

EPISODE 032

“You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith – Making Your Song’s Character Fall in Love

See the show notes at storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-032

[00:00:00] Hey, this is Melanie Naumann, and Herzlich Willkommen, welcome, to the Stories in Songs Podcast.

In today’s episode, we’ll go through the lyrics of the song “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith. The lyrics are worth taking a look at. They are so amazing to study how much the power of storytelling influences your audience’s engagement.

The lyrics of “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith are written so great, and they show you how you can make your song’s character fall in love. And you’ll learn exactly how you can pull that off too by using Pat Pattison’s Development Engine of the three boxes as an outline and fill it with life by looking at this song’s narrative techniques.

Furthermore, they offer you lots of great insights you can take away from them – especially when it comes to using the power of storytelling to keep listeners engaged from the first phrase to the last.

Sound good?
Let’s get started.

TEASER

The S.O.N.G. Framework

[00:01:29] So today, we will study the storytelling power of the lyrics of the song “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith using the S.O.N.G.-framework.



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This framework includes all the questions we need to answer when we want to find out how much a song uses storytelling to captivate the listener, hook them, engage them, and, most importantly, provide a meaningful message for their lives.

The S.O.N.G. framework consists of 4 steps: S like Summary - O like Observer - N like Narration - G like Gist.

So first, we'll summarize the song and determine its story content genre.

After getting an overview of what the song is about, we'll get to know the song's main character.

In the third step, we look at the key components that make a story work.

And lastly, we talk about the big takeaway the lyrics provide.

“You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith

[00:02:19] The song we will analyze today is “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” by American country music artist Toby Keith.

The song was released in 2000 as the fourth and final single from his 1999 album “How Do You Like Me Now?!”. “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This” reached number one on the US Hot Country Songs charts.

So let's go through the lyrics. As always, I'll read them to you first.

The lyrics are under copyright by Tokeco Tunes.

[[Video]]

<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/zwV2VM54CYA>

You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This Lyrics © Tokeco Tunes

*I got a funny feeling
The moment that your lips touched mine
Something shot right through me
My heart skipped a beat in time*



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*There's a different feel about you tonight
It's got me thinking lots of crazy things
I even think I saw a flash of light
It felt like electricity*

*You shouldn't kiss me like this
Unless you mean it like that
'Cause I'll just close my eyes
And I won't know where I'm at
We'll get lost on this dance floor
Spinning around
And around
And around
And around*

*They're all watching us now
They think we're falling in love
They'd never believe we're just friends
When you kiss me like this
I think you mean it like that
If you do, baby, kiss me again*

*Everybody swears we make the perfect pair
But dancing is as far as it goes
Girl, you've never moved me
Quite the way you moved me tonight
I just wanted you to know*

I just wanted you to know

*You shouldn't kiss me like this
Unless you mean it like that
'Cause I'll just close my eyes
And I won't know where I'm at
We'll get lost on this dance floor
Spinning around
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*They're all watching us now
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*When you kiss me like this
I think you mean it like that
If you do, baby, kiss me again
Kiss me again*

Now that we have read through the lyrics of “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith, let’s start taking the lyrics through the S.O.N.G. Framework to discover their storytelling power.

1. Summary (About)

[00:04:20] Let’s start with getting an overview of what the song is about. This first step is laying the groundwork for our lyric study.

So the first question is:

1. What is the song about?

That’s an easy question, right? But believe me, there are songs that leave you wondering with many, many question marks tangling over your head. Fortunately, this song doesn’t throw us into confusion. Instead, the lyrics have painted a great scene. It’s about two friends sharing their first kiss.

Unless you take into account the music video, then you might think differently.

I don’t know if you’ve seen the video “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This”. Make sure to check it out on YouTube. Anyway, I’ve just watched it for the first time, and personally, I thought it creepy.

Here’s the scene: A young man helps an attractive older lady clean up after a party. He kisses her on the cheek, and their little love story quickly starts with them dancing. Then he has to leave for college, and we get the typical breakup scene, but what a surprise, he returns by standing like a creep outside her door staring at her. And then they make out again and fall into a pool, and it seems almost like he’s trying to kill her. The video looks like an obsessive love story, and those stories never end well. Maybe that’s why I thought he wanted to drown her. Anyway, the video ends – watch out, spoiler – revealing that he was just daydreaming. So, he’s still a stalker who has not yet committed his crime.



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I'm deeply sorry for anyone who thinks otherwise. But that's what it felt like to me. I love the lyrics, though, and they are much more romantic than the video. In a sense, the video is made with a humorous touch, while the lyrics are deeper and more emotional.

So, I prefer listening to the lyrics and dreaming about that situation my way much more.

But well, let's continue our lyric study. After all, it's not about the music video but the lyrics.

And the lyrics are about two friends sharing their first kiss.

So we know the song's a love song because if the lyrics belonged to a scene from a movie or were a poetic summary of a chapter of a book, we'd think it was a love story, especially because the first kiss is a must-have moment of every love story. So there's absolutely no doubt what the story's content genre is. So it's a love story.

2. Do the song's first lines set the expectations of what the song will be about. Do they give a promise to the audience that they'll hear about a love story or the first kiss moment?

The first lines of your lyrics play an essential part because they have to hook and engage your audience. They have to make them want to keep listening to the rest of the song. And you can achieve that by either ...

- setting expectations to what the song will be about
- creating intrigue by opening a narrative gap or creating a question in the listener's mind
- creating tension by referring to a problem that needs solving

So basically, the first lines create the setup for the rest of the song. It's the foundation. Everything else you add has to build on top of your lyric's beginning.

Let's look at the first lines of "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This".

*I got a funny feeling
The moment that your lips touched mine*

That line gives the audience already a great insight into the type of song they're about to hear.

1. We know the lyrics will be about love, especially the first kiss.



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2. They set up the point of view of Direct Address, which lets us know that the singer takes on the role of the song's main character, and he's right in the action. And we're right in the unfolding event with them.
3. Furthermore, the lines hint at a problem. Like in the last two lyric studies to "Rumor" by Lee Brice and "Shut Up and Kiss Me" by Mary Chapin Carpenter, the problem doesn't seem big. But there's definitely something else going on because why would he say he "got a funny feeling". So we're intrigued to find out more about that situation.

Okay, let's continue by looking at some further love story must-haves.

3. Does the song use conventions of the love story genre?

Conventions are the conditions that set up those expected must-have moments of a love story. They refer to the setting, character, and catalysts to create the conditions for conflict.

So love story conventions are different character roles like a rival, helpers, and harmers.

Furthermore, conventions can also refer to the way the story moves forward.

For example, by including

- an external need
- opposing forces to overcome,
- secrets
- rituals,
- moral weight

In the song "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith, we encounter the following love story convention as the song's main character says to his girl:

Everybody swears we make the perfect pair

What do you think: What love story convention is at play here?

Yes, the other persons around them take on the role of helpers. They are in favor of the relationship.

We do not encounter any more love story conventions. There's no talk of a rival, and we don't know if dancing is something they do a lot. So we can't say it's a ritual. And there are no secrets since the song's main character is honest about what that kiss does to him.



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If you want to look at a song that uses more love story conventions in its lyrics and that fits very well together, check out our lyric study of “Rumor” by Lee Brice. That’s [episode 24](#), and I’ll include the link in the show notes. If you look at those two songs – “Rumor” by Lee Brice and then “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith, you’ll be surprised how well those two songs fit together. It’s like Keith’s song is the sequel to “Rumor” by Lee Brice, which was all about the anticipation of the first kiss as two friends were standing on the dance floor and everyone around them wanted them to be together. So sometimes it’s really fun and super amazing to see how you can put an entire love story together just by adding the right kinds of songs.

Now the next question in the first step of the S.O.N.G. framework is:

4. Is the song’s character talking about the distant past, their current state of mind, or an imagined future?

This question is important because it reveals ...

- if the song’s story moment has already happened and therefore is just a retelling of events that might have led to a certain situation or used to build a bridge to the present,
- or if the song pulls the listener right into an unfolding event
- or if the song is about an imagined, anticipated, or feared future event

In the song “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith, we are on the dancefloor with the two characters. So we are thrown into an unfolding event.

5. And lastly, what’s the point of view?

This question helps us know how intimate the relationship is between the listener and the song’s main character. It tells us how far the audience is away from the world of the song.

It also defines the relationship between the singer and the audience and sets the context for the ideas.

And “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith uses “Direct Address”. That’s the most intimate point of view.

The singer is talking directly to the audience or to someone they refer to as “You”. So Direct Address combines the 2nd person pronouns mixed with 1st person pronouns.



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Summary Step 1 - Summary

Okay, now we've finished the first step of the S.O.N.G. framework.

We now know:

1. The song is about two friends sharing their first kiss.
 2. So it's evident that the song is about love.
 3. And especially about the lover's first kiss.
 4. And the song's first line set up the expectation of a love song about a first kiss.
 5. The song uses the love story conventions of helpers.
 6. The character is speaking in the present moment, and we're right there with him as the events unfold.
 7. And he is using Direct Address. So the narrative distance is very intimate.
-

2. Observer

[00:12:08] Now that we have an overview of the song's moment, let's talk about the main character. As you know, a character and their actions make a story. So we must have a clear picture of who the person is at the center of your song.

The first question of the second step of the S.O.N.G. framework is:

1. What is the role the singer takes on in the song?

This helps us determine if the singer is taking on the main character's role in the song, whether he's just a bystander or an unidentified presence. But, again, this ties back to narrative distance and how closely connected we feel to the song's characters.

As we've already said as we talked about point of view, the connection between I and you in Direct Address is for communicating feelings and not facts. And "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith is a Love song. So the singer takes on the role of the song's main character.

2. Is the singer referring to another person?

This question serves to list all the characters present in the song. In addition, it's to have an overview of who else is taking part in that scene.



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So the song's main character is talking directly to his girl. And there are people around them. They are dancing on the dance floor, and he also mentions "everybody," probably referring to everyone standing around them.

Now that we know who is on stage with our song's main character, let's talk about him in more detail:

3. What does the main character in the song consciously WANT? What is his goal?

As we've discovered in [episode 29](#), your song's main character should be pursuing something they consciously want. They need an active goal, and something must be at stake if they don't try to get it. Otherwise, there wouldn't be a story and no reason for us to root for the song's character to get what they are after.

So what is it that the character in "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" wants?

Well, we just have to look at the story's content genre. It's a love song. And love stories are about the universal human value of love.

Again, if you want to find out more about universal human values, check out [episode 23](#) of the Stories in Songs podcast.

So in love stories, the main character wants to love or be loved. Or they try to get away from love. But their goal is always connected to love.

In "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This", the song's character, more precisely, wants the truth if his friend truly means everything that kiss implies.

Now that we know what the character wants, let's talk about his NEED.

4. What is the main character's NEED? What is his internal desire?

Needs refer to a character's thought, fortune, or character. Or speaking in storytelling terms of internal content genres: Needs refer to a character's status, worldview, or morality.

When we look at the character in "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith, we can make a case that his worldview is about to shift. He's about to find new meaning in an already existing relationship which is his friendship with this girl. They were friends, and



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suddenly – because of that kiss – he felt a lot more for her. And, as we know, he wants the truth about how she feels. So he needs to find new meaning.

When we talk about the universal human value of meaning, it belongs to the worldview subgenre of Education. This subgenre can be defined as follows:

“When a sympathetic protagonist, with a naive or cynical outlook, experiences an opportunity or challenge that enlightens them to a broader understanding, they find new meaning in their existing actions.” (Story Grid)

The spectrum of that value goes from Meaninglessness Masked As Meaning → Meaninglessness → Cognitive Dissonance → Meaning.

We can see that our song’s character thought that his relationship with her was once meaningless – speaking in the context of love. Remember, just in the context of love and attraction. But then she kissed him. So now he’s at the level of cognitive dissonance. He’s trying to figure out what that kiss means and what she truly feels for him. So he’s moving from meaninglessness to cognitive dissonance and he is on his way to finding a deeper meaning of what his relationship with her is truly all about.

So I hope that explains better why I think his Need is finding meaning.

Let’s continue with the next question:

5. Do we like the main character of the song? Does he have positive character traits? Or is it someone we despise and can’t consider a role model?

This question aims at understanding how we feel about the song’s main character. Do we like him? Or don’t we? If we don’t like that person, we’ll keep our distance from the song’s message. Who listens to someone they don’t respect, right? But, on the other hand, if we like that character, we are more likely to take the song’s message and apply it to our own lives.

Or see it like this: If we had a whiny and selfish character who doesn’t care about the people around them, we would probably not identify with them, which means we’d keep our distance from them, their situation, and what’s going on. If they somehow managed to overcome their external problem but didn’t become a better person in the process, we wouldn’t see that solution to the problem as valid because that person is still whiny and selfish. So, especially in love songs, you should really pay attention to your song’s main character and how you



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present him to your audience. Even if they have flaws, you can't do anything wrong as long as they can overcome those flaws and change for the better.

I like the song's main character in "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith. He's honest, and he respects their friendship, and even though he's aware of what the people around them think, he still gives her a chance to respond to everything that's going on. So he's very respectful. So in that sense, I root for him that she means how she kisses him.

Summary Step 2 - Observer

Okay, now we've finished the second step of the S.O.N.G. framework.

We now know:

1. The singer takes on the role of the main character,
2. and he talks to his love interest
3. He wants love, and more precisely, he wants the truth about that kiss.
4. He wants that truth because he needs to find new meaning in their existing relationship.
5. And the song's main character is someone we like because he has many positive character traits.

Alright, now we've got a solid understanding of what the song is about, and we are aware of who the main character is, what he wants and needs, and to whom he's talking.

3. Narration

[00:18:55] Now, let's study the storytelling power of the lyrics.

The first and easiest question is:

1. What are the characters literally doing?

In [episode 25](#), we talked about the songwriter's six best friends. That's a term Pat Pattison gave to the question of

- Who does something? Who acts?
- What happens?
- When does it happen?
- Where does it happen?



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- Why does it happen?
- How does it happen?

When we look at what our characters are literally doing in the song, we refer to the question of “What is going on”. To make that question easier to answer, we also look at the context. That means: Where is the scene happening, and when is it happening?

If we don’t answer any of those questions, the characters will float around in an empty space, and the audience doesn’t have any clue where or how to picture them. In “Shut Up and Kiss Me” by Mary Chapin Carpenter, [episode 28](#), we came across what it looks like or doesn’t look like when we don’t have any idea what the setting of our song’s scene looks like and how the characters move around on that stage.

In Keith’s song “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This”, we are zooming out from a very intimate camera perspective – their kiss – to the people around them, revealing they are dancing on a dancefloor tonight. So that’s when, where, and what our characters are literally doing.

Let’s move on to the second question of step 3.

2. What is the essential action of what the character is doing in the scene? What is on his secret agenda? What is he trying to achieve?

The Literal Action is what’s happening on the surface. The Essential Action is what’s happening below the surface or the subtext within the scene.

We know that our song’s character is looking for meaning. And he tries to discover the truth by applying the tactic of honesty. By talking honestly about what she does to him, he hopes she’ll tell him the truth. So that’s his intention. Somehow get to the truth.

Let’s move on to the next question:

3. Is there a problem the character is facing? Does something challenge him? Or is there some kind of conflict that he has to solve? If so, what is the central conflict the main character in the song has to deal with?

In “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith, the main problem that the song’s character faces is falling for his friend. And now he’s trying to make sense of what’s happening to him and what it all means.

Now let’s see if this problem was already used at the song’s beginning.



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4. Do the song's first lines introduce the problem the main character will have to deal with? And thus hook us and spark our interest?

The first lines go like this:

*I got a funny feeling
The moment that your lips touched mine*

He has a "funny feeling". However, he's not able to express what he feels as she kisses him. This loss of words shows his confusion about the situation. And it also shows that he has reached the stage of cognitive dissonance. So our song's character's problem gets already introduced in the song's first lines. Great job, Toby.

Alright, let's continue with the five commandments of storytelling.

Analyzing the scene told in the song.

[00:21:53] Alright, now that we really know what the character wants, needs, and the problem he's dealing with, let's look at the five commandments of storytelling. Those five commandments are the key elements that we need to call a story a working story.

The first question is:

5. What is the inciting incident?

An inciting incident is an event – either causal or coincidental – that thrusts the song's character into the story's main action.

This event is a stimulus that your character gets. It's something unexpected that they did not see coming and don't know how to deal with it OR they are so focused on achieving a particular goal that they are blind to everything that is going on around them. They just don't see what that particular event means to them. Or they ignore it completely.

In "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith, her kissing him is the inciting incident. That's the moment that throws him completely out of balance, and he doesn't know what it means.



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6. What is the turning point?

The turning point is the most important essential element of storytelling. It is why a character has to face a dilemma and make a choice to be able to move on. Because at that moment, the character realizes the true nature of the inciting incident. They were blind, but now they see what that incident truly means.

In the case of “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith, our character has gone through a series of progressive complications. Those progressive complications poke the character to make better sense of the inciting incident, but only when they hit the turning point progressive complication can they identify the inciting incident for what it truly means.

Now, if you want to explore progressive complications and how you can use them to develop your verses, listen to [episode 27](#) of the Stories in Songs Podcast. In that episode, we go through the song “Hero of War” by Rage Against and look at how you can develop your verses by using progressive complications.

In the case of “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This”, we have the following progressive complications that all happen after she kisses him. Remember, her kissing him was the inciting incident to our story moment.

1. Then “something shot right through” him.
2. His heart skipped a beat.
3. He notices “there’s a different feel” about her tonight.
4. He can’t concentrate as he suddenly thinks of “lots of crazy things.”
5. People around them think they are falling in love.

All those complications add up to the turning point progressive complication. It’s the moment that he realizes that she’s never moved him quite the way she moved him tonight. So his heart skipping a beat or noticing that “different feel” about her are all indicators that want to make him aware of what that inciting incident means.

Let’s continue with what’s happening after the turning point.

7. What is the dilemma that the character has to face? What are his options?

When a character experiences a turning point moment, then the value changes. The situation changes for better or worse. More specifically, the universal human value at stake shifts on the value spectrum to the positive or negative.



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In “You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This”, we have the universal human value of love that sits on a spectrum between love and hate with all kinds of levels in between and as he realizes what he feels for her, his relationship with her changes from friendship to possible lover. So it moves to a more positive place on the value spectrum of love. Friendship turns to love.

But what's the crisis he faces?

Well, he has discovered that he feels more for her than just friendship. But love takes two. So he's in a dilemma. As much as he enjoys that kiss, he can't commit to her unless she truly means that kiss, and she also moves their friendship up another level. So he can either just fool around with her, and the next day it's back to being friends OR he can confront her with how he feels and ask her about the truth of how she feels. He's risking their friendship, but there's a chance to end up at a much greater place.

8. What's the decision the character makes?

Now the fourth commandment of storytelling is the decision. We, as the audience, must be able to observe clearly what choice the character made. That means they have to turn their decision into a motor action or words.

And our song's character tells her how he feels and how much she has moved him. And he is asking her:

*They'd never believe we're just friends
When you kiss me like this
I think you mean it like that
If you do, baby, kiss me again*

So he is ready to commit.

9. What's the resolution?

The last commandment is the resolution. So what are the consequences of the character's decision? We don't know if she commits to him as well. But the last lines of the song are a repetition of the phrase “Kiss Me Again”. Maybe she did kiss him again, and now he just wants more. We don't know the outcome. It's not stated, but same as in the song “Rumor” by Lee Brice, we know those two characters know each other very well, and there must be a good reason why she kissed him in the first place. So there's no doubt in my mind that this story has a happy ending – unlike the music video.



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But even though we don't get a resolution, the character already knows what will happen if she kisses him. He sings:

*We'll get lost on this dance floor
Spinning around
And around
And around
And around*

I think that assumption is very likely to happen. So we can take it as a very possible and realistic resolution as well.

Change

[00:27:30] Alright, let's look at how the turning point led to a change in the character's situation or the way they look at the world. After all, stories are all about change. That's why it's good to look at the change in more detail.

10. Did the song's main character change his perception of the world around him after going through that situation?

How a character changes internally is tied to his Need. So we know our character was looking for a deeper meaning in their relationship. And he has found more meaning because I think they both end up together. So yeah, he has changed internally by discovering more meaning in his life.

11. So, to wrap it up, how did the situation change for the main character?

Well, his entire situation changed from being friends with that girl to being lovers. That's a great step up on the value spectrum of love. It's aiming right at the level of commitment.

12. Another interesting way to observe if the song is about change is to compare the song's first and last phrase. Can we see a difference between how the song started and how it ended?

Okay, here's how it started:

I got a funny feeling



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And the song ended like this:

Kiss me again

We can see the change that happened to the character reflected in comparing the song's first and last lines.

When you look at the character's external situation, then we know he's moved from friendship into a relationship. Every doubt from the beginning has been eliminated by him saying "Kiss Me Again". And remember, that kiss also sends his internal confusion into a state of cognitive dissonance. Saying "Kiss Me Again" shows that he's figured out what's going on, and he's able to make sense of that first kiss.

Again, great job because the lyrics include an external change of the situation and an internal change in the character's inner world. That's amazing and so important for a great love story.

Writing Techniques

[00:29:35] Lastly, let's talk about some of the writing techniques used in this song. This just helps us talk about some additional things we could apply or avoid in our songwriting.

The first question is:

13. Is the singer only revealing some general information, or does he go into the specifics?

As a rule of thumb, it's always good if your lyrics answer the following questions:

- Where is the scene taking place?
- When is the scene happening?
- What is happening? How do the characters move over our imaginary stage?

Unfortunately, we don't receive many clues about the surroundings. But that's okay because the character is so focused on that girl and her lips and that kiss that he almost has tuned out everything that's happening around him. And that's understandable because she just kissed him for the very first time and what's going on inside of him and how his body reacts to that rush of emotion is more important than who else is on that dance floor dancing or standing at a bar laughing.



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The main thing is, they are not lost in an empty space, but they are on a dancefloor, and it's tonight. We know that much.

If you are eager to find out what a more specific dancefloor setting might look like in lyrics, check out the song "Rumor" by Lee Brice. We talked about that one in [episode 24](#). And again, that song is like the prequel to our situation in this song. So it's worth checking out "Rumor" by Lee Brice.

Another question about the writing technique considering the storytelling aspect is:

14. Is the song evoking specific pictures in the audience's mind by using imagery?

Imagery refers to figurative language to evoke a sensory experience or create a picture with words for your audience.

In "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith, he uses a simile to describe what's happening inside him. He says:

*I even think I saw a flash of light
It felt like electricity*

But we don't have much more descriptive language. It's all very down to earth and sounds very natural. Much like "Rumor" by Lee Brice, and I really like it.

Summary Step 3 - Narration

Okay, now let's quickly summarize part 3 of the S.O.N.G. framework.

We now know:

1. The song's character is sharing the first kiss with a friend.
2. And he needs to find out what that kiss means.
3. The problem is that they are friends, and that kiss changes how he feels about her.
4. The inciting incident was her kissing him.
5. The turning point progressive complication was realizing that his feelings for her had changed.
6. The crisis was deciding between fooling around or committing.
7. He decided to confront her with how he feels about her now.
8. We don't have a resolution, but we have a strong sense of a possible happy ending. Especially we see them keeping dancing.



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4. Gist

[00:32:32] Alright, now let's talk about the song's message and if it provides a takeaway for the listener.

1. Looking back at the problem the character had to deal with in the song, did he solve it?

If you want to figure out the message of your lyrics, it's best to concentrate on the problem first and check if the character has overcome it or if he failed.

Knowing if the problem was solved will give you a great clue to what the song's message could be.

In the case of "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith, the problem or challenge our character faced was that suddenly and because of that kiss, his feelings changed for that girl. So that's what he had to deal with and somehow make sense of. And he did figure out how important she is to him, and he lets her know what she's doing to him and how he feels about her. So he can overcome his problem.

Now that we know he was able to solve the problem, we can focus on the lyric's message.

2. What is the message of the song? What can the audience take away from it?

We know our song is about the universal human value of love. Love is at stake for our song's character. So that value is what we'll include in our message. And since our song's situation is very positive and even changes from good to better, it's going to be a prescriptive message. So the takeaway is along the lines of "Love triumphs when friends can show and talk honestly about their feelings without being scared to confess how much they mean to each other."

The last question is:

3. Does the title refer to the message of the song?

If your song's title and your message are connected, your audience will have it easier to remember your song. Once they hear the title, they'll think of the takeaway. And since the



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lyrics painted such a great emotional experience, the title of “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” immediately reminds the audience of that great narrative in the lyrics.

Summary Step 4 - Gist

Okay, now we’ve finished the fourth and last step of the S.O.N.G. framework.

We now know:

1. The character solved the problem he faced.
2. So the song’s message is: “Love triumphs when friends can show and talk honestly about their feelings without being scared to confess how much they mean to each other.
3. And that message refers to the song’s title “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” because that kiss was the inciting incident that made the special moment of honesty between those two people possible.

What we’ve learned in this episode:

[00:34:57] Great. We’ve now talked about the four steps of the S.O.N.G.-framework and analyzed the lyrics to the song “You Shouldn’t Kiss Me Like This” by Toby Keith.

What stands out the most about those lyrics is how they used progressive complications to make the character aware of what that kiss – the inciting incident – truly means. Just look at it like this.

If she had kissed him, and he hadn’t experienced:

1. “something shooting right through” him.
2. His heart skipped a beat.
3. He notices “there’s a different feel” about her tonight.
4. He can’t concentrate as he suddenly thinks of “lots of crazy things.”
5. People around them think they are falling in love.

If all of those little things that poke the character weren’t there, then he would have never noticed the way she moved him by that kiss. He would not have been able to understand what her kiss really meant. And so, their friendship wouldn’t have evolved, and he wouldn’t have found more meaning in their relationship.



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So this song is another great song to study progressive complications. Just look at the lyric structure. You got the inciting incident in the first verse. It's right there in the second line.

*I got a funny feeling
The moment that your lips touched mine*

And then, the verse continues with the progressive complications.

The second section includes another progressive complication, but this time it's not internal anymore. It's not about what our song's character feels, but it's about the way the people around them look at them.

*They're all watching us now
They think we're falling in love*

So you can see how the chorus gains more meaning because now it's not only about our song's character, but the stakes got higher because of the people watching them. So what was an internal problem in the first verse has now become an external problem. And that's great verse development.

And then we got the last verse that includes the final progressive complication that changes the value. It's called the turning point progressive complication.

*Girl, you've never moved me
Quite the way you moved me tonight*

So if you'd take "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith through the three boxes that Pat Pattison uses to develop the verses, you have something like:

1. Your kiss gives me the butterflies – "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This"
2. People think we're falling in love. – "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This"
3. I've never felt this way before about you. – "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This"

You can see how each box gains more meaning and weight and adds to the chorus. That's why we stay engaged until the end of the song. We're just right in the moment with the song's characters, and we enjoy ourselves. The song's first lines hooked us, and they didn't let go of us until the song's end because they used the power of storytelling. And even now, we're still thinking about those two and the great line "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This".

I love the lyric writing of Toby Keith's song.
What do you think about it?



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Song Exercise - The First Kiss

[00:38:19] Lastly, let's talk about how you can use "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" by Toby Keith as an inspiration to write your lyrics about the first kiss between friends.

You don't need to take any notes. You can find a transcript of this episode in the show notes on storiesinsongs.com/podcast. You'll also find a PDF you can download with this week's exercise.

And here's what the exercise looks like:

I want you to write your original lyrics about how friends fall in love by either sharing a first kiss or by experiencing their first intimate connection.

Use the following criteria as a guideline:

1. Use **present tense** to answer the following questions:
 - a. Where is the scene happening?
 - b. When is it happening?
 - c. What is happening = what are the character's literally doing in your scene? What can we observe or watch them do?
2. Use **direct address** (pronoun "I" and "you") to show the intimacy between your song's main character and their beloved.
3. **Develop your verses** like this:
 - a. First Section: Include the inciting incident that threw your song's character out of balance. This incident introduces the problem your character has to deal with: making sense of what just happened. Also, include internal progressive complications that show what's going on inside the character after experiencing that inciting incident with his friend.
 - b. To raise the stakes, include external progressive complications in the second section.
 - c. The turning point will be an action by their beloved, or they experience a revelation. Save the turning point for the last verse of your song.
 - d. It's unnecessary to include the crisis explicitly, but it should be clear what's at stake for the character and how their dilemma might look.
 - e. Show the character's decision by using motor action or spoken words. You can put that either in the last section after the turning point or into the chorus.



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- f. You don't have to include the resolution of how the beloved responds. But the key is to make it evident to the audience that the couple has the same feelings for each other, and there will be a positive outcome.
4. You can also take your idea through the **three boxes**. Feel free to use the boxes of "You Shouldn't Kiss Me Like This" as a foundation to develop your idea.

I hope you enjoy this task.

If you have any questions or want to show me what you've come up with, feel free to write me an email at write@storiesinsongs.com.

Next time, I'll see you when we talk about dynamic characters in songwriting and how you can create three-dimensional characters in your lyrics.

Thanks a lot and see you next time.

Bis bald und auf Wiedersehen, Melanie

Show Notes

- Finding Topics to Write about by Looking at Universal Human Values – <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-023/>
- "Rumor" by Lee Brice – Using Multiple Love Story Conventions <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-024>
- A Songwriter's Six Best Friends - ADVANCED: The Story Grid Diorama Model <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-025>
- "Shut Up and Kiss Me" by Mary Chapin Carpenter – Avoiding Contradictions in Lyrics <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-028>
- Develop your Lyric's Verses by Using Progressive Complications: <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-027>
- Every Character WANTS something. But how do you figure out WHAT that is? <https://storiesinsongs.com/podcast/episode-029>



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