Triplo”
And I'm trying to console her,
“Forget Federico's wild moods”
“Trust in your own gift”
“Your pure talent, your – “
“Magnificent beauty”.
Another room and I'm in
“Moscow. The day before the October revolution”

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 2

GLORIA 4

GLORIA 3

GLORIA 2

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 3

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 4

GLORIA 2

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 3

GLORIA 1

GLORIA 4

Sitting across the table from
GLORIA 1

“Vladimir Ilich Lenin”
GLORIA 4

With a Stolichnye in hand –
GLORIA 1

“The cigarette not the vodka”
GLORIA 4

plotting the Tsar’s downfall.
GLORIA 1

In another room
GLORIA 3

There’s the whole of the Sydney Cricket Ground.
GLORIA 2

I’m in the Aussies dressing room sharing a
GLORIA 1

“Stuyvo with Warnie.”
GLORIA 2

Then Adam Gilchrist says:
GLORIA 1

“Hey, you’re not allowed to smoke in here”
GLORIA 3

“Wuss!”
GLORIA 2

Warnie just laughs and hands me another. Next I’m in a -
GLORIA 1

Tokyo restaurant,
GLORIA 4

Prague café,	GLORIA 3
Munich beer hall,	GLORIA 2
Beijing square,	GLORIA 1
London club.	GLORIA 4
Every room	GLORIA 1
Another destination,	GLORIA 2
Another time,	GLORIA 3
Another magical companion –	GLORIA 4
All linked by our universal passion –	GLORIA 1
the greatest invention of all time –	GLORIA 2
the glue that holds mankind –	GLORIA 3
and womankind	GLORIA 4
together.	GLORIA 3
Le Palais de Cigarette.	GLORIA 1

A living,
GLORIA 2

breathing
GLORIA 3

interactive
GLORIA 4

Smokers museum!
GLORIA 1

[SILENCE. GLORIA 3 COUGHS. PAUSE. SHE COUGHS AGAIN.]

Or should that be Mausoleum?
GLORIA 4
[BEAT.]

They had a brand of cigarettes called “Death” once didn’t they ?
GLORIA 2

Yeah. It was cool.
GLORIA 3

It was in a black packet with like skull and cross bones.
GLORIA 1

Brilliant!
GLORIA 2

We loved it.
GLORIA 4

Pity the cigarettes inside were so crap.
GLORIA 1
[THEY ALL NOD IN AGREEMENT.]

Death cigarettes. Pretty ironic huh?
GLORIA 2
*[GLORIA 2 LAUGHS. THE OTHERS TURN TO LOOK AT HER.
GLORIA 2 STOPS LAUGHING.]*

Non-smokers think the danger aspect of smoking is a real turn off.
GLORIA 1

Wrong ! ALL

Smokers love the danger. GLORIA 3

Cheating the grim reaper, GLORIA 4

They put their pathetic warnings on cigarette boxes, GLORIA 1

Spend all this money on tacky adds, GLORIA 2

Offer us nicotine patches, GLORIA 3

how to quit classes, GLORIA 4

breakthrough weekends, GLORIA 1

spiritual healing. GLORIA 2

Wrong! GLORIA 3

Wrong! GLORIA 4

Wrong! Don't you understand if we wanted to stop smoking we would. GLORIA 1

I will give up. GLORIA 2

Just not today. GLORIA 3

GLORIA 4

Like that poet once said: Those something somethings –

GLORIA 3

“half in love with easeful death”.

GLORIA 2

He was talking about smokers

GLORIA 4

Because we recognise that in the end life is

GLORIA 2

Fleeting,

GLORIA 3

transient,

GLORIA 1

momentary

GLORIA 4

and trying to hold on to it is like

GLORIA 3

trying to catch smoke

GLORIA 4

in the palm of your hand.

GLORIA 1

Or maybe we just like smoking too much to give a damn.

[GLORIA 3 COUGHS AGAIN. THEY ALL TURN TO LOOK AT HER.]

GLORIA 3

Sorry.

GLORIA 2

I think they should start up a Cigarette smokers Hall of Fame.

GLORIA 1

Entry only available for those who have smoked

GLORIA 2

1,000,000 cigarettes.

[GLORIA 4 COUGHS. THEY ALL TURN TO LOOK AT HER.]

GLORIA 4

Sorry.

GLORIA 2

Now you might think that is impossible but I worked it out. If you started *(COUGHS)* at say 14 years of age and you smoked a *(COUGHS)* and a half a day – not that hard, I do that occasionally – you’d be ready for the Hall of *(COUGH)* by the time you were *(COUGH)*. Now that would be a *(COUGH)*. I wonder if anybody’s *(COUGH COUGH)*. Maybe I could be the *(COUGH)*. The very first to enter the *(COUGH COUGH COUGH)*

GLORIA 1

Maybe you should reduce the number –

GLORIA 2

500,000 ...

GLORIA 4

100,000 ...

GLORIA 3

50,000 ...

[GLORIA 1 COUGHS.]

GLORIA 2

10,000.

GLORIA 3

[TO GLORIA 2]

You sounded just like ...

GLORIA 4:

Dad.

[PAUSE.]

GLORIA 1

He lay on a hospital bed for two months coughing just like that. Still didn’t stop. He’d sit out on the verandah,

GLORIA 2

Of the hospital ,

GLORIA 1

In a wheel chair, smoke pouring out of the little plastic hole they dug in to his throat. Doctors had given up trying to make him quit. What was the point ? Right to the very end, died with the

ALL

Constant flickering glow

GLORIA 2

Of a Kent

GLORIA 1

in his filthy yellow fingers. Still wearing that stupid blue singlet. He was 47. Wife and four daughters –

GLORIA 2

who

GLORIA 3

all

GLORIA 4

smoke.

GLORIA 2

Nice funeral.

GLORIA 3

Not really.

GLORIA 1

What you need to understand is the trick isn't stopping – it's not starting in the first place. I'll go for two minutes this time. 1, 2, 3,

GLORIA 2

[JOINING IN]

4, 5, 6,

GLORIA 3

7, 8, 9,
[JOINING IN]

GLORIA 4

10, 11, 12 -
[JOINING IN]
[THE LIGHTS FADE AS THEY CONTINUE TO COUNT.]

* * *