

BLACK AND EGG-WHITE

Evie Buller

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

MUSIC CUE: "Happy Together" by The Turtles.

Entirely in black and white.

Whilst the song is playing, this sequence will feel different from the rest of the film with quick cuts and unnatural movement, like a pop video.

A HAND hits off an ALARM CLOCK. Time 8 A.M, dated 20/03.

STEVE and CARLA sit up from the bed in unison. Middle-aged but looking old past their years.

Their faces are blank and tired as they turn to each other.

INT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

The couple stands at a double vanity sink brushing their teeth mechanically.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

A clinical-looking kitchen, lacking personality.

Carla cracks two eggs into a pan.

Steve watches from the kitchen table - the table sits in front of a window.

Carla scoops one egg onto each plate and places Steve's plate on the table in front of him.

She sits opposite.

They raise their forks to their mouths in unison, staring at each other in silence.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Steve drives, void of expression.

INT. LOUNGE. DAY.

Carla presses the TV remote, void of expression.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

In bed, they pull the covers over themselves and roll away from each other, back to back.

It goes dark.

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

A hand hits the alarm clock again. 8 A.M, now dated 15/04.

INT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

They brush their teeth at the sinks again.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Carla cracks an egg.

A plate of fried eggs is placed on the table.

They stare at each other as they eat.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Steve drives, void of expression.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

They roll away from each other.

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

A hand hits the alarm. 8 A.M, now dated 6/07.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

A plate of fried eggs is placed on the table.

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

A hand hits the alarm. 8 A.M, now dated 14/09.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

A plate of fried eggs is placed on the table.

They stare at each other as they eat.

END MUSIC CUE mid-song as a figure wearing RED passes the window - the only colour we have seen so far.

Action is now in a more naturalistic style.

Steve jerks his head towards the window.

STEVE
Did you see that?

CARLA
See what?

STEVE
Outside - by the window. I saw...

Carla places her cutlery down on the table. She doesn't attempt to look outside.

STEVE (CONT'D)
(cautiously)
I think I saw colour.

Carla shuts him down without hesitation.

CARLA
Impossible.

Steve stands from his chair, moving closer to the window and scanning outside for what he saw.

STEVE
(getting excited)
It was right there Carla, the red, you know I'd almost forgotten what it --

CARLA
(interrupting, short and impatient)
I saw nothing.

Carla stares at him, hard and unforgiving. Steve stares at her, hopes crushed, slowly sitting back down and fighting the urge to look back out the window again.

CARLA (CONT'D)
It's gone, Steve. Finish your eggs.

INT. CAFE. DAY.

Steve sits alone with a newspaper he doesn't seem to be reading and a coffee he doesn't seem to be drinking.

His eyes float around the room, never lingering anywhere for long, at various people doing mundane tasks - eating, drinking, on their phones. They all seem bored.

The bell above the door rings.

It doesn't catch Steve's attention until he notices the person whose entrance made it ring - a woman in FULL COLOUR - bright RED. The same red he saw pass by his window.

Her clothes are vibrant and her hair is beautiful and we can only guess her face is too - however, it is obscured as she sits at a table and pulls out a book, also in colour.

Steve watches, hypnotised.

The empty chair opposite the woman looms large and inviting but Steve remains where he is.

He sips a cup of coffee as he watches, once more eyeing up the empty chair, intrigue growing into jealous desire.

He firmly places his cup down and stands from his chair. A few heads turn at his abrupt movement as he walks towards the woman's table... and straight past it.

The bell rings as he exits.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

Steve firmly closes the front door behind him.

He wanders down the hallway, pausing at a closed door. The muffled TV drones on behind it.

He opens it a crack, peering through. Carla sits with eyes wide and blank watching it.

She turns her head but Steve closes the door briskly.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Carla pulls the covers over her and rolls away from Steve.

He remains sat upright, staring down at her.

He goes to touch her hair but pulls his hand away at the last moment.

STEVE
(quietly)
It's not gone.

Carla doesn't stir. The silence lingers. Steve distractedly pulls at and fidgets with the duvet cover.

STEVE
(staring ahead)
Would it hurt to scramble the eggs
again?

She remains still.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Carla? Why can't you do it anymore?

Carla turns onto her back, facing the ceiling.

CARLA
You know why.

STEVE
Do I? Do you?

Carla sits up and turns to Steve, staring accusingly. He continues to pull at the duvet, plucking up the courage to speak.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Carla, I know why we're stuck. I know we're in pain. But to be stuck so tight... how have we allowed it? Maybe the eggs, something small - they were her favourite. Maybe it would help. I've seen how it could be again.

CARLA
Help?

Carla scoffs with a disbelieving laughter.

CARLA (CONT'D)
What help do we possibly need? What good could it ever do? She's gone. It's all gone.

Steve falters under Carla's shortness. Carla leaves the question's tension in the air as she lies back down.

CARLA (CONT'D)
What you're seeing are delusions.

Steve remains upright, blinking and staring into the darkness.

INT. BEDROOM. MORNING.

Steve awakes. Carla's place in the bed is empty.

He rises and paces over to the door, listening to the sounds of Carla in the kitchen. He hesitates and turns back towards the wardrobe.

He opens it, rummaging through the top shelf. At the back, there is a briefcase, dusty and unused. He pulls it out and places it on the bed.

Inside there is a scrapbook and a teddy. Steve gently touches the teddy before pulling out the scrapbook.

Inside, the photos are in FULL COLOUR. They're of Steve and Carla looking a few years younger and a YOUNG GIRL around 5 years old.

Steve and Carla look full of life. Steve smiles with sad nostalgia as he looks through them and pulls one picture from its place.

It's of the three of them, sat at the same kitchen table with an array of exciting food.

The young girl is eagerly shovelling scrambled eggs into her mouth.

The words 'STEVE, CARLA, IMOGEN' are written beneath.

Steve turns his head towards the door, towards where Carla waits downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Steve enters the kitchen with urgency. Carla stands by the stove and turns to him, taken aback by his abrupt entry.

STEVE

We don't need help? Look at us Carla.

He looks around at the bleak kitchen.

He holds out the photo.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Do you not remember?

CARLA
(accusingly, offended)
Where did you get that.

STEVE
Tell me, do you remember what life was
like before?

CARLA
(without conviction)
Of course I remember.

STEVE
I don't think you do. This isn't the
life we agreed to, Carla.

CARLA
That agreement was taken when she was.

STEVE
I know. But we can have it back. Some
form of that life - we can go back to
it.

Carla grabs the photo from Steve's hand.

CARLA
We both know that can't happen.

STEVE
But if we just try. I've been seeing--

CARLA
(interrupting)
Enough of what you've been seeing. Why
can't I see it? Why's it not back for
me?

Carla throws the photo down onto the table, backing away to
return to the stove.

Steve looks at her guiltily. It's as if he almost wants to
tell her it's because she isn't trying, but knows that's not
fair.

He picks the photo up and walks to the door.

STEVE
I've been asking myself the same
thing.

Carla watches him go, the offended anger on her face slowly dissolving into a deflated upset.

She stares with longing at the table and the empty chairs.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. DAY.

Steve wanders through the graveyard, head down, ignoring his surroundings. Most graves are overgrown with tall grass and the trees are bare and dying. It's lacking life and love.

A bunch of dying limp flowers hangs from his hand.

He approaches a particularly overgrown grave, the gravestone almost entirely covered. He pulls away some of the weeds to reveal a name - 'IMOGEN', dated '2010-2016'

Steve runs his fingers over the words, staring almost in disbelief. He's clearly not familiar with visiting.

He places the bunch of flowers on the grave and pulls out the coloured photo from his pocket. He places it beside the flowers.

He stands to leave, eyes lingering on the grave and around the graveyard, unsure of what he's expecting.

Eventually, he turns to leave and doesn't look back.

The photo and the flowers lay still... until the colour from the photo slowly starts to seep into the flowers.

They gently bloom into roses, full of life and colour.

A hand, also in colour, reaches down and picks up one of the roses. We don't see whose hand it was.

EXT. STREET. DAY.

Steve walks along the street, dragging his feet along with a deflated effort.

The coloured hand holding the coloured rose appears behind him - as it approaches Steve, we see from behind that it is the woman in colour. She's wearing a vivid red.

He reaches Steve and gently grabs his shoulder.

Steve turns around and his face melts from confusion into recognition.

The woman is a younger version of Carla, a version that resembles the happy woman from the photos.

Steve appears lost for words as Young Carla takes Steve's hand and places the rose into it.

STEVE

(shaking his head)

How -- I want this back but we can't,
we can't go back... I don't know how.
She refuses to see.

YOUNG CARLA

She's not refusing. She just
understands you can't go back.

STEVE

Then what do we do?

Young Carla smiles a knowing smile that holds a sad,
sympathetic tone to it.

YOUNG CARLA

You move forward. You remember.

Young Carla lets go of Steve's hand.

YOUNG CARLA (CONT'D)

Through her pain, you help her
remember.

Young Carla backs away, leaving Steve stood with the rose in
hand. He appears small and hopeless within the large empty
street.

EXT. HOUSE. DAY.

Steve approaches the house, rose hanging down beside him.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Carla is sat at the table, back to the door, doing nothing
and looking vacant and lost.

Steve enters. Carla stirs slightly at the door closing but
doesn't turn around.

After a beat, Carla's nose twitches slightly. She frowns.

CARLA

Something stinks.

She begins to turn around.

CARLA (CONT'D)
(whilst turning)
What have you--

She cuts herself off as she catches sight of the rose.
There's a beat as she falters, taken aback by the colour.

STEVE
Isn't it beautiful?

CARLA
It's...

Steve approaches Carla and she flinches away - subtle, but the sight of the colour has thrown her off. She doesn't know how to react to it.

STEVE
It's everything you remember it was.
I'm not letting you block it out
anymore.

Steve takes Carla's hand, opening it up and placing the rose inside.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Please, give it a chance. For me.

Steve guides Carla's hand to her nose.

STEVE (CONT'D)
For Imogen.

Carla takes in a breath, allowing the scent of the rose to consume her.

As she does, she lets go of the tension in her body. She breaks into tears, collapsing into Steve's arms.

CARLA
I want to remember it all.

They stay in each other's embrace.

INT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

Warm light filters through the windows and soft music can be heard from downstairs.

The bed is empty and unmade, and upon it the scrapbook lays open, showing pages with photos missing.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING

The soft music is accompanied by sounds of cooking.

The coloured rose sits in a glass of water on the table.

Some of the images from the scrapbook have been framed and placed on the walls. Colour has gradually begun to leak into the black and white walls.

A box of cracked eggshells lies on the counter. A hand drops another eggshell on the pile - it's Steve's hand. He turns to smile at Carla who is sat at the table.

Steve walks over with two plates and slides one over to Carla.

It's two plates of SCRAMBLED EGGS, in full colour.

The rose sits between them.

They lock eyes, gazing at each other with warm smiles.

CARLA

Not impossible after all.

Steve laughs lightly.

STEVE

It never was. We just didn't know it.

The lady in colour walks past, but neither of them turn to look.

They eat the eggs.

For the first time, in this simplicity, they are content.