

OUR LOCKED HEARTS

Written by

Noah Needle

INT. ELLIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING - AUTUMN

The room wears a gentle morning glow. It's golden: warm. Scattered around are hints at who this room belongs to. On the wall is an out-of-date One Direction calendar. On a cheap IKEA desk, there's a stack of YA novels. Beside a bed, there's a small bookcase of the classics.

ELIZABETH "ELLIE" MAY (15), a freckled brunette with her heart locked behind insecurities and self-doubt, lies asleep in that bed.

Suddenly, her alarm starts blaring. There's an awful digital BEEP, BEEP, BEEP until she groggily stops it with a press.

She forces her eyes open, clearly wishing to stay asleep, then lets out the heaviest of sighs.

Moments later, Ellie is stood by her slightly parted curtains, already letting light in through the small gap between them. She draws them apart.

The sun shines in; she closes her eyes as it blinds her. Outside, slowly changing from a blinding glow to a lived-in world, the trees are orange and red.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

The room is in a deep blue darkness. The curtains, worn but working, keep most of the morning light out. The walls are barren. The whole room feels lifeless and empty, with only a desk and a quietly occupied bed.

MICHAEL HAVERTY (15), an athletic lad with a certain fragility about him and his heart locked behind broken love and betrayal, lies with his eyes open but unmoving.

He lets out a soft sigh.

INT. ELLIE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ellie is brushing her teeth, looking at herself in the mirror. She still looks tired--less so from lack of sleep and more so from the chaos around her.

As she brushes her teeth, she's knocked and bumped about. Her younger brother (8) is brushing his teeth also. Her younger sister (11) is washing her hair. The bathroom isn't big enough for them all.

Then, to add to the mix, another younger brother (14) enters.

ELLIE'S TEENAGE BROTHER
Out. Everyone out.

Ellie looks at her brother, unsure as to why he thinks he can be so demanding.

He moves to the toilet and gives her a look that asks if she really wants to stay for that.

Ellie rolls her eyes and spits out her toothpaste. She escorts her youngest siblings out of the bathroom too, shooting a glare at her teenage brother as they go.

INT. ELLIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ellie, still in her pyjamas, places her clothes neatly on her made-up bed. She has a school skirt, tie, and blazer set out already.

She searches her wardrobe for her school shirt, but can't find one that's been ironed and put on a hanger.

ELLIE
Mum! Did my shirt get ironed last night?

Ellie pokes her head from around her wardrobe door, waiting for an answer.

ELLIE'S MUM (O.S.)
No, hon, sorry!

Ellie quietly and slowly closes her eyes--frustrated but not wanting to make a scene. She opens them again, just a moment later, and sighs.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Michael quietly packs his school bag on his desk. He carefully places in an drawing pad, before more carelessly slotting in textbooks and reading material.

He wears a muted look of sadness--close to apathy but his eyes give him away--to accompany his neat school uniform.

Once packed, Michael zips up his bag and throws it over one shoulder.

He pauses for a moment, listening for something.

Hearing nothing, he makes his way to the bedroom door and out of it.

I/E. MAY FAMILY CAR/ELLIE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Surrounded by her siblings, as her teenage brother sits in the front with her dad (mid 40's), Ellie buckles her seatbelt in.

It's a squash and a squeeze, but they manage it.

ELLIE'S DAD

All set?

Ellie gives a thin-lipped smile. Her younger sister, to her right, nods.

ELLIE'S YOUNGEST BROTHER

Yep!

The car, an older model that's still running reliantly, bumps as it pulls off the driveway.

The house stands tall. It stands alone, despite being a terraced. The world is quiet around it, as the car vanishes from view.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

A near-identical, red brick, terraced house stands connected but alone, elsewhere in the small British town.

It's colder, though. With its face away from the rising sun, it's cloaked in a midnight-blue shadow.

The front door creaks open meekly. Michael steps out.

He looks back inside, into the darkness, then quietly closes the door. He makes sure to lock up, then he sets off down the footpath and disappears from view.

EXT. STREET TO SCHOOL - MORNING

The morning is cold. The morning is cosy.

Michael walks along a quiet street. The occasional car passes.

He holds both straps of his backpack. His gaze wanders around, glancing at the autumnal trees, the baby blue sky, and the perfect white clouds that float along idly in it.

Upon his face, he wears an anxious look. Though he tries to hide it with brief smiles at the world around him, the underlying fear can't be hidden.

INT. MAY FAMILY CAR - SAME TIME

Ellie sighs softly, as the car radio blasts music. From the back middle seat, she tries to look out of any window she can, to see the autumnal beauty as they drive to school.

A small fleeting smile comes across her face, as she sees some leaves swirl and dance in the wind. Though, the smile suddenly vanishes as her youngest brother accidentally bumps her side with his elbow.

She takes a deep breath, trying to remain composed, as they drive on.

EXT. STREET TO SCHOOL - LATER

Michael continues to walk alone.

Across the street, some other lads, around his age, walk together. They wear the same school uniform as him, and he glances over at them.

However, he's quick to pull his gaze from them to his feet, as he carries on alone, on his side of the road.

INT. MAY FAMILY CAR - LATER

Ellie checks her phone, as the car nears the school. It's 8:15 A.M. and she has a few Snapchat notifications.

She opens up the app and responds, as the car pulls up outside the school gates.

Feeling it come to a stop, Ellie looks up and locks her phone screen. She slips it into her blazer pocket.

Her younger sister gets out first, throwing her school backpack on as she stands up. Ellie scoots from the middle and gets out too.

As Ellie adjusts her bag, she smiles at her dad, silently grateful for the lift. Her teenage brother, meanwhile, gets out from the front and joins his sisters.

Their dad winds down the window, as they all stand together.

ELLIE'S DAD

Have a good day, you lot. Be good,
listen to your teachers, and try
your hardest.

Ellie smiles. Her brother rolls his eyes, then smiles and
nods. Her sister beams the brightest smile of the three.

ELLIE'S TEENAGE BROTHER

Will do, dad. Love ya.

ELLIE'S DAD

Love you all too.

Ellie's sister and brother set off towards the gates. She
lingers for a moment longer.

Behind her, unknowingly following her siblings to the gates,
is Michael.

ELLIE

Love you, dad. Have a good day too.

Her dad smiles back at her and gives a nod. She watches as
the car sets off again down the road.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - MORNING

A group of teenage girls, similar in look and style to Ellie,
stand congregated by a doorway. They chat away together, but
can't be heard over the many other conversations happening
simultaneously around them.

Ellie comes around the corner, and her face lights up as she
sees her friends.

She rushes over to them, carefully dodging oncoming foot
traffic, and they all squeal a little as she arrives. She's
quickly brought into the conversation at hand.

As they talk, coming from the opposite direction to Ellie,
Michael wanders past, looking lost.

He glances at Ellie, as he looks around for somewhere to fit
in. For a moment, he pauses. There's something about her that
makes him smile.

However, the girls are locked in to their chit-chat. She
doesn't notice him at all.

Looking ahead again with a sudden blink, and looking around
at the décor and design of the school, Michael carries on.

He wanders past other groups of friends. People chatting. People laughing.

Each group he passes, the world grows duller. He shrinks away.

INT. SCHOOL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Michael makes his way down a corridor, squeezing past a group of friends blocking the doorway, and enters the school hall.

The vast, open, wooden-floored room is jam-packed with students of all varieties.

Michael, standing on a slightly raised outer walkway of the hall, looks over the sea of students. His face drops as he doesn't recognise a single person.

He swallows hard, then carries on around the hall to the exit.

INT. EMPTY CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Finally, Michael finds a place--the only one in the school it would seem--where there's no one for him to be afraid of. The corridor he stares down, as he stands in its doorway, is empty.

Taking this rare opportunity, Michael moves aside, standing against a wall, and pulls out his timetable: a folded piece of A4.

As his eyes scan the words--his classes and their rooms listed--Michael begins to feel himself pulled away from the present.

MICHAEL'S DAD (V.O.)

You seriously think this is how I wanted my life to go? This--all of this shit?

Michael clenches his jaw, as echoes of the past ring in this present moment.

MICHAEL'S DAD (V.O.)

I gave up everything so that you wouldn't have to be alone raising him, but I'm tired! Can't you see that?

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - STAIRS/HALLWAY - EVENING [FLASHBACK]

Michael's dad (35) stands in the hallway facing his wife, Michael's mum (34). Streams of tears are running down her face. His arms are extended as he shouts.

MICHAEL'S DAD

I go out and work. I come home and work. I never get a rest! Even when it comes to us, I have to slave away to feel even the tiniest bit of love or affection from you nowadays.

MICHAEL'S MUM

Oh, so this is my fault, is it?

MICHAEL'S DAD

No. Not all of it. I was an idiot, okay? I get that. I picked a dead-end job. This house. That's on me. But--

(scoffs)

--it all felt worth it at some point. It doesn't feel like that any more. And, honestly? I'm starting to feel like my biggest mistake in all of this was thinking you'd still love me when all we meant to each other was jack-shit until Mikey came along!

Michael, quietly sat on the stairs, looks at the front door blankly. He is completely vacant in the eyes. There's nothing behind them, even as tears well up. Even as his lips quiver.

In his ears, he wears a pair of earphones. He has a classical piece playing, in an attempt to drown out the argument.

MICHAEL'S MUM

(tearful; voice breaking)

Don't... Don't say that. I loved you. I promise I did.

MICHAEL'S DAD

Loved?

(nods head)

Loved. So, what? You're just admitting now that you don't any more?

The music begins to drown out his parents shouts, as it grows louder and louder in a beautiful crescendo.

Michael looks down, at the sketchpad on his lap, and his hands begin to work. He begins to sketch a still-life of his front door, as the sun shines through the small windows on either side.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MICHAEL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Michael, with pen in hand, quietly scribbles in his workbook's margins. He doodles beautiful micro-scenes where each stroke of the pen feels important and seen.

As he doodles away, lost in his own mind, he has his head down and his eyes locked on his page.

The teacher, at the front of class, is sat behind their desk. They tap away at their keyboard. The rest of the class is chattering away in whispers, but the whole classroom has a low hum about it.

The odd student here and there scribbles something down in their book, to seem like they're working, but most turn and chat to their neighbours--beside or behind them.

Amidst this gentle chaos, Michael remains focused on his doodling: the only one with his head down and being quiet.

INT. ELLIE'S CLASSROOM - SAME TIME

In an almost identical fashion, Ellie sits amongst chatters and unfocused students with her head down and her focus on getting her work done.

Ellie diligently scribbles notes into her workbook, copying from the whiteboard at the front, with an occasional glance up at it now and again.

However, Ellie is soon distracted, as a girl in front of her, leans back to talk. Ellie puts her pen down and begins to chat, smiling and laughing as she does so.

Her world pops with colours. The classroom, bathed in late morning sunlight from the windows, glows brilliantly.

INT. SCHOOL CANTEEN - DAY

Still with her friend from the classroom, now both carrying lunch trays, Ellie walks through the canteen towards a table at the far end.

ELLIE'S FRIEND

So then he said 'anything?' with, like, this really flirty undertone to it. I told him where I draw my line--no nudes, nothing below the waist, and no face--but apart from that--

Ellie nods along, but her attention is stolen by a student as she passes. Michael sits alone, huddled into a corner, and is drawing a beautiful impressionistic piece.

She continues to walk, as her friend talks but isn't heard, and struggles to pull herself away from Michael and his artwork.

ELLIE'S FRIEND (CONT'D)

Ellie? Are you listening? What do you think I should do?

Ellie suddenly turns, bringing her attention back to the conversation at hand.

ELLIE

Oh. Uh, don't do anything you're uncomfortable with. I mean, I'd advise against any kind of nude-like photo being sent, but you do you. Make sure you have a timer set on it, though, so he can't screenshot it or anything.

Ellie's friend nods, understanding and formulating a plan in her own mind, and they move closer to the table where their other friends are sat.

However, just as they're about to sit down, Ellie looks back over at Michael, on his own. She squints, thinking hard, then smiles at her friend.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna go... speak to someone. I'll be back in a minute.

Her friend, now amongst others as she's seated at the table, nods and hums but pays no real attention to Ellie's words.

Ellie, with her tray still in hand, walks back over to Michael and sits down opposite him.

He looks up sheepishly at her sudden arrival.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
(with a kind smile)
Hi.

MICHAEL
(anxiously)
Hi?

ELLIE
I saw your drawing as I passed.
It's really good. You don't mind me
sitting here, do you?

MICHAEL
Uh, no. No, not at all.

Michael looks at her, as she starts to eat. He's baffled and is making no attempts to hide his confusion from showing on his face.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Why?

ELLIE
Why what?

MICHAEL
Why are you sitting with me?

ELLIE
So I can watch you draw.

Michael slowly nods, but still doesn't quite get it.

MICHAEL
Right... I mean, it's not usually a
spectator sport. I don't know how
interesting it'll be for you.
(BEAT)
Wouldn't you rather sit with your
friends and... chat or something?

Ellie shrugs. She looks back to her friends, Michael's gaze follows, and they're all chatting amongst themselves without her.

ELLIE
(looking back at him)
I'm alright. Plus, we can chat. You
know, as you draw.

Michael pulls his attention from Ellie's friends, giving it to her. He blinks a few times, in quiet shock, then nods.