

GUNPOWDER VALLEY

A deeply unlikeable journalist from the present day seeks redemption in 19th century industrial Cornwall.

Leighton Crossley is a real piece of shit. 20 years as a tabloid gossipmonger, selling any celeb scoop he can get his mucky hands on. Who cares if they're true? True doesn't buy BMWs. Lately, he's lined his pockets by levelling hit pieces at a TV presenter who once left her baby unattended in the car. In the eyes of his readers — who incidentally are quite keen on bringing back capital punishment — that's a hangable offence. For Leighton, she was a reliably easy target.

And then the silly bitch topped herself. Just like that, he's dropped by the rag, left on read by his so-called-friends, and exiled to his bachelor's bolthole in West Cornwall. Worse, for the first time in his 42 years, he's being nagged by what he can only assume is...his "conscience"?

That's why Leighton is presently wandering the rain-slicked and mossy ruins of the Perranooth Valley Gunpowder Mill — a key player in Cornwall's nineteenth century mining industry. It's well after dark, and he has a sixth or possibly eighth can of Carlsberg in his fist. As he slips from the top of a really *very* high wall, Leighton considers that if he dies now, he probably deserves it.

Instead, he awakes to the noise and grime of a working day at the mill, circa 1870. Some fucking hangover. He'll later learn he's arrived approximately one month before the unexplained and suspicious explosion that destroyed (or rather *will* destroy) the mill, killing dozens of workers.

For now, Leighton stumbles into the village — where he discovers that ranting about being from the future gets you carted off to the madhouse. Given his history of hounding mentally ill celebs, you might call the week he spends sampling the notoriously inhumane conditions of the Cornwall County Asylum "a taste of his own medicine"...

In a moment of lucidity between beatings, Leighton makes the connection. He's seen *Life on Mars*. Sure, he can't remember how it ended, but he's now pretty sure he's in purgatory — punishment for his complicity in the TV presenter's death — and becomes convinced that if he can somehow prevent the Perranooth Valley explosion and save its victims, maybe he can also save his shitty ink-stained soul.

To do this, Leighton must repurpose his investigative skills for good. Ugh. He'll dive into a dark world of black powder politics and even darker mines, grifting to gain the trust of an eclectic cast of Cornish labourers, landowners, lawmakers and even a lovely landlord's daughter or two (put the room on the expense account), to uncover who is responsible for Perranooth Valley's looming fate. But first, he's got to get out of this fucking asylum.

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Gunpowder Valley is a six by one-hour black comedy-drama with conspiracy at its core, populated by characters you'll hate to love. Call it *Succession* with steam pumps...or *Taboo* ft. Piers Morgan.