

The Lady In Red
screenplay by
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EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

MARK(18) sits on the tailgate of his truck in a graduation robe and cowboy hat. LAUREN(18) playfully snatches his hat.

JOSH (V.O.)

In eighth grade, we danced for half a song. She wore this red dress with tiny specks of glitter on her skin. That's all it took. I didn't get the courage to ask her until halfway through the last song of night.

JOSH(18) in cap and gown, watches from a couple cars over. The two young lovebirds kiss.

Josh fake coughs. It breaks their trance. Lauren untangles herself from Mark.

JOSH (V.O.)

Yeah, it was a dick move. But, I didn't want my last visual to be of her getting slobbered on by Mark.

LAUREN

(softly to Mark)

We have an audience.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Lauren passes Josh on the way to her car.

JOSH

Hey, Lauren.

She stops and stares. Josh searches for something to say until he word vomits --

JOSH

Good luck in life.

-- And instantly regrets his choice of words.

Lauren comes up. He looks over her shoulder to see Mark's truck leaving.

JOSH

Can I tell you something?

Josh turns his attention back to Lauren. They lock eyes. Her gravity pulls him in as --

-- Lauren flips the tassel on his cap to the left side.

LAUREN
(re: tassel)
You had it on the wrong side, silly.
(then)
Good luck in life to you, too.

She offers him a handshake. He just stares at her hand.

JOSH (V.O.)
She had to know. I was an idiot
anytime I was around her.

Josh shakes her hand. It gets to be a little awkward. Lauren scurries off.

A defeated Josh unlocks his car.

LAUREN (O.S.)
Hey, Josh.

He looks up as fast as his hopes are.

JOSH
Yeah?

LAUREN
I never did tell anyone about you're
accident in fourth grade.

Lauren uses sign language for baby making a poop. She makes sound effects with her mouth for added clarity.

JOSH
Thanks.

He gives a thumbs up and slinks into his car.

JOSH (V.O.)
From kindergarten to graduation.
And that was the memory she chose to
embed in her cortex.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Fall in full display. Everyone enjoys the crisp air and colorful leaves.

SUPER: FIVE YEARS LATER

Josh proposes to his GIRLFRIEND(20s) on bent knee. She shakes her head a thousand yeses. He places the ring on her finger.

GIRLFRIEND
I've gotta call my mom and tell her.

She runs off. Josh starts packing up the picnic.

LAUREN (O.S.)
She seems like a keeper.

Josh, taken aback by the unfamiliar voice, turns to see Lauren standing before him in a captivating red dress.

Dumfounded, he offers her a handshake.

JOSH
What's the chances?

She shakes his hand.

LAUREN
I know, right. What are the chances?

JOSH
I bet you've conquered life... Let me guess. Married with two and a half kids. A big career.

Lauren wiggles her bare ring finger.

LAUREN
Nope... None of the above.

JOSH
What about...
(searching)
Mark?

LAUREN
Mark? He decided he liked riding bulls more than me. Sorry that didn't come out right.

JOSH
Damn. That's crazy.
(then)
So, what brings you to this part of the country?

Josh's girlfriend returns, wrapping herself around him. She shows Lauren her engagement ring. Lauren gets uncomfortable.

LAUREN
Looking up an old friend.

JOSH
Someone we went to school with?

LAUREN
(not meaning it)
Nuh-uh. Nope.
(then)
Hey, sorry to have interrupted.
This is obviously a special evening
for you guys, congratulations... I
guess I will see you in another five
years. At the reunion. It will be
our ten year. One.

JOSH
I hope to be there. Should be fun
to see how everyone turned out.

LAUREN
(inside joke)
Good luck in life.

JOSH
(smiling)
Yeah. You too... Send me a friend
request if you want.

LAUREN
I quit social media when Mark decided
to use it as a weapon against me.

Lauren nods and takes off toward the sidewalk. Josh watches her walk away as his girlfriend gives him pecks on the cheek.

EXT. PARK - MOMENTS LATER

Lauren turns to see if he's looking. They've done left. She takes a seat on a bench and folds up into herself.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

SUPER: THE REUNION

A WOMAN(20s) sits behind a decorated table. Colorful lights blink against the backdrop.

A happy Josh strolls up to the table. He changed his hair and wears glasses. He grabs a marker and writes JOSH on a HELLO MY NAME tag.

JOSH (V.O.)
After my marriage failed, I decided
just to go for it. The last time we
talked, we agreed to meet at the
reunion. That was going to be our
start.

WOMAN

Look at you. Welcome back.

JOSH

(looking around)

Is Lauren here?

She doesn't know what to say. Josh catches her reaction.

JOSH

What?

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

AT THE ELEVATORS

Josh frantically jams the buttons with a stuffed animal in his left hand.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Josh stands at the foot of her hospital bed in shock. He sets the stuffed animal in a chair.

JOSH (V.O.)

I couldn't process what I was seeing... It took ten years for us to make our way to each other... For it to end this way was cruel.

Josh sits on the foot of the bed... He uncovers and wraps his hands around her feet.

JOSH

I've loved you since eighth grade.

Lauren slightly raises her right hand off the bed. He realizes she wants to shake hands.

Their hands come together.

JOSH

The pleasure is all mine.

Josh pulls back to see a folded note in his palm. He unfolds the paper. Tears race down his cheeks. He can't wipe his eyes fast enough.

INSERT: The note reads in unsteady strokes - I LOVE YOU TOO!

Through Josh's watery eyes, MUSIC begins to play.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A spotlight shines on two eighth graders dancing. The girl wears a red dress. No one else is around. Just young love and music.

JOSH (V.O.)

We don't get many moments worth remembering in our lives.

Young Josh's POV: The angelic face of young Lauren smiles with her arms around his neck. Little specks of glitter sparkle off her skin.

BACK TO SCENE

JOSH (V.O.)

I guess that's what keeps us pushing forward. Knowing as we grind through this thing called life. We can look back and say it all wasn't bad.

The song ends. Young Lauren kisses him on the cheek.

She walks off, disappearing into the darkness. Young Josh stands in place like a statue.

Young Josh's POV: He uses a finger to get a piece of glitter off the top of his hand. He brings it close to examine it.

BACK TO SCENE

Young Josh walks off in a different direction, disappearing into the void of black...

The spotlight slams off.

FADE OUT: