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A GYPSY'S WISH
(screenplay)

By

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(with input from the Romany community)

1. INT. BEDROOM. DAY:

Close up of female hands taking out a CD from its cover, putting it in CD player and pushing play button. Rock music blares out. The camera pans a single bedroom and finally comes to rest on Kelly, a sixteen year-old Gypsy girl. She is tall, slim and attractive and lays on her bed listening to the music. Staring up at the ceiling she mouths some of the words to the song.

2. EXT. GARDEN. DAY:

Two women in their late thirties are sitting on deck chairs in the back garden of a semi-detached house. One is Myra Webb, (Kelly's Mother) the other is Tracy, a family friend who still lives in a caravan. It is a tranquil scene apart from music playing in the background, which is coming from Kelly's bedroom directly above where the women sit.

MYRA:

The girl's a misery with her music up there.

TRACY:

She still obsessed with becoming Madonna or whoever it is this week?

MYRA:

It's all she's ever wanted to do be.

TRACY:

You don't get many Gypsies on top of the pops.

Both women lie back in the sun.

3. INT. KELLY'S BEDROOM. DAY:

Kelly opens her eyes and glances across at the guitar on a stand in the corner of the room.

4. EXT. GARDEN. DAY:

Tracy surveys the surroundings.

TRACY:

Been here awhile now haven't you?

MYRA:

Six weeks.

TRACY:

What's it like?

MYRA:

More room less freedom. You've got no other choice now with the government pushing us on sites built on rubbish dumps, next to train lines, motorways, or sticking us under electric pylons.

TRACY:

They just want to do is get rid of us. If it was legal they'd still be throwing us on the fires.

A pause:

TRACY:

How's Kelly taking it?

MYRA:

She misses moving about... she hates going to school. I had her teacher on the phone half an hour ago asking me where she was.

TRACY:

You can't blame the children for not going to school when you think about what they teach'em. History and philosophy, what good's that? If they taught'em how to earn a living they might get somewhere.

MYRA:

Another thing she don't like is people saying she's not a Gypsy anymore just because she lives in a house.

TRACY:

Being a Gypsies is in our blood and our bones. It's got nothing to do with where you live or what you do.

They listen again to the music coming from Kelly's room.

Her mother shouts up to the open Kelly's window.

MYRA:

Kelly, can you turn that music down!

5. INT. KELLY'S BEDROOM. DAY:

When Kelly hears her mother calling her she gets up and turns down the music. She moves to the corner of her room and picks up the guitar. She sits on the edge of the bed and begins to strum it and sings softly. On notepaper by her bed she writes down some lyrics.

6. EXT SIDE STREET. DAY:

Tom Wright, 16, is walking down a side street when comes up to a pub. Outside the pub is a notice and on it is a flyer with the name of a rock band with the date they will be playing at the pub. Tom looks at the poster, smiles to himself and moves away.

7. EXT. IPSWICH DOCKS. DAY:

Kelly sits on a bank over looking Ipswich docks. She stares out at the boats passing by.

On a bridge in the distance Tom watches her. He walks down to where Kelly is sitting. She doesn't look at him.

TOM:

Why weren't you at school today?

KELLY:

You have to ask?

A pause.

TOM:

Mr Conley was asking about you.

She shrugs. They both stare out at the boats in the docks.

8. EXT. STREET. DAY:

Tom and Kelly walk by the docks.

TOM:

What have you been doing all day?

For the first time Kelly smiles and looks at him.

KELLY:

I've been working on my song. It's nearly finished.

TOM:

The Crash are playing at the Drum and Monkey at the end of the month.

KELLY:

Who are the Crash?

TOM:

You know Craig Taylor from school?

KELLY:

That twat.

TOM:

Well he has a brother who is not such a twat who plays in a band called the Crash.

KELLY:

So?

TOM:

So maybe he'd let you sing your song at the gig.

KELLY:

Why would he?

TOM:

I don't know, maybe he wouldn't, but it's worth asking isn't it?

A pause.

TOM:

Look, I know where they rehearse.

She looks unsure.

BOY:

Are you serious about becoming a singer or not?

9. EXT. GYPSY CAMP. DAY:

Several caravans on the side of the road.

10. INT. CARAVAN. DAY:

Charley, an eleven year old girl is sitting on a side bunk talking to another girl about the same age through the caravan window when her mother, Tracy from scene one, hits her playfully with a pillow.

TRACY:

Charley, I've told you once already. You're going to be late, *(to girl outside)* and you...

Maria, Tracy's eldest daughter appears behind her. Maria is fifteen years old, tall and slim with long dark hair and olive skin. She seems to be a little scared.

TRACY:

Maria, I thought you'd gone.

MARIA:

Mum, but I don't want to go to school.

TRACY:

We've been through this so many times. You've got to go to school. I've told you.

MARIA:

But they're so horrible to me.

TRACY:

In what way are they horrible?

MARIA:

They pick on us. They've got gangs.

TRACY:

Look, I've told you before, you just go and tell the teachers alright? Now get moving.

MARIA:

The teachers don't listen to us though Mum. They don't care about us.

TRACY:

If you get that kind of thing from the teachers, then you come back here and you tell me. But you've got to do it, the time that it happens. I can't do anything about it now. Now get moving.

11. EXT. OUTSIDE CARAVAN. DAY:

Maria steps out of the caravan followed by Charley. Their mother follows but stops at the door of the caravan and speaks concern.

TRACY:

Maria, take care... right?

12. EXT. SCHOOL. DAY:

Bill, and Maria walk up to the school gates, when they reach them they stop.

MARIA:

If anyone calls me a dirty Gypsy today I'm going to pogger'em. I've had enough of it.

Bill smiles ironically, winding her up.

BILL:

You're supposed to tell the teacher, remember?

MARIA:

Like that'll do a lot of good.

BILL:

You can't blame the teachers in a way. Most of them are middle class white people, what would they know about racism.

MARIA:

(looking into the distance)

Here comes Tom and Kelly.

Kelly and Tom walk up to them.

BILL:

(to Kelly)

Hello songbird.

KELLY:

All right?

TOM:

Hi'ya you lot.

BILL/MARIA:

Alright, Tom.

In the playground they spot a group of three boys and a girl together who are all looking in the direction of the Gypsies. One of the male members of the group in particular seems to be aggressive. Tom gestures toward them.

TOM:

Our friendly neighbourhood racists are here I see.

Tom waves patronizingly at them. Bill hasn't taken his eyes off the group.

BILL:

(to Kelly and Maria)

If anyone of them says anything to you today, tell me and I'll sort it.

Maria nods.

Bell rings.

TOM:

Better put a move on, we're all going to be late for class.

He looks at Kelly.

TOM:

And some of us are already in trouble.

Kelly gives him a knowing look and they all move toward school. Kelly looks up and sees a male teacher (Mr Conley) looking out of a first floor window at her. She stops for a moment, they make strong eye contact, then she moves on.

13. INT. CORRIDOR: DAY:

Mr Conley is waiting outside Kelly's classroom when she comes out. He is tall, slim and in his early forties. He is stern but fair and is respected while at the same time a little feared by the pupils.

MR CONLEY:

Kelly.

She stops when she sees him but doesn't reply.

MR CONLEY:

You weren't in school yesterday. Why?

KELLY:

I didn't feel very well.

MR CONLEY:

You didn't report in sick.

KELLY:

I forgot.

MR CONLEY:

We had to call your home. Your mother didn't seem to know where you were.

She doesn't reply.

MR CONLEY:

Kelly, this makes four times you haven't turned up for school without giving a good reason in the last month. If this goes on I'm going to have to call in your parents. Do you understand?

Kelly nods her head.

MR CONLEY:

I don't want to do this but you're leaving me no option.

Still no reply.

MR CONLEY:

Do you have anything to say for yourself?

KELLY:

I told you, I was sick.

14. EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY:

Kelly sits alone on some stairs leading to the school corridor watching other young people talking together when Tom walks down the stairs and sits beside her.

TOM:

You still here?

KELLY:

What?

TOM:

It's ten past eleven. I thought you'd be over the fence by now.

KELLY:

Very funny.

TOM:

I spoke to Richard Taylor last night.

She gives him a quizzical look.

TOM:

You know, Craig's brother who plays in a band? They're rehearsing tonight. I told him about you and said we'd drop by.

KELLY:

Tom... I'm not sure I can sing in front of a band. I've only ever sung on my own before...

Tom sees Kelly's vulnerability and as she emotionally reaches out to him.

TOM:

I know you can do it.

She still looks doubtful.

TOM:

I'll be there with you.

A pause. There is a look more than friendship shared between them. She is a little frightened by it and looks away.

TOM:

We can ask Bill and Maria to come as well if you like.

15. EXT. CORRIDOR OF MEDIA HOUSE. NIGHT:

Tom, Kelly, Bill and Maria make their way through a large media house in the town known at The Point. They all look apprehensive, including Tom who is trying his best to appear relaxed. As the four youngsters make their way tentatively along the corridor music is heard in the background. They soon come upon a door behind which the music is coming. Tom gives one last look around then pushing the door open. A five-piece rock band are playing. All the youngsters look at each other in awe. When the band members see the youngsters in the doorway they stop playing. All is quiet for a moment then...

SINGER:

Yes?

TOM:

Ah... well... we... that is you said yesterday... that...

BILL:

(to singer)

Are you the Crash?

SINGER:

Yes. *(to Maria)* Are you the vocalist we're waiting for?

MARIA:

No.

Maria pushes Kelly, who has been hiding at the back, to the front.

MARIA:

She is.

16. EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY:

Kelly is sitting on a swing while Tom leans up against one of the iron poles, which help secure the apparatus.

TOM:

So what are you going to buy with your first million?

KELLY:

A boat.

TOM:

Seriously?

KELLY:

Well, I love the water and a boat's about the same size as a trailer. I'd have the two things I love most together.

He smiles at her logic.

TOM:

Makes sense.

KELLY:

Last night... in front of the band... I've never felt like that before. Like... I don't know... like I belonged there or something.

17. EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY:

The bullies are sitting on and around a table in the grounds. They spot Tom and Kelly near the swings.

CRAIG TAYLOR:

(to a boy beside him)

Look, it's another one of those Gypsies.

The four bullies get up from the table and move to where Tom and Kelly are.

CRAIG TAYLOR:

Well if it isn't our old friend Tom Wright, *(he looks at Kelly then back at Tom)* the Gypsy lover.

TOM:

Craig, don't you ever get tired of being a complete twat?

CRAIG:

(to Tom while looking at Kelly)

Why do you hang around these people? Gypsies do nothing but thieve, cause trouble and mess up the place.

TOM:

Saw that in a newspaper did you? I didn't know you could read.

CRAIG:

(to Kelly)

I hear you're singing with my brother's band on Saturday.

KELLY:

Well?

She doesn't reply.

CRAIG:

I wouldn't miss this one. In fact I'm going to bring along all my friends so they can enjoy themselves as well.

TOM:
(to Craig)

You don't have any friends.

Craig turns back to Tom.

CRAIG:

You'd better watch it, Tom.

Tom gets up and faces Craig.

TOM:
(to Craig)

You've said enough. Go back to pulling wings off flies tough guy.

CRAIG:

And if I don't, *(gestures to Kelly)* Gypsy Rose Lee going to put a spell on me?

Kelly stares at him for a long moment.

TOM:

Go. Now!

18. EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY:

Unseen, Bill watches what's going on from behind a wall.

19. EXT. SCHOOL GOUNDS. DAY:

Craig stares back at Tom for a few seconds, is about to say something then thinks better of it.

CRAIG:
(to his friends)

Come on. I don't like the smell around here anyway.

Tom and Kelly watch them go.

20. EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS. DAY:

Craig and his friends are smoking cigarettes as Bill approaches. Maria watches from afar. Craig stands up and moves toward Bill.

CRAIG:

What do you want, pikey boy-

Before Craig can finish his sentence Bill hits him in the face and knocks him down. Three of Craig's friends immediately jump on Bill. Maria joins in the fray.

21. INT. SCHOOL. DAY:

From inside the school building screams can be heard. Tom and Kelly, who are in the corridor, both look toward the sounds.

TOM:

It's Bill and Maria...!

They both run toward the commotion.

22. INT. MR CONLEY'S OFFICE. DAY:

The three Gypsies and Tom stand in a line in front of Mr Conley who sits at his desk looking up at them. Bill has a black eye while Maria's and Kelly's clothes and hair are dishevelled. Tom has blood on his cheek.

MR CONLEY:

I'll be talking to Craig Taylor and his friends after I've finished talking to you four. Well, what do you have to say?

MARIA:

It doesn't matter what we say. You won't believe us because we're Gypsies.

MR CONLEY:

That's not true Maria and you know it. I'm not racist and I won't be called a racist.

KELLY:

She didn't mean you personally she just meant... people.

MR CONLEY:

I know you have a tough time in school from people like Craig and his pals but-

MARIA:

Tough time? Going to school is the worst thing about my life. I've had to fight my way through school. I've tried telling the teachers but they don't do anything. They always take the other children's side!

MR CONLEY:

I know how it must feel-

BILL:

Nobody knows what it feels like unless they've had to face it. And you haven't.

23. EXT. TOM'S HOUSE. DAY:

Kelly knocks on the door of a semi-detached house on the outskirts of town. Tom opens it and smiles when he sees her then is immediately serious when he sees there is something wrong.

TOM:

What's up Kelly?

24. INT. TOM'S HOUSE. DAY:

Kelly and Tom sit side by side on the settee.

TOM:

You can't let Craig and the rest of those idiots stop you from doing what you've always wanted to do.

KELLY:

There'll only jeer and make fun of me... you know it.

Tom gets up and moves to window.

TOM:

People are just... ignorant.

KELLY:

It's not all one way. We could help a little by talking to people more. By saying how we feel about things... and what we want.

TOM:

Then why don't you?

KELLY:

We don't trust people from outside. Every time we see a picture in a newspaper or programme on television they're saying something bad about us. I don't mean the media should only concentrate on good things, just that they be fair to us.

A long pause as Tom moves back to the settee and sits with his back to her.

TOM:
You are going to sing tonight Kelly... aren't you?

25. INT. PUB. NIGHT:

It's a packed audience. The band is playing and everyone seems to be enjoying themselves. Tom looks around anxiously for Kelly but can't see her. Just then Craig and at least six friends walk in. They look at Tom. From a separate entrance Bill and Maria appear with no sign of Kelly. Bill and Maria join Tom. The two hostile groups "sharks and jets" glare at each other across the room. The band on stage finish playing their song. The singer gesticulates to Tom, trying to find out what's happened to Kelly. Tom turns to Bill.

TOM:
Where is she?

BILL:
I don't know. She left the camp about an hour ago. She said she was coming here.

MARIA:
Looks like she changed her mind.

Tom looks back at Craig's group, then back to Bill and Maria.

TOM:
I'm going to see if I can find her.
He leaves the pub.

26. INT. PUB. NIGHT:

SINGER:
(to audience)
Well we were supposed to have had a special guest for you tonight but it doesn't look as if she's going to turn up.

Craig and his groups start to slow handclap and look over to where Bill and Maria are sitting.

SINGER:
So we'd just like to say thank you and...

Just then Tom and Kelly come through the door and Tom shouts at the singer.

TOM:
Wait...! Please wait...! She's here...

Kelly moves to the front of the stage. Kelly looks out at the audience, (her mother? Mr Conley?) at Bill and Maria, Craig and his gang and Tom. The band start to play. Kelly gives a fantastic performance and the audience goes wild at the end.

Craig slow handclaps but it's clear he knows she can sing. Craig looks across at Bill and Maria, there is a grudging acceptance between the rival gangs. Craig turns to his friends and motions them to come with him. They leave the pub. Bill looks over at Kelly who smiles back at him. Maria is still applauding wildly. Kelly looks at Tom who to is applauding. She mouths a silent "thank you" to him then takes in the applause of the audience.

THE END.