

The Love Way Around

By

David Beatty

INT. HOUSE - DAY

JACK (40) and LAURA (30s) sit on a small love seat. To the left of them, a side table with a lamp, bouquet of flowers and a **goldfish bowl**.

Behind them, hanging on the wall, several photographs of Jack and Laura, smiling, happy, full of love.

A **clock** also hangs on the wall.

Jack is doing (something). He wears khaki pants, button down shirt, loose tie round his neck. He is disheveled.

Laura wears many layers, hair a bit messy and unkempt. She is preoccupied with her thoughts, anxious.

After a moment.

LAURA
It's time for me to go.

JACK
I thought you were spending the night.

She looks at him sympathetically.

LAURA
I'm sorry.

She stands and crosses out of frame. Jack holds up the (something)

JACK
I thought we were doing this tonight.

LAURA
I'm tired of doing that, we always do that.

JACK
I thought you liked it.

LAURA
I did, once. But now I have to do something else.

She returns to the room with a suitcase and a pile of clothes. She Begins packing.

JACK

Okay, lets do something else.

LAURA

Something isn't the problem.

JACK

There's a problem?

LAURA

It's something other.

JACK

Other?

LAURA

Something new. Maybe the problem is you.

JACK

Me?

LAURA

It's not your fault, it's me, it's always been me, I'm just not the right girl for you.

JACK

This isn't just about tonight is it?

LAURA

I'm sorry, I loved you, I did.

JACK

Loved? The past tense of Love?

LAURA

These things happen, people move on. We just got to learn to let go, it'll get easier with time.

JACK

It just seems like your transitioning so fast. What about the time it takes to get over us?

LAURA

Life is too short for that, we have to move quickly before it's all over.

JACK
It just seems so-

LAURA
Healthy.

JACK
I was going to say heartless.

LAURA
I gotta go.

She takes the clock off the wall and throws it in her suitcase.

JACK
That's not yours.

She zips up the bag, turns to him.

LAURA
You will always have a special place with me, the years we had together were life changing, I'll never forget you.

JACK
Why would you forget me?

She taps her chest. Taps his chest. Smiles.

Then, She opens the door and runs outside into:

A DRY DESERT PLAIN.

Jack picks up the **Goldfish bowl**, runs after her.

JACK
Wait! What about J.J.?

LAURA
He belongs to you now. Feed him every day and change the water every two weeks.

JACK
But..

LAURA
A little something to remember me by.

As they exit the house, we see that it's not a house at all but only one room of a house. And only a partially built room. It's a set piece. A fake house, not built to last.

Laura runs towards a car with the engine running. SOME GUY is driving.

JACK
Who's that guy?

Laura climbs in the car and kisses him. Then the guy gives Jack a cheesy grin and a thumbs up.

Laura leans out the window.

LAURA
Remember me Jack, remember there was a time when we loved each other.

She waves goodbye as they drive off.

JACK
But I still do love you.

Jack and the goldfish are enveloped in the dust kicked up by the car speeding away.

Almost immediately, another car pulls up to Jack.

Jack leans down to see who's driving.

JACK CON'T
Larry?

LARRY
Get in.

Jack jumps in with the Goldfish.

JACK
Laura left me.

LARRY
I heard.

JACK
That's her in the car in front of us. Took my clock too.

LARRY
I know.

JACK

You gotta help me get her back.

LARRY

Do I?

JACK

Step on it, they're getting away.

LARRY

I don't know man, I think maybe you
should let her go.

Jack looks over at him.

LARRY CON'T

I'm your best friend, I love you,
I'd do anything for you but she's
gone man.

JACK

No she's not, she's right there.

They look out the front windshield but the car isn't there.
She's gone.

JACK CONT

She was there. She was right there.

LARRY

She went a different way man.

JACK

I should have been better. I should
have known better. I should have
done things differently.

LARRY

Listen to me, I don't want to tell
you that you two aren't meant to be
together, maybe you are, but not
right now. Maybe your paths will
cross again. But right now, you two
are completely different people.
Pay more attention to who you are
and what you want rather than
trying to be something you're not
for somebody else.

Jack isn't listening. He's looking out the windshield.

In front of them, stopped on the side of the road, is
another car, hood open.

A girl is standing next to the car.

JACK
Stop the car!

LARRY
No.

JACK
Why?

LARRY
Because that girl is exactly like
Laura.

JACK
What? No.

LARRY
Trust me.

Larry stops the car.

LARRY CON'T
You find her attractive?

Jack looks at the girl.

JACK
Yeah, I guess.

LARRY
Same girl.

JACK
No.

LARRY
Metaphorically speaking, and in
this case literally, all girls you
find attractive are broken down on
the side of the road.

She looks up. Jack smiles, she smiles back.

LARRY CON'T
This is an important moment for
you. You have to make a decision.

JACK
She needs help.

LARRY

Yes, she does, but you don't have
to help her.

Jack opens the door.

LARRY

Wrong decision. Close the door,
lets try again.

JACK

I'm just going to see if she's
okay.

LARRY

She's not okay! That's my point,
she's a distraction. You're a grown
man, you should know this stuff by
now.

JACK

(distracted)

Yeah okay, sure.

Jack gets out with the goldfish, walks towards the girl.

JACK CON'T

You okay?

THE GIRL

I'm not okay.

LARRY

Told you.

JACK

Can I help?

THE GIRL

Yes that would be great.

LARRY

(sings to himself)

*How many roads must a man walk
down...*

Jack extends his hand.

JACK

Jack.

THE GIRL
Lauren.

They exchange a smile.

Jack turns.

JACK
That's my friend...

But Larry pulls away fast, kicking up dust.

Jack turns back to Lauren, shrugs.

LAUREN
You know anything about cars?

JACK
A little.

Jack sets the Goldfish bowl on the roof.

JACK CON'T
So what brings you out here?

Lauren stands by the drivers side as Jack fixes the engine.

LAUREN

Oh, it's nothin really. Just a stupid story about how I followed my boyfriend out here last night to an old beat up gross motel. The place was a dump. I was embarrassed that he was such a cheap skate gettin an awful place like that for a girl. I mean if you're gonna have an affair make it fancy. Anyway, I followed them to the motel. Waiting outside till I couldn't wait no more. Drove my car right though the front door of their room. Caught them In flagrante delicto. Butt naked. She was on her hands and knees. And I'm not completely sure, but I'm close to certain his pecker was in her ass. He likes that. But I tell you, it all happened so fast. I jumped out quick in the room. She screams terror. But that screamin didn't last long cause the shovel I was holding fell straight down on top of her head. Shut her up quick. He

(MORE)

LAUREN (cont'd)
looked at me like I wasn't even me,
which is probably true cause I
wasn't really, you know, myself in
the head. I looked down at his
pecker which was still a little
hard, he hadn't lost it completely.
I was about to reach over and touch
it, when he interrupted my thoughts
and said, 'honey, put the shovel
down' Can you believe that? Called
me 'honey'. The shovel just hit him
in the face. I didn't think I hit
him hard, but it was a pointy
shovel and the tip was pretty
sharp. It cut him right fast
between the cheekbone, nose and the
mouth. His whole upper lip and part
of his face just sorta cut in half
and hung there like a lazy piece of
pizza. I couldn't stand to hear him
scream so I smacked him again.
Twenty six smacks altogether. Then
I gave her another dozen just for
fun. Both of them stopped screamin
after that.

A few beats pass.

Jack looks up from under the hood.

JACK
Try it now.

Lauren gets in the car and fires it up.

LAUREN
Oh my God, you're a magician.

She gets out of the car and plants a big wet kiss on him,
finishes by biting his face.

LAUREN CON'T
Thank you.

JACK
No problem.

LAUREN
You mind helpin me get my bags back
in the trunk?

JACK
Of course.

Jack picks up two suitcases as she opens the trunk.

Jack pauses as he sees two dead bodies inside the trunk.

She takes the suitcases and stuffs them in on top of the bodies.

She slams the trunk door.

LAUREN CON'T
Can I give you a lift?

They go around the front of the car, open the doors.

She gets in, but Jack hesitates.

LAUREN
Well get in.

Jack looks up at the goldfish on top of the car. The goldfish stares back at him.

Then he looks in at Lauren.

JACK
I think I'm having a moment.

LAUREN
A moment?

JACK
I think it's a life moment.

LAUREN
What's it feel like?

JACK
Like I shouldn't get in the car
with you.

LAUREN
Instinct.

JACK
Might be.

LAUREN
You feel sick?

JACK
Little bit.

LAUREN
Listen to that voice, it's probably
gonna save your life.

Jack shuts the door, grabs the Goldfish.

JACK
Thank's for understanding.

She blows him a kiss and peels out down the road.

Jack watches her go.

A BARTENDER approaches with a bottle of Whiskey.

BARTENDER
What'll it be?

JACK
Whiskey.

Bartender pours him a shot, Jack drinks, nods his head,
turns and walks back towards home.

From the other side of the road a man approaches, selling
bibles.

BIBLE SALESMAN
Get your fresh hot bible right off
the heavenly press of salvation!

JACK
Thanks.

From the other side of the road comes a self help writer.

WAYNE DYER
With my 9 point plan you will
achieve enlightenment and self
actualization. Don't forget my
entire DVD library with inside tips
to getting the most out of your
true potential.

Half a dozen MONKS approachs

MONKS
Vishnu, vishnu, Vishnu.

MONKS
Hari Krisna, Hari Krisna

An NPR HOST approaches. (aka Terri Gross)

NPR HOST

We only have 10 minutes left to
reach our five thousand dollar
goal. Your pledge to public
radio will ensure the best in
listener supported broadcasting.

A male prostitute struts by.

PROSTITUTE

Best blow job you ever had.

Jack looks guilty.

PROSTITUTE

Don't forget me Jack.

Jack finally clears the circus and comes back to his little house.

He puts J.J. back on the table.

He sits.

A long moment passes.

He makes a decision.

He exits frame and comes back with a GAS CAN and pours it all over the little house.

He picks up J.J. and holds him close.

Then flicks a match igniting the gasoline.

Jack turns and walks away as the little house burns and smoke billows out towards the sky.

The conflagration roars behind Jack as he begins to walk a little taller. More confidant.

A FRIEND passes by.

FRIEND

Hi Jack.

JACK

Hey.

A BETTER FRIEND approaches.

BETTER FRIEND
Hey man looking good.

Jack smiles.

JACK
Thank you.

A GREAT FRIEND approaches.

GREAT FRIEND
Did you lose weight?

This makes Jack feel terrific.

A secretary approaches, all business.

SECRETARY
Hello Jack, Thank you for sending
in your resume. We would like to
see you at 2pm on Wednesday for an
interview.

A CEO in a business suit steps up.

CEO
Glad to have you aboard Jack,
you're a promising addition to this
company.

They shake hands. CEO Exits.

Secretary returns with a cup of coffee for Jack.

SECRETARY
You have a 10 o'clock presentation,
by noon you'll be on site.
Everybody is counting on you,
you're the best we got, I'm
extremely proud to be working along
side you. Good luck.

She takes the coffee cup away.

A small crowd of people have assembles and give Jack a round
of applause, cheering him on.

The CEO pops a bottle of champagne and gives a toast.

CEO
To Jack!

EVERYBODY
TO JACK!

People shake his hand, congratulating him.

He feels fantastic. A few people trail past, in the aftermath of celebration.

As they pass by a woman calls out.

WOMAN
Jack?

Jack turns to see LAURA. She looks different. More put together. Her clothes and hair are simple and neat.

LAURA
It's me. Laura.

JACK
Laura. I barely recognize you.

LAURA
It's been a long time.

He nods, agrees.

LAURA CON'T
Is that J.J.?

Jack looks at the Goldfish bowl he's still holding.

Laura takes a good look at J.J.

LAURA
He looks great, you've taken good care of him.

JACK
Yeah. I guess I have. We've taken care of each other.

She smiles at the fish, then back up at Jack.

LAURA
I have something for you.

JACK
You do?

She takes the **clock** out of her purse and hands it to him.

He takes it, looks it over with care and appreciation.

JACK

Thank you.

She smiles.

LAURA

It's good to see you.

He nods. She turns away.

Jack watches her go. Then he looks at J.J.

JACK

Wait.

She turns back.

Jack holds J.J. up to get a better look at him swimming around. Then he hands him to Laura.

JACK

Here.

She takes the fish, but doesn't really want it.

JACK CON'T

Feed him everyday and change his water every two weeks.

LAURA

But...

JACK

A little something to remember me by.

He smiles.

She nods and agrees.

They share a familiar moment. He takes a deep breath.

JACK CON'T

It really is good to see you.

Laura smiles, returns his stare. Their eyes lock and see each other again for the first time.

BLACKOUT

The end.