

Where Lovers Lie

written by

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BLACK SCREEN:

REPORTER

Finally, after six weeks of deliberations, the jury is ready to deliver its verdict in the murder case of Valerie Cooke. The main sticking point, the lack of a body...

FADE IN:

INT. CROWN COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

HENRY (40's) waxen skin, matted hair, sits in the packed gallery. His stare is cold and empty.

COURT CLERK (O.C.)

Has the jury reached a unanimous verdict?

FOREPERSON (O.C.)

Yes.

COURT CLERK (O.C.)

On the count of murder, how do you find the defendant?

FOREPERSON (O.C.)

Guilty.

Those around Henry cheer and hug. One slaps his hand on Henry's back, but Henry doesn't flinch. His cold dead stare doesn't relent.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Pristine, like a show home. Henry sits motionless in an armchair next to the window. Silence, until...

The sound of letters pushed through the letterbox causes Henry to leap up and go into...

HALLWAY

He scoops them up and rifles through. He tosses each one aside until he gets to...

The final letter. Hand addressed. Henry stares at it.

LIVING ROOM

Back in the armchair, Henry pops on his reading glasses and unfolds the handwritten letter.

HENRY (V.O.)

Mr Cooke. Thank you for your letters. I will not tell you where your wife's body is laid to rest and I am not sorry for that. If I get out of here in both of our lifetimes, I will take you to her. Until then, please stop trying to visit me, and please stop sending me letters. Move on. Ashley.

Henry stares at the letter, hands tremble.

The letter crunches as he grips it tighter and tighter.

His face turns red as the blood surges through his throbbing veins. Boiling point, Henry ROARS. Screws up the letter and dashes it to the other side of the room.

He storms to a drink's cabinet, pours a stiff one.

In trembling hands, he brings the glass to his mouth. In one.

Henry throws the empty glass after the letter, SMASH.

Beat.

Composing himself, he retrieves the letter, brushes off the broken glass.

He focuses on the words "If I get out of here".

INT. AMBULANCE CAB - STATIONARY - DAY

JACKY (30's) Paunchy with a kind face, sits nervously in the passenger seat.

The driver's door opens, Jacky sits up straight, beams a condescending smile at Henry as he gets in the driver's side.

JACKY

Glad to have you back, Henry. We've missed you around here.

Henry puts his seatbelt on.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The ambulance pulls out and onto the road.

INT. AMBULANCE CAB - MOVING

Henry's intense stare remains firmly out of the windscreen.

Jacky fidgets, looks around, makes annoying noises.

Beat.

JACKY

Have you erm-- Did you get up to...

Henry huffs. Jacky resumes her uncomfortable shuffling.

Henry checks his watch.

HENRY (V.O.)

I've been told you can do this.

DEEP VOICE (V.O.)

'course I fuckin' can. Who's the target?

Now and then Jacky glances at Henry like she is about to talk but can't find the words.

HENRY (V.O.)

I've written the name down. Listen carefully. This pill needs mixing with one glass of water before administration.

Henry checks his watch again.

DEEP VOICE (V.O.)

Is it fatal? Murder will cost you a lot more.

HENRY (V.O.)

Take everything. Car, house. I don't need them. Oh, and I need a gun.

The radio clicks on.

OPERATOR (RADIO)

Code red at Old Mill Road.

Jacky grabs the receiver but Henry slaps it out of her hand.

JACKY

Jesus Henry, what was that?

HENRY
We can't take it.

Again, Henry checks his watch.

JACKY
We're like five minutes away!

Jacky reaches for the radio, Henry gets it first, slams the receiver back down

OPERATOR (RADIO)
Who can respond?

VEHICLE 45 (RADIO)
Charlie-Zero-One, we got it. 10
minutes out.

Jacky glares at Henry, she sits a little stiffer, scared.

OPERATOR (RADIO)
Code red at HM Long Lartin.

Henry snatches the receiver.

HENRY
Charlie-One-Nine, on it.

He slams the receiver back down. Flicks on the sirens.

EXT. HM LONG LARTIN - DAY

Henry and Jacky load a PRISONER laden gurney onto the back of the ambulance.

Jacky and a POLICE OFFICER get in the back, Henry in the cab.

INT. AMBULANCE - TRAVELLING - DAY

Equipment shakes, the officer holds on as the ambulance bounces along at speed.

Jacky checks the patient, who lets out a light MOAN.

JACKY
Henry, she's coming around.

SCREECH. Jacky and the officer topple as the ambulance skids to a halt.

They both get up to find Henry standing at the cab entrance, pistol in hand, aiming right at them.

HENRY

Get out.

JACKY

Henry, what the hell?

OFFICER

Sir, please put the gun down.

HENRY

Get the fuck out!

Henry shakes with rage. Jabs the pistol in their direction.

The officer slowly raises his hands.

OFFICER

Lower the gun and we can talk--

BANG. The officer squeals and drops to the ground, blood oozes from his leg.

HENRY

Open the fuckin' doors and get him out!

Jacky opens the back doors and jumps down. She grabs the officer by the arms and drags him to the floor.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AMBULANCE

Henry closes the rear doors.

Jacky puts pressure on the Officer's wound as he takes a radio from his belt.

The ambulance skids away.

INT. AMBULANCE - STATIONARY - DAY

The inmate lies on the gurney. Henry inserts a needle into her arm... nothing happens.

Henry slaps her across the face, she awakens with a gasp.

ASHLEY (30's) female, terrified, stares back at Henry.

ASHLEY

Wha- where am I--

Ashley gags, leans over the side and pukes.

HENRY

That'll be your body rejecting the
drugs that knocked you out.

Henry presses the pistol into Ashley's forehead.

HENRY

Take me to my wife!

Ashley's terrified eyes trace up to the gun.

ASHLEY

Mister Cooke, what's--

HENRY

(Yelling)

--Take me to my wife!

Ashley manages a nod.

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE GARAGES - DAY

A banged-up estate car waits in front of the graffiti-riddled abandoned buildings.

The ambulance pulls in, comes to a stop.

At gunpoint, Ashley exits the ambulance and gets into the driver's seat of the estate. Henry gets in the passenger seat. It pulls away.

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - DAY

With the Estate car parked in a lay-by. Ashley walks into the woods, pushed forward by Henry with his gun in her back.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The pair walk down a barely trodden path between thick trees.

The sun penetrates through the canopy onto a small section of ground where daffodils sway in the breeze.

Ashley bends down, picks a handful of them.

HENRY

Get the fuck up!

Ashley stands. smells the flowers.

ASHLEY
She's up ahead.

EXT. LAKESIDE - CLEARING - DAY

Ashley emerges from the tree line.

The sun beams down on the lush grass, twinkles on the surface of the lake. A beautiful place.

Ashley walks towards the lake, followed closely by Henry.

She stops at a disturbed patch of ground, the size of a grave. Pebbles on top arranged in the shape of a heart.

Ashley smiles excitedly at the site as if she thought she would never gaze eyes on it again.

ASHLEY
She's here.

Ashley lays the daffodils in the centre of the heart.

Henry rushes over, shoves Ashley to the ground. Points the gun at her.

HENRY
What is this?

Henry surveys the well-presented grave, kneels next to it, caresses the stones.

With his gun hand, he wipes away a tear.

Ashley shaking, stares at him. Henry jumps up, gun trained on Ashley.

HENRY
Dig.

ASHLEY
Hell no, I'm not digging her up!

Henry rushes over, shoves the gun against her cheek. He points to a spot next to his wife's grave.

HENRY
I said fuckin' dig!

ASHLEY
With what?

Idiot! Henry rolls his eyes, forgot the damn shovel.

He frantically searches the surroundings.

EXT. LAKESIDE - CLEARING - LATER

Ashley hacks at the ground with a large flat rock. The grass has been removed, but the graves barely three inches deep.

Henry looks out across the lake.

HENRY

At least you picked a nice spot.
She would have loved it here.

Ashley scoffs.

ASHLEY

She *did* love it here.

Henry sighs.

HENRY

What nonsense are you spouting now?

ASHLEY

This is where we met.

HENRY

Met? What are you-- stop talking,
get out of my head.

Henry storms over to Ashley, gun aloft.

HENRY

Keep digging that fucking grave.

ASHLEY

I can't dig anymore.

HENRY

(shouting)

Dig!

ASHLEY

It's a rock, I can't dig with a rock.

Ashley shows her bloodied hands to him.

Henry grabs Ashley, pulls her away from the shallow grave.
She doesn't struggle, let's it happen.

Face to face, staring contest.

Henry brings the pistol up, barrel centimetres from Ashley's face. She doesn't show fear.

He spins the pistol around, offers her the handle.

HENRY

Take it.

Ashley, dumbfounded, doesn't move.

Henry grabs her hand, forces the pistol into it.

HENRY

The graves for me. Put me in it.

ASHLEY

Are you insane? I'm not shooting you.

Henry, agitated.

HENRY

You owe me.

ASHLEY

I owe you nothing.

HENRY

(shouting)

You killed my wife! You owe me everything!

Ashley shakes her head.

ASHLEY

Clueless bastard. I didn't kill your wife, she killed herself.

Henry laughs manically.

HENRY

Really? Funny, your defence lawyer never mentioned that part.

ASHLEY

Yea, that's what you would do, isn't it, drag her name through mud, her family through hell. I'm the scapegoat. You know why she used to come here?

Patience running out, Henry fidgets, agitated.

HENRY

Everything that comes out your stupid mouth is a lie!

ASHLEY

Because she didn't want to go home
to a monster. We would lie here
(points to grave)
for hours, talking... making love.

The blood rushes to Henry's face, the veins get bigger.

HENRY

Then why didn't she leave me, huh? Run
away with you, makes no sense, does it.

Ashley's head drops, thoughts of what could have been.

ASHLEY

You bullied, manipulated, abused--

HENRY

--shut up--

--She chose the ground over a lifetime
of looking over her shoulder--

HENRY

--I said shut up--

ASHLEY

(voice breaking)
--You killed her.

HENRY

Shut up!

Henry grabs Ashley by the neck, the other hand raised, balled
fist, ready to unleash.

Ashley raises the pistol, shoves it into Henry's forehead.

ASHLEY

like beating women, don't you?

Henry closes his eyes.

HENRY

Yes, kill me.

Ashley removes the gun from his head, he opens his eyes.

Faint sound of sirens and the whir of a helicopter heading
this way.

ASHLEY

The last thing she would want is to
be laid to rest next to you.

Sirens closer still. Ashley smiles.

Car doors slam, dogs bark. The helicopter so close now it's almost deafening.

Ashley puts the pistol in her mouth-- Henry lunges for it.

BANG

Henry, splattered in blood, can only watch as Ashley's body falls perfectly into the fresh grave. One arm on her chest, the other caresses Valerie's grave.

The police close in.

Henry breathes heavy, can't take his eyes off the graves of the lovers. Together again.

FADE OUT.