

Paradise Falls

Once was a town
called Paradise Falls
full of bad man and loose women
and a couple of Hare Krishnas
and in this town
called Paradise Falls
there was a legend of a man
more than a man really
he was a legend
so there was this legend of a legend
named Steve

Steve had stringy red hair
off-kilter grey eyes
worked in the Post Office
lived with his Mama
loved him some meatloaf
Steve smelled kinda funny
and was always a'muttering to himself
but every two months
in the town square
steve put on a show
that could dazzle a grizzly bear
 steve's puttin' on a show
 in Paradise Falls
 using nothing but 2 loaves of moldy bread
 a wire coat hanger & some spit
 he's puttin on a show
 a puppet show
 you all gotta go
 see steve's puppet show
 puppet show
now folk round them there parts
weren't the artsy types
but even old crazy Codger
stopped his shootin and droolin to see Steve's puppets foolin
even Dastardly Dan
took a break from his Dastardly ways
to giggle like a schoolgirl
in dastardly glee at the puppet show of Steve
now folks round them there parts
didn't got no stomach for Shakespeare
no patience for Pollack
nor no hankering for Handel
but even Franny the old fat one-eyed syphilitic gout-ridden one-armed consumptive whore with a
heart of gold
would stop her fuckin' for a chance to see the puppets being diddled by Steve

steve's puttin' on a show
in Paradise Falls
using nothing but some spam
a thimble and a comb
he's puttin on a show
a puppet show
you all gotta go
see steve's puppet show
puppet show

This here song cycle
is gonna tell the legend of steve
gonna sing about his true love Evelyn
and their puppetical tragedy
the old woman's curse
and the day the turnip bled
 steve's puttin on a show
 in Paradise Falls
 using nothing but some tampons
 a frying pan & a stick
 he's puttin on a show
 a puppet show
 you all gotta go
 see steve's puppet show
 puppet show

When Puppets Are Your Friends

some people see a stick but i see a stick man
ready to take a stand
some people see a bag but i see a kind nun
smiling and shading her eyes from the sun
some people see things as merely things
but things are stories in waiting
waiting for me to make them be
waiting for me to make them be

 when puppets are your friends
 you have all the friends that you'll ever need

some people see a tennis shoe but i see a dying prince
reaching for his true love
some people see a lipstick tube but i see a newborn
crying out in a tempest toss'd storm
some people see things as merely things
but everything has it's own story
waiting for me to make them be
waiting for me to make them be

when puppets are your friends
you have all the friends that you'll ever need

puppets are there when no one else
seems to ever stay
puppets are kind and make you laugh
and don't tell you to please go away
puppets see me as more than me
as the me I want to be
the stories they tell are the stories i tell
are the stories of me

when puppets are your friends
you have all the friends that you'll ever need

some people see a mitten but I see you smiling
and gently touching my cheek

when puppets are your friends
you have all the friends that you'll ever need

some people see a stick but I see you
i see you in everything

Evelyn

Evelyn
is really pretty with really pretty blue eyes
Evelyn
laughs like cherry blossoms in the spring
Evelyn
smells as sweet as honeysuckle pie
Evelyn
la la la la lie la la la la lie
evelyn & steve when they were nine
shared a kiss out back by the woodbine
evelyn & steve when they were ten
make a pact to get married sometime when
they were all grown up
but they they both grew up
and their promise got lost
like childhood gets lost
and the woodbine was cut down
by old man Crabtree
and the days just disappeared

Evelyn

moves like soft sunlight in the morning air
Evelyn
bright as the sun on a really really bright day
Evelyn
so beautiful that even the angels stare
Evelyn
la lair
 evelyn & steve when they were 11
 walked down by the train tracks, talked about when they were 7
 evelyn & steve when they were 12
 swore to each other that they'd each go through hell
 to be by the other's side
 to stay by the other's side
 but their promise got lost
 like childhood gets lost
 and the woodbine was cut down
 by old man Crabtree
 and the days just disappeared

Evelyn
evelyn evelyn evelyn evelyn
Evelyn
evelyn evelyn evelyn evelyn
Evelyn
evelyn evelyn evelyn evelyn
Evelyn
evelyn evelyn evelyn evelyn

Evelyn

His Puppet Shows

his puppet shows make me feel like a young girl once again
back when magic was all around us, we were nine or ten
 and the days were bright and clean
 but now the times are hard and lean
his puppet shows make me feel like a young girl once again

his puppet shows make me feel like i want to laugh & cry
the way he looks at me from behind his puppet's eyes
 and I love him in a way I'll always do
 but i just don't love him the way he wants me to
his puppet shows make me feel like i want to laugh and cry

he's the only person in the world who can always make me smile
he's the sweetest man I know, so kind and not a hint of guile

and we had our moment long ago
I just wish he could let it go
he's the only person in the world who can always make me smile

i love the way he brings life to the things of everyday
telling stories that enchant everyone no matter their age
he's like a wizard of puppetry
but he just doesn't pull my strings
if i could i'd be more than his friend
but i just don't love him that way in the end
I love the way he brings life to the things of everyday

his puppet shows make me feel like I want to laugh and cry

Her Name Was Sophie

her name was sophie
she was my daughter and the pride of my life
quick with lifting a wallet
laugh like her fathers as sharp as a well-honed knife
we traveled the world and we made our own way
we took more than what we needed and never chose to stay

then one day we came to this god-forsaken town
she was all of 10 years old when the puppet man came around
he did his show in the town square
and entranced sophie with his stories made of cloth & air

he took my girl
my darling girl
and set her on the path
to puppet school
he took my girl
my darling girl
and set her on the path
to puppet school

from that day forward she wanted to play with things
to make them dance and speak and move and make the sing
but that is not the life we were meant to lead
we take more than we give and we don't ever dream

i tried to show her, i tried to make her see
that a thief and a grifter like her mother was all she'd ever be
she laughed at me, laughed right in my face
and swore she'd leave me one day and go to a better place

he took my girl

my darling girl
and set her on the path
to puppet school
and just this year
my darling girl
got herself into
a puppet school
(in Connecticut!)

so now I'm returned to paradise falls
with magics in hand and spirits to call
i will make the puppet man's deepest fear come true
and he will watch as death comes for his love, Ms. Evelyn Drew

because he took my girl
my darling girl
and set her on the path
to puppet school
so now i take
my cruel revenge
try to save your love with puppets
puppet man
try to save your love with puppest
puppet man
he took my girl
my darling girl
and set her on the path
to puppet school

Steve's Final Show

The sun got itself swallowed up by stormclouds like hope from a junkie's eyes. Evelyn lay in a stone cold curse come as Doc Fletcher took a hit from his bright silver flask and shook his head in a sad slow "no."

"Ain't got the medicine to cure this magic," he said and wiped whiskey kissed lips. Steve looked up from Evelyn's face. A face as pale and still and distant as the moon on a winter's night. The old woman's words crackled in his mind like when little Johnny Rottenfang burned down the town's popcorn factory.

"You got just one chance, puppet man," she'd said, "to break this magic mine. Gotta make a puppet so real it will breath and bleed and die or your love will sleep forever and never open her lovely blue eyes."

Quiet as the moment before a thunderclap, Steve said, "One hour. Town Square. Puppet show. Tell everyone." Then he turned and ran out of Doc Fletcher's like he was a tiger with his tail on fire.

So the townsfolk of Paradise Falls all gathered. Old Man Crabtree with his chaw and h is cane. The Townsey Twins dressed like they was 16 again instead of pushing 50, snapping gum and making eyes at Dastardly Dan who curled his mustache but looked as grim and serious as a heart attack. Madame Laroux, dressed all in black like she'd done everyday for the 40 years since her husband had

been killed by that freak falling piano. Mike McGillicuty was there, high strung as an alley cat as he held hands with Gilbert Applehoople, that being the first time he'd done so in public.

There was Greebleburt M. Frostein, the town undertaker, and over there was Flossie Trippledime, who was dressed almost respectable as she plucked petals from flowers and sang softly to herself. Dawn's Grace and Divine Breath wandered through the crowd, singing Hari Hari Krisna, but didn't try to give any of their pamphlets away. Susie Narkle, Tom Frappeneut and Linda Sukeame all tried to start at each other while pretending to ignore each other at the same time. Same old story.

Mayor Flowerbottom kept trying to speechify, but would get a jab in the ribs from his sharp-elbowed wife Maria and a stern "shh," from his pretty little daughter Louisa. Sarah Jane Smith, the town reporter took notes on it all the while Crazy Coodger sang the latest Tin Pan Alley hits between declaring his divinity and sobbing like a baby with a sore tooth.

Lightning broke the sky as Steve came into the town square. A hush descended soes you could hear the very sky creak and groan under the weight of those black clouds that boiled above but held back the rain.

Steve took the stage and the crowd murmured: where were his puppets? Where were those whimsical and baroque contraptions made of metal and cloth, bits of old hairdryers and twisted tires? Those impossible figures that walked on whisks and flew on recycled tissue paper? Where were the puppets?

The air crackled. Steve stood on the small stage, looking out at the crowd like a mad saint. He smiled. Took two sticks from his back pocket. One one he put a small, shriveled turnip. On the other he tied a wreath of honeysuckle.

"I've got a story to tell," he said, quiet but soes everyone could hear, even Old Man Turnbolt with his bad left ear.

"It's about two people. And love."

And tell it he did. So true and clear that those sticks got realer and realer till it seemed like they was tellin' Steve 'stead of the other way round.

The story was a true one. So there was laughter and even Madam Laroux smiled with the Turnip chased the mountain lion all the while thinking it was a bear; there was misunderstandings and awkward silences and sometimes sorrow so deep it felt like drowning in thick black tar just like the Woolly Mammoths. There was anger and rejection and love. So much love. And those two sticks came so to life that not a single one of them there folk in Paradise Falls noticed Steve growing weak and pale and shaky. No siree. They was all caught up in the story that reminded each and every one of them about the purest most magical moment of their lives. They didn't see Steve gasping for breath, they didn't see him trembling like the last leaf on a tree faced by a cruel winter storm. They only saw a story of Turnip and Honeysuckle and a second chance to recall the best of themselves. The best *in* themselves. To remember that time, it may have been a single moment or it may have spanned decades, that they truly loved bigger than themselves.

Then

BLAM

Lightning struck and screams and shouts and the sky wept hard cold tears and Steve collapsed to the stage, already dead before he hit, the two sticks falling with him, but the oddest thing was, and every one there on that day of Steve's Final Puppet Show would swear on a stack of Bibles that this here is the truth:

That turnip was so alive, it bled to death even as the rain washed away the honeysuckle.

Cause don't you know it, but Evelyn woke up right then and there.

Epilogue:

And so the townsfolk of Paradise Falls made a pact. To honor the legend of Steve they would go out to the world and start puppet shows for grownups. In towns across the land, they went, bringing stories made of the things of everyday, stories of sadness and stories of play, stories of love and hate and wonder and silliness and freedom and truth and death and life and hope and more love.

And Evelyn, well Evelyn's story is a whole nother tale, but suffice it to say, she became the best puppeteer the land has seen since Steve himself and wherever she went she would share the story of her friend the puppet man, the man who give his life to save her. And she would tell the tale of the day when he made a puppet so real, so alive, that he made blood flow from nothing but a stick and a turnip.

When Puppets Are Your Friends (Reprise)

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when puppets are your friends
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puppets are there to make us laugh
and bring us closer together
to tell us stories about ourselves
and show us we are all brothers and sisters
puppets for children
and puppets for grown ups
and puppets for grown up, grown up children

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