

Revs. 24/10/11 (Blue)

THE RED VALENTINE

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SIXTH DRAFT

20 OCTOBER 2011
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1 OMITTED 1

2 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT 2

Shards of light glisten in the sky as waves lap against the sand. A MAN, late 20's, handsome with a strong face, and a beautiful WOMAN, early 20's, with clear eyes, lay side by side on a blanket staring into the dark above.

WOMAN
(smiling)
...tell me.

He clenches his hand before eating a raspberry as she lays her head on his chest and smiles, taking a sip of wine.

MAN
Close your eyes, count to three,
then make a wish.

INSERT CUT -- The Woman walks towards a curtained window.

WOMAN
I wish that we could stay here
together... Until the end of time.

He turns to face her.

MAN
Do you love me?

WOMAN
(RUSSIAN)
My love...
(MAYA LUBOF)

A star streaks across the dark sky.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
... we'll find them. Just take your
time, anything you can tell us will
help.

3 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 3

A few scattered lamps light the cramped room, lined with odds and ends and two mismatched armchairs, one sitting opposite the other.

In one sits a DETECTIVE (40's), with a lean face and piercing eyes.

DETECTIVE
When you're ready.

In the other, the MOTHER of the Woman, a Ukranian immigrant of small stature with faded eyes, cigarette smoke coiling from her lips.

MOTHER

She was young when they met. She was still a girl, still listened to her mother. And he was handsome. They never left each other's sides. When you saw them together...

INSERT CUT -- The Woman stands at the window, sees someone, and smiles.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

They're meant for each other, two halves of the same person. The same flesh.

*

DETECTIVE

Where did they meet?

She nods her head off to the distance.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

He was a soldier?

MOTHER

(nods)

The Nazis were moving east, the Ukraine next. He was part of a unit trying to disrupt them, slow them down. Sabotage. But... they were ambushed.

INSERT CUT -- A flickering lamp reveals the bloodied face of the Man, caked in dirt as rain falls, his eyes barely open.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

A man found him and brought him to an outpost near Odessa. That's where they met.

INSERT CUT -- The Woman sits next to the Man as he lays bloodied and bandaged and takes his hand. His eyes drift open and --

4

EXT. BEACH - DUSK

4

The Woman smiles, as waves crash against her legs. She lifts her hand to him.

MOTHER (O.S.)

It was only a few months, but they were closing in --

5 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

5

The Mother Continues.

MOTHER

-- and he helped us to get out. We left at night, and eventually, a ship here.

DETECTIVE

Were you given your registration card at the port?

MOTHER

Card?

DETECTIVE

Immigration.

She shuffles to a shelf and pulls out a worn Immigration card and hands it to him, the flicks and swirls of a unique hand over faded paper. BORN: MOSCOW, RUSSIA -- WIDOWED.

MOTHER

It took seven months, but at the end of it, there he was... waiting for her.

6 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

6

The Woman laughs and pushes him to the blanket.

WOMAN

Close your eyes. And count to three. I have a surprise for you.

His eyes close.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Now open wide.

She places a raspberry on his tongue, his mouth enveloping the tips of her fingers. He opens his eyes, leans up and she turns her head as he kisses her on the neck.

7 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

7

The Mother stubs out her cigarette and smiles momentarily.

DETECTIVE

It must have been leaving and starting over.

MOTHER

(Agrees)

You never truly leave your home behind... Even when it's not there anymore. He was still in the army and she got work in a field hospital, so it was OK for them.

She lifts a cigarette to her mouth.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

For me, it was odds and ends, anything... sometimes, you do what you need to survive.

8 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

8

They couple lie looking into each other's eyes.

MAN

Do you love me?

She holds his hand to her face.

WOMAN

(RUSSIAN)

My love...

(MAYA LUBOF)

INSERT CUT -- The Mother strikes a match and it ignites --

9 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

9

A spluttering flare of a Police Signaller, raised high above his head, illuminates the beach. The Man and the Woman lie curled towards each other, lifeless, their hands clasped together in silent reverie, watched over by a couple of officers and a crime scene photographer.

10 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

10

The Mother inhales her cigarette.

MOTHER

They had their own house and they were happy. It's enough for her.

*

DETECTIVE

What happened?

MOTHER

He'd wake at night, couldn't sleep.

INSERT CUT -- The Woman turns over in her sleep, as the Man watches her from a chair.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

He never talked about it, but it wasn't hard for her to guess. He was the only one who survived that night, friends, brothers, torn to pieces... Who knows what that does to you?

DETECTIVE

She told you this?

She nods.

MOTHER

A mother and her child have no secrets. It seemed he was improving but... it only got worse.

DETECTIVE

Did he ever hurt her?

MOTHER

(Shakes head)

But something started to change in her. She became detached, distant, withdrawn... His darkness became hers.

INSERT CUT -- The Woman straddles the Man on the sand, staring into his eyes.

11 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

11

A camera FLASHES. Across wooden planking strides the Detective as a CONSTABLE waves him over.

CONSTABLE

Detective -- some kid from up the way found them about an hour ago. Said he comes by here every afternoon so probably here about a day.

DETECTIVE

He the only one who's seen them?

CONSTABLE

There were three tracks when we got here, one for the kid, leaves the other two for them. Nothing seems to've been taken.

The Detective crouches down to the Man and Woman. Blood cakes her nose, a dried pool of vomit beneath the man's head as a camera flash BURNS. The Detective reaches into the Man's pockets --

DETECTIVE
When's the Coroner here?

CONSTABLE
Should be any minute.

And pulls out a wallet and I.D. -- the Man's. HARVEY LEWIS --
28 -- DEFENCE FORCE.

DETECTIVE
They have a car?

CONSTABLE
There's an old Chev -- it's just up
over the ridge.

12 INT. HOUSE - DAY

12

A small, simply appointed house with bare floors. The Woman stands at the window and notices something outside, smiles slightly, placing her hand against the material and onto the glass. From the other side, a shadow presses back. She moves her hand as the shadow follows, then disappears.

A door CLOSES.

MOTHER (O.S.)
She came to me last week, said he
was taking her somewhere, but she
wouldn't tell me. Her eyes had
faded, grown dull.

The Man approaches behind her and she sinks into his arms,
but there's a slight sadness.

13 EXT. GRAVEL LOT - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

13

The couple's Chevrolet stands lit by the flashlights of few officers. The Detective opens the door and begins to dig around.

CONSTABLE
Bring that torch over here.

An Officer approaches as the Detective pulls out a hand bag with an I.D. card and new driver's license, the Woman's. LOLA MARISOVA -- 24 -- IMMIGRANT

CONSTABLE (CONT'D)
A reffo.

DETECTIVE
Ukrainian -- Call it in and get
them to check the register.

The Officer hurries off. The Detective pulls from the bag a **scrap of paper covered with random letters in a unique hand**, as an object falls.

CONSTABLE

Girl like that? Breaks your heart
doesn't it.

He picks it up -- **an empty glass vial, chipped, with worn markings.**

14 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 14

Tears begin to well in the Mother's eyes.

MOTHER

She was just a shell. Lost. That
was the last time I saw her.

(RUSSIAN)

My girl.

(MAYA DEVIAJKA)

15 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT 15

The aged and bespectacled CORONER stands over the bodies as the Detective walks up.

CORONER

Rather Shakespearean aren't they.

DETECTIVE

So what do you think?

CORONER

By the looks of it, no contusions
or outward signs of trauma -- I'd
say you're looking at suicide,
probably from a poison or an
overdose.

DETECTIVE

(sceptical)

Suicide.

The Detective crouches beside the bodies as the Coroner swabs the Man's hands.

CORONER

We're living in desperate times.
For some, it's just too much to
bear. They think it's easier this
way than being overrun by the Japs.

DETECTIVE

He was Army though.

The Detective examines the wine bottle.

CORONER

Really? Chap should have known better.

16 INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 16

The Man is asleep in bed as a crack of light drifts over him.

LOUNGEROOM

The Woman slides a key into a safe, opens it, removes a file and begins to transcribe onto a note pad.

She soon finishes and rips the scrawled notes from the pad and returns the file, the Man's shadow disappearing from the doorway.

17 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 17

The Detective flips through his notes for a moment before looking to the Mother.

DETECTIVE

Is that all?

She nods silently, eyes red.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

18 OMITTED 18

19 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT 19

The Coroner leans over the bodies.

CORONER

Hmmm.

He checks the same body parts of the Man and Woman.

CORONER (CONT'D)

The chap and the girl's symptoms are different; the blood from her nose? Her nasal passages have been stripped raw.

DETECTIVE

What would do that?

CORONER

Arsenic. And a very high dose that would also account for the discolouration of her nails. The chap however shows none of that. The way he's holding her hand points to a muscular seizure that would have happened before he died. Combined with vomiting and stains on his tongue? Odd, very odd.

DETECTIVE

What if it they each took something different.

CORONER

(thinking)

Neither of them would have been a particularly pretty way to go.

20 EXT. STREET WALKWAY - NIGHT

20

A lone couple shuffle by as the Woman saunters down the corridor of steps where a tall, gaunt, SILENT STRANGER stands at the bottom.

There are WHISPERS of RUSSIAN as she hands over the folded wad of handwritten notes that the Stranger quickly pockets.

And from the shadows the Man watches, his breathing shallow.

21 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

21

The Coroner feels through the Man's pockets. He pulls out a wad of paper as a scrap falls to the blanket --

CORONER

Something your boys missed.

-- And hands the Detective the wad of paper.

CORONER (CONT'D)

Ahhh.

He holds up the scrap, a stamp sized wax envelope with remnants of a powder inside.

CORONER (CONT'D)

Arsenic -- definitely enough to kill her. Question is, what did he take?

The Detective opens the paper.

22 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 22

The Detective closes his notebook.

DETECTIVE

His work in the army, do you know
what it involved?

The Mother shakes her head.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Military Intelligence.

23 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 23

Alone, the Man leafs through the file.

Flashes of words -- CONFIDENTIAL, SECURITY CLEARANCE, TROOP
MOVEMENTS -- as his fingers graze the blank notepad. He grabs
a pencil and begins to shade lightly over the page.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Classified. High security.

*

**Lines and characters begin to appear, revealing maps and
words --**

Identical.

24 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT 24

The Detective stares at the paper, **the same page the Man just
revealed littered with lines and words**, and compares it with
the scrap of **random numbers and letters** from the Woman's bag.

25 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT 25

The Man sits in the shadows, studying the Woman as she turns
over in her sleep -- but her eyes are open, knowing.

26 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 26

The Detective leans forward.

DETECTIVE

Is your daughter on any medication
or dealing with any physical pain?

*

*

MOTHER

No.

DETECTIVE

Nothing?

MOTHER
Not that I know.

DETECTIVE
You said earlier she had no secrets
from you.

She says nothing, but shifts slightly. Defensive.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
How about yourself, do you use --

MOTHER
-- No, I don't.

He removes an object from his jacket and places it on the table. It's **the vial** from the Woman's bag with a worn label of letters and numbers in CYRILLIC, and the insides caked with a fine powder.

DETECTIVE
It's a tricky thing, Aconitine.

INSERT CUT -- The Detective picks the vial from the gravel.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
It used to be a pain medication,
but no one could seem to get the
dosage right. Use enough of it
though... It was found in her
belongings. Manufactured 1926. But
she would have been 4 years old
then.

MOTHER
You've seen her?

A BEAT.

DETECTIVE
They're together.

27 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

27

The Man and Woman lie side by side, staring into each other's eyes. He swallows but it's difficult.

MAN
Do you love me?

She smiles.

MAN (CONT'D)
You told me something once, a long
time ago --

28 INT. RESISTANCE BASEMENT - DAY 28
The Man, bandaged and lying on a stretcher as the Woman leans to his ear and begins to speak --

29 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT 29
The Woman whispers.

WOMAN
Don't fear, I'm here with you.

He places his hand on her face.

MAN
You betrayed me.

But it begins to harden, cramping as he retches bile.

WOMAN
(RUSSIAN)
My love... Don't fear.
(MAYA LUBOF... NYE BOYSYA)

30 INT. TERRACE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT 30
The Detective pulls from his notebook **the page of random letters and numbers**, found in the Woman's bag.

DETECTIVE
There's something else she had. A
code, a cipher --

*

He places beside it the **Mother's I.D. card**, the cursive identical.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
-- written in your handwriting. You
were right about not leaving your
home -- born in Moscow, weren't
you?

(A BEAT)
They were unlucky to make the same
mistakes.

*
*

INSERT CUT -- The Man eats a raspberry as the Woman drinks a glass of wine.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
There'll be some men coming to
collect you for more questioning.
And to identify her body.

*
*
*
*

The Mother sits in silence, her composure beginning to break.

31 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT 31

The Man convulses, retches, while the Woman tearfully takes the man's hand from her face and kisses it tenderly.

She pulls his hand away, revealing a smear of blood. She touches her fingers to her nose, bloodied, and looks at the Man who can barely keep his eyes focused on her.

32 EXT. BEACH - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT 32

The Constable walks up to the Detective.

CONSTABLE

Dispatch came back -- we've got a next of kin.

The Detective nods, pockets the note papers and looks at the couple's bodies one last time before turning away.

33 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT 33

Realisation sets in -- she tries to pull away, desperate to break free but he's holding too tight.

The light begins to fade from his eyes, hand desperately clasped to hers. Tired and blood trickling from her nose, she looks skyward --

-- to see a star shoot overhead.

Her eyes glaze over and she soon becomes motionless, resigned, and silent, as waves lap against the sand.