

*Stella
Epiphany's
Yesterday*

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No one remembers how Stella Epiphany obtained her concussion, nor does Stella accurately remember much of anything before its apparent occurrence. She claimed to have been hit by a car while riding her bicycle. “In the city!” exclaimed the Good Samaritan who came to her aid, “haven’t seen one of those here for years!”

It was inside *Micky’s Malt Shop* the seriousness of her condition was revealed. As she searched the songbook for her favorite band and became confused, then somewhat hysterical and even a little belligerent.

“They don’t have any *Pewpils!* songs!”

“Poodles?” Asked Rodney, one of her coworkers at the *The Candlelit Coffeehouse* which was only a few blocks away from the *Malt Shop*. The work crew went there every Thursday for Karaoke Afternoon..

“No, *The Pewpils!* The most famous and important band of the last century!”

“Sorry, I’ve never heard of them.” Rodney was being genuine in his ignorance and apology.

Stella was suspicious, how could someone have not heard of *The Pewpils!* They had taken the world by storm in the early 2000s with their viral hit videos. They democratized the music industry

with their refusal to sellout to the major labels and corporate interest. Some said they changed the course of history and may have well as saved the world! “How could you have NEVER heard of *The Pewpils!*?”

“They from the 80s or something’s? I don’t really like 80s music.” Rodney was a man of the present.

“The 80s!” Stella was entering the hysterical belligerent phase. Her mind whirling in dissonance. *The Pewpils!* weren’t just her favorite band, they were a part of her understanding of the very life she lived. She was in high school when *The Pewpils!* blew-up the internet with their hilarious parody videos. She graduated as they began their Anonymous Dive Bar Tour. She, like many youth of her time, opted out of attending college or trade school and instead joined the burgeoning “Art Economy” *The Pewpils!* had brought to the Twin Cities.

After spending the better part of a year commanding a worldwide audience with their constant release of content, not being connected to a record label freed them to release their creative works at the pace they created them. They hosted their own music on a free streaming website. Eventually others would follow suit. Soon the internet would be awash with free music. The Pewpils! then retired from the internet, and went on their Anonymous Dive Bar Tour.

The Pewpils! , though not attached to a record label did have a financial backer, who paid for the recording and video equipment. His name was Jimmy Taylor, or as most called him “The Tail”. He was a small time real estate hustler, who with the promise of The Pewpils! popularity was able to make some absurdly profitable land deals. The most absurd of which being when he acquired the rights to the 94s. The municipalities in charge of the interstate corridors found them to be necessary but an expensive hassle. The Tail, who had just become the mayor of Lauderdale, a small town wedged between the northern border of Minneapolis and St. Paul, sometimes referred to as the Tramp Stamp of the Twin Cities, was able to have the highways become a part of

Lauderdale, eventually renamed LauderTale, on the promise that the land would continue to provide high speed travel and would not charge tolls. It did not specify that travel needed to be cars.

Thus the 94s became large carnival amusement parks, with FREE rollercoaster trolleys. Wanna go to work, hop on a Twisted Sister and take it from Roseville to Richfield. Maybe get some cotton candy and a corn dog, too.

Between the maze of destination coasters, there were little dive bars with live music. This is where *The Pewpils!* would tour after unplugging from the worldwide web. Every night they would perform at a different bar, under a new name. Fans flocked from far off to try to see the most famous band in the world live. Though not knowing where they would turn up, every bar was full of hopeful guessers. And since *The Pewpils!* we're known to wear costumes and play personas. It was sometimes unclear whether you saw them or not at the end of the night.

Stella was certain she saw them at least 5 times and had another handful of questionable concerts. This proved to be a great way for local bands to gain a following, especially if they could appear to possibly be *The Pewpils!*

“I think I need some air!” Stella said as she stood up and left the Malt Shop.

“Of course, let’s go!” Rodney accompanied Stella outside, first whispering to the table, “concussion...”

Outside Stella paced around fantastically. “You’ve really never heard of The Pewpils!? Of Catch My Exhale? Of Make Me Feel? You’ve never been to Ick Slimhounds Mini Golf and Puppet Theater? At the crossroads of 35 and 280?”

Rodney had no idea what she was on about. “Sorry. I don’t remember that... maybe we should take you to a doctor...”

Stella fell to floor and began to tear-up. She didn't even know what world she had woken into. But she knew it couldn't be the right one for her. Not without her favorite band. Their music had gotten her through rough times and heartbreaks. It was the soundtrack to her youth.

She could not fathom how to express her disbelief and disappointment, and then she thought- what would The Pewpils! do? And she began to sing, "What to do with these feelings that I cannot bare?"

Rodney's ears perked up. Not everyday someone starts singing their feelings.

She continued, "put them into words so that we can share!"

Rodney looked at her with recognition.

"I'm commiserating might become a pair..."

Rodney knew the next part, "who could fix all the world's problems if we dared!"

Stella was struck with surprise and relief. "You know it?"

"Oh sure, I've heard this one." He started the second verse, "Lately I've been thinking of life is so bad- we might as well give-up on all that we have!"

"When we don't have arms to hold all that we've grabbed..."

They harmonized, "we'll feel so less foolish after we've relaxed!"

Stella got on her feet, "It's hard to believe the things we once thought fleeting, may now be the only ones it's worth bleeding!"

"With each day that passes much more clearly seeing!"

Their eyes meet as together they sing, “it’s really just you and me to believe in!”

“You know it! You know it! I’m not crazy! You remember them!”

“Oh well, I mean... I’m pretty sure I learned that song in school, Mrs. Sangers class. By the Ordinary Passengers? Passengers, Pupils, I see where the mix-up is. Well, at least we figured that one out! Phew! I was pretty worried about you there for a second...”

Stella’s heart dropped. It became clear she was alone in her memories, she thought of Rodney’s threat to take her to the doctor, hoped her voice conveyed calmness (and sanity), and said,

“Phew is right.”

You & Me (a waltz to believe in)

C G Em F

*What to do with these feelings that I cannot bear?
Put them into words so that we can share,
in commiserating soon become a pair
who could fix all the world's problems if we cared.*

*Lately I've been thinking if life's gone so bad
then why don't we give up on all that we have?
Soon we won't have arms to hold all we've grabbed
we'll look far less foolish once we've all relaxed.*

*It's hard to believe the things we once thought fleeting
may now be the only ones it's worth bleeding-
for each day that passes much more clearly seeing
There's really just you and me to believe in*

Interlude

*Lately I've been thinking if life is so bad
then why don't we give away all that we have?
We don't have the arms to hold all that we've grabbed.
We'll all look less foolish after the collapse.*

*It's hard to believe the things we once thought fleeting
may now be the only ones it's worth bleeding.
For each day that passes much more clearly seeing
no wage in this world could be worth all this grieving.*

Interlude

*What to do with these feelings that I cannot bear?
Put them into words so that you may care.
In commiserating might become aware
our problems would all be fixed had we shared.*