

"Stolen Love Songs"

by

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**Opening Scenes.(First Draft)**

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE LAWN OF A WELL-KEPT GARDEN. LONDON. DAY.

The image is slightly sepia to create a sense of past.

ELLIE SWAN (35) perches elegantly on a wicker chair. She is dressed in a spotless Edwardian outfit with a large white hat which casts a shadow over the table on which she writes. A china plate containing cucumber sandwiches with the crusts removed sits next to a crystal jug of home-made lemonade. A pair of lace gloves rest on the table edge.

Ellie pauses and scans the whale-bone writing paper. Her voice is cut-glass.

ELLIE

(v/o)

Dear Mr Danceney, I am greatly heartened by your kind words and ask that you do not think too harshly of me if I do not answer your request directly...

She looks up from the letter and sighs. DEREK HODGKISS (30) crosses her line of sight carrying an antique camera and tripod. He wears the clothes of a 19th Century Gamekeeper and speaks much the same.

HODGKISS

Are you ready Miss Swan? You did say two o clock.

Ellie looks up at the sun.

ELLIE

Goodness is that the time?

Hodgkiss sets up the camera and attaches the velvet curtain at the back.

He disappears under the hood.

Ellie corrects the angle of her hat and carefully puts on her lace gloves.

HODGKISS

All set m'lady?

ELLIE

All set Hodgkiss.

Hodgkiss looks through the lens.

Ellie is framed in the black rectangular letterbox, but the image is naturally lit and no longer sepia.

The sound of a mobile phone ringtone ("Saturday Night" by Whigfield) is heard.

Hodgkiss' head jerks under the camera hood.

Now visible in the camera's viewfinder above the tree-line is a large tower-block.

Hodgkiss reaches into his pocket and pulls out his phone, he turns away from Ellie and answers with a hoarse whisper, his voice still coarse but now less affected.

HODGKISS

Look Pete, I told you I was  
busy... what...yep I'm with crazy  
mary...I'll be there eightish.

He shrugs his shoulders at the disgruntled Ellie.

INT. HALLWAY. ELLIE SWAN'S HOUSE. LONDON. DAY.

The image is once again sepia.

"La Traviata" plays softly in the background as Ellie walks down the long hallway of her mid-terrace Victorian house. Either side of her the walls have been painted to represent a sunny poppy field. She stretches out her arms and touches the walls as she moves, smiling, remembering.

INT. LIVING ROOM. ELLIE SWAN'S HOUSE. LONDON. DAY.

As she enters the living room the music gets louder: an old brass phonograph plays in the corner. The room is in keeping with her style of dress. Fresh flowers and a large easel are either side of the bay windows. The canvas shows a moustached man playing a game of croquet in front of an imposing country house.

Hodgkiss follows behind her, carrying an exposed photographic plate.

She falls into an armchair, knocking over a pile of envelopes resting on the arm.

As she stoops to collect them, "Final Demand". "Council Tax". "Bill Payment" are visible, printed in bright red lettering, unnatural against the otherwise sepia tone.

ELLIE

Oh dear oh dear. Tradesmen are  
so tiresome, aren't they? They  
will insist on being paid.

HODGKISS

Yes we do.

She lets out a girlish giggle.

ELLIE

Oh Hodgkiss. You are not a tradesman. You're my knight in shining armour.

She points to the photographic plate.

ELLIE

When do you think it'll be developed?

HODGKISS

I'll need some more money. Not many people do it these days. Why don't you just go digital?

Ignoring him, she walks to an elegant bureau in the corner of the room and opens the drawer, putting in the collection of bills and pulling out a mother of pearl purse.

ELLIE

Funds.

The purse is elegant but empty.

The needle on the phonograph becomes stuck and repeats a catchy three bars.

INT. RHYTHM FACTORY NIGHTCLUB. DALSTON. LONDON. NIGHT.

The sound of the stuck record becomes a sample. A bassline follows it.

Shattering strobe lights and thick smoke mix with the banging house music. People are sweating and dancing feverishly in the crowded club.

Ellie squeezes through the crowd, carrying a small G&T and large pint of lager. She still wears the Edwardian dress and receives a mixed reaction from the crowd. Some shake their head, others give her respect for daring to be different.

Hodgkiss is dancing in a tight circle with two men and three women.

Ellie hands him the lager and gingerly sips on her iced drink.

Hodgkiss punches the air with his fist.

HODGKISS

'Av it!

Ellie smiles weakly.

A bright yellow spotlight sweeps her face as she looks out over the crowd.

She closes her eyes and the flashing yellow strobe becomes sunlight streaking through trees. The sepia tone returns.

EXT. A FIELD OUTSIDE NATCHINGHAM HOUSE. DAY.

The bassline recedes to leave only the original violin sample, which carries on, dislodged from its scratch.

Ellie is freewheeling on a period bicycle through a field of dandelions towards a large country house.

MR DANCENY (36) plays croquet on the clipped lawn. He wears a pinstriped boating jacket and white trousers.

She waves to him as she approaches, but the effort of lifting up her arm causes the bike to wobble and she falls gently onto the grass.

Mr Danceny drops his croquet mallet and runs the short distance towards her.

He reaches down and gently sweeps her up.

She looks into his eyes, her face a mixture of relief and rapture.

He returns the smile, naturally at first, but his mouth continues to widen and his eyes start to cross. A yellow strobe catches his face.

CUT TO

INT. RHYTHM FACTORY NIGHTCLUB. DALSTON. LONDON. NIGHT.

A clubber, obviously enjoying his chemical high, gurns at Ellie with wide boss-eyes and leering grin.

She opens her eyes and shudders.