

THE LADY IN RED

Written by

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EXT. LONDON CITY STREET - EVENING

A chilly evening: a fine mist of rain seems to hover over the city without ever touching ground.

JAMES, 30s, handsome, grey hairs peeking out from around the sides of his hat, strolls down the street.

He wears a grin that knifes through the drear like midday sunshine and whistles a lilting tune. He pauses to tighten the belt of his overcoat.

PEDESTRIANS regard him with irritated suspicion - *what does he have to be so happy about?*

James stops in front of a flower shop, enters.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A FLORIST, 60s, white haired (what's left of it anyway) and with jowls that could give Richard Nixon a run for his money, nimbly ties a bow around a bouquet of roses.

FLORIST

You got quite lucky, mate. The gent who ordered these never arrived. Need to close up shop. Even a florist can't get away with standing up the missus tonight.

He drops him a wink. James chuckles, winks back.

EXT. SWEET SHOP - EVENING

James exits the shop. An ornate box of chocolates and heart-shaped balloon have joined the flowers in his hands.

James walks past two adorable, freckle-faced GIRLS, 11, each with candy apple red hair. They giggle as he passes.

He stops, turns to face them, and flashes his winning smile. He tucks the bouquet under his arm and fishes his hand into the box of chocolates. He pulls out two chocolate kisses.

He places one in the hand of each Girl. They smile back at him and then skip back towards the sweet shop. He watches them for several moments.

The grin widens.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Faint light from the full moon peers around the edges of a covered window.

James enters, hits s wall switch. Light floods the room. His pointy-toothed sneer is no longer cheerful, but lupine.

He carries the balloon, flowers, and candy.

JAMES

I hope I didn't make you wait too long.

On the bed: a WOMAN, 20s, bound and gagged, her eyes bulge with terror. Lacerations cover her body, her once beautiful face a mass of cuts and bruises.

Her candy apple red hair stands in stark contrast to the dried, maroon blood that stains the bed.

James walks over to her. She tries to pull away. He sets the flowers on the bed.

He pulls the gag free. She tries to speak. He holds up a finger.

JAMES (CONT'D)

A kiss for you, love.

He takes a chocolate kiss from the box, pops it in her mouth. A tear rolls down her cheek.

He sits on the bed, releases the balloon.

It floats upward, passes a window covered with newspaper clippings. One headline reads:

POLICE BAFFLED AS CHOCOLATE KISS KILLER STRIKES AGAIN!

The Woman watches as the balloon hits the ceiling. It rolls around. The writing on its side mocks her. It reads:

"Happy Saint Valentine's Day!"