



Puppy Love at Follyfoot



A follyfoot fan-fiction by Sue & Dave

Puppy Love at Follyfoot

SATURDAY, and a sunny May morning at Follyfoot. A pair of Swallows were flying in and out of the barn through the gap in a window and building their nest on one of the hay loft rafters. The sound of church bells ringing in the nearest village was carried by a south-west breeze. As Dora walked across the stable yard she pondered over who the lucky girl was getting married, heralded by a peel of bells. She imagined what it would be like if her and Steve were in the same situation.



A shot suddenly broke the tranquillity at Follyfoot and the horses and donkeys brayed in disapproval. There was another bang, as a second shot was fired. Dora was joined by Steve, having rushed from the tack room. The cause of the gunfire was soon clear with the appearance from behind the donkey pen of a teenager wearing a flat Barber cap and holding a shotgun.

“What the blazes do you think you’re doing” yelled Steve in condemnation.

“Can’t you see the horses are frightened to death by all that flaming gunfire”, he added, shaking his head and expressing a sigh of dismay.

“Sorry. I’m Dave. The Colonel told my dad, who works at Emmerdale Farm, he wanted the vermin round here shot, so that’s what I’m

doing” Dave proclaimed in a local Yorkshire accent, whilst at the same time ‘breaking’ the shotgun to show that it was safe from being fired.

Dora replied, “No-one told us you were coming. Anyway, you can’t just walk around here with a gun, shooting away, it’s far too dangerous.”

Slugger had appeared from the kitchen and having heard the exchanges, said, “Wait while Monday and I see that Ron. He was supposed to tell you about it ages ago. The Colonel told him to make sure you all knew, so I left it up to him. Anyway, I saw a rat the size of a cat the other day. That’s what we need, a cat! I think it’s worth every penny of the two-‘bob’-a-rat the Colonel has offered, and we don’t want to be using poison round here, do we now?”



“Well, I suppose not, but the shooting stops right now, until I’ve had a word with uncle”, Dora retorted.

Dave realised he had upset the donkeys and everyone else and asked if he could have a closer look at the horses. Steve and Dora could see that he was genuinely concerned and encouraged him to enjoy meeting the equine characters. He also

took a better look at Dora whilst they both leant on one of the stall doors. Dave felt a strong physical attraction towards her, whilst thinking what a beautiful girl she was. He went to his pocket and took out a bag of jelly babies, offering Dora and Steve one.

Dave made a real fuss of the horses and explained he didn't enjoy having to shoot the vermin, but just needed to earn some extra money to help towards his rent. He was an animal lover really and even had dreams of becoming a nature reserve warden one day. Dora was quite intrigued by this.

He said, "I would really love to learn how to ride a horse. I can't afford to own one or even have lessons myself. I just have a pushbike, it's over there behind the wall."

Dave pointed past the lightening tree to where he had left his bicycle on arrival at Follyfoot some twenty minutes earlier. Dora looked at Steve who gave a nod of approval, anticipating what she was about to suggest.



"If you like you can come here, to Follyfoot, on Saturdays and we can teach you to ride, but only in return for plenty of help around the yard with the horse work." Said Dora assertively.

Dave's face gave a huge smile and he said,

"That would be a dream come true, when can I start?... Oh, and could I bring my girlfriend Sue along, she has always wanted to learn how to ride too?"

"Yes, go on then. But remember, you both have to earn your riding lessons here." Steve said, and going on, "You can start next weekend if you like."

Steve and Dora were very pleased with the prospect of extra help around the yard, especially since the new stables had created more work and Callie could not get there as often due to revising for next month's 'O'-level exams. Hazel had just got a Saturday job as a barmaid at *The Woolpack* and Ron did not work at weekends, nor much in the week according to Steve.

—PART TWO—

SUE listened intently to Dave, when he came rushing into her flat at Emmerdale later in the day, excitedly gibbering on about his encounter with the people of Follyfoot Farm. She had heard of the work they did there looking after unwanted horses but had never been to the farm, despite taking walks along the nearby bridleway. Sue was surprised to learn that both she and Dave were to be given riding lessons there.

She had confided in Dave many months before that she wished that she had learnt to ride when she was a little girl but living in a town as she did before moving to the Yorkshire countryside, never had the opportunity. She asked how they were to afford the lessons as neither earned a great deal of money. Dave had kept the fact that they were to work for the riding lessons from her.

"Oh, er...." he mumbled sheepishly. "I've agreed that we would help them out

there. Do some voluntary work at the weekends.”

“But I know nothing about looking after horses, and neither do you.” Sue exclaimed.

“We can learn though, can’t we? It can’t be that difficult mucking out stables.”

“What about us; weekends are the only time we have together and the only time we can go out for our walks?” Sue retorted, looking down-hearted outwardly but inside was thrilled at the thought of actually learning to ride and having her girlhood wishes come true. She had wanted to tease Dave over making a decision for both of them without consulting her first. She supposed it was sweet of him to think of her and insisting that she went along too!

“Sorry.” Dave said quietly. “I thought it was something we could do together and we don’t have to spend all weekend there or go every weekend, for that matter.” He smiled at her and put his arm around her affectionately and gave her a squeeze trying to appease her.

“Okay.” Sue smiled back. “It could be fun. Can we go next weekend?” She asked excitedly.

Dave hit her playfully when he realised she’d been teasing him.

Both Dave and Sue eagerly looked forward to the weekend, ticking off the days on the calendar that was pinned on Sue’s kitchen wall. Early on the Saturday morning Dave and Sue took their bikes and peddled like mad the few miles to Follyfoot, racing each other along the track to the farm. Dave won as he usually did. Propping the bikes against the stone wall near the gate leading to the yard, Sue dismounted and looked around, taking in the surroundings, the stables, the farmhouse with its blue door and the fields beyond where she could see the fitter horses galloping around enjoying the spring sunshine.

“Hello.” Dave called out.

Seconds later the head of a young girl poked over a door in the middle of a row of stalls.

“Oh, Hi.” Dora said as she opened the stable door and walked into the yard to greet the couple. “You’re certainly nice and early, you must be eager.”

“This is Dora and this is Sue.” Dave introduced the girls, who shook hands and nodded to each other.

“Hi.” Sue smiled at the pretty young girl. “Nice to meet you, at last.”

“Hi Sue and you too! Steve’s around here somewhere.” Dora looked around the yard and called out his name. “STEVE!”

“Hello.” A voice answered.

Sue turned at the sound of the voice and almost collapsed at the sight of a dark haired, handsome young man emerging through the tack room doorway, a wide grin on his face. Dave had mentioned a lad called Steve had worked there but he hadn’t said how good looking he was. But then he wouldn’t, would he, she thought.



Steve walked over and held his hand out to Sue as Dora introduced him.

“Lovely to meet you, Sue.” He said shaking her hand firmly and smiling widely at her, while taking in the alluring

scent of her Estée Lauder perfume.

“Hi St...Steve, good to meet you too.” Sue stuttered trying to look and sound cool and calm but feeling her knees go weak underneath her at the sight of his beaming smile and dark brown eyes. She held on to Steve’s hand a fraction longer than was necessary and hoped Dave hadn’t noticed, but when she glanced at him, he was busy talking to Dora.

“Come on then, let’s get you two settled in and show you what to do.” Dora said brightly. “Have either worked with horses before?”

“No.” Dave and Sue answered in unison as they followed Dora and Steve to the top stables.

It had been a while since riding lessons were given at Follyfoot and that had not been a good experience for Dora. She loved the children brought to ride by Miss Patience, but could not get on with the schoolmistress herself, who treated her like a child.

The lesson with Sue and Dave riding Marty and Barney respectively had gone well, both showing natural ability and an affinity with their rides. The only hiccup came when Steve had to embrace Sue as she dismounted, sliding



safely to the ground through his arms and putting a smile on his face.

This didn’t go unnoticed by Dora who couldn’t help saying, with jealousy in her eyes, “She could have managed Steve.”

Slugger walked towards them carrying a mug of tea and offered all four a brew, which was eagerly accepted. Afterwards, the remaining work around the yard was done in record time. Sue and Dave had enthusiastically got stuck in, impressing both Dora and Steve with their ‘labour of love’ enthusiasm.

—PART 3—

OVER the next couple of weekends or so the lessons and work at the stables was relatively uneventful, though the young couple showed all the signs of puppy love towards their tutors. And Dora envied how Sue and Dave were soul mates, thinking if only she and Steve were so close and not miles apart like Steve had suggested to her.

One Saturday afternoon following the riding lesson, Dave mentioned that his Jack Russell terrier had got some new puppies and they were being kept in a kennel at their Emmerdale allotment. Dave said he was a bit worried about leaving them for long and should really go and check on them since he knew his dad would not be there. Instead, his dad would be going to *The Woolpack* for a few pints with his Emmerdale mates.

Dave said to Dora, “I’ve been thinking... would you like one of the puppies when they have been weaned. They make good rattling dogs, and you won’t need anyone shooting around here again.”

“That sounds a good idea Dave, can I come with you to see the pups, we can ride over to Emmerdale if you like?” Dora replied.

"I'll carry on working round the stables with Steve while you get back. If that's all right with you Steve?" Sue said in an enthusiastic voice.

"Of course." Steve's eyebrows rose in pleasant surprise. Dora and Dave soon set off along the public bridleway which passed Follyfoot and led over the verdant hillside to the nearby village, before another bridleway took them on to Emmerdale itself.

The breeze strengthened as they rode side-by-side along a hawthorn-hedged part of the bridleway and white May-blossom fell on the two of them like confetti. Then, there was the ominous sound of rumbling thunder. On arrival at the allotment Copper and Barney were tethered to the gate. Trudy, Dave's terrier, started yapping.

"Well, what do you think of it then" Dave said, as both walked along the allotment path past the chicken coup and towards Trudy's kennel. He asked if Dora would like some freshly laid hens eggs to take back for breakfast, and pointed out that she could even take the brown ones if she liked. Dora politely refused, explaining that Slugger had just bought a pack of two dozen eggs only yesterday, so they had enough for all week.

Then Dora added, "It's nice here. When your carrots have grown, a few would be good for the donkeys, if you can spare any."

"Spare any!", Dave exclaimed, going on to say, "You can have buckets full. There'll be enough for the donkey's and some stews by the summer."

Dora spontaneously started to say "N..." But instead of saying no thanks, said: "Oh Dave, they're wonderful", giving an adoring smile as she spied the basket of pups. Trudy had settled down and was suckling her litter of puppies. Dora felt very maternal whilst peering down at them, and looked at Dave.

"They are all okay", said Dave, who was happy



now he had checked on them, offering some fresh water to the little bitch he loved. Dora noticed one of the pups was wagging its tail and took an immediate liking to him.

"Oh Dave, I wish... I wish I could have that one."

"Your wish will come true." replied Dave, although he knew that Sue was rather fond of that little fella too.

The rumbling heard earlier had now moved closer and a flash of lightning was followed by an almighty crack of thunder as the sky became darker. Soon the heavens opened with a heavy downpour of rain.

"We don't have any waterproofs Dave, and looking at those clouds it's set in for a while." Said Dora.

"Look, we are going to have to go back to my place to keep dry and maybe I can find you a Mac for when we ride back to Follyfoot." Dave replied.

Dora looked at her watch which showed 6.30pm, and tried to say no, but had little idea what else she could do, asking, "Do you have a phone?"

"No, sorry. Hardley anyone round here has one. We have no use for phones and I

think the box is out of order.” He explained, referring to the village telephone kiosk.

Back at Follyfoot Steve said to Sue “I hope those two are sheltering otherwise they are going to get soaked to the skin. And it’s time for us to knock off. It’s taken longer to do the mucking out without them and the time has flown, it’s 6.30. You can come up to my place above the tack room until they get back. I’ll put the radio on, it can’t be much longer before they’re back.”

The thunder storm continued and the next flash of lightning reminded Steve how the tree he could see from his window had been born some years earlier. Although he said nothing to Sue, he was somewhat anxious about Dora, hoping they had not had an accident with the horses. If the storm was to spook Dave’s horse, his riding inexperience could get the better of him, Steve whittled.

—Part 4—

DAVE was secretly pleased to have Dora in his bed-sit, and likewise, Sue was thrilled to be accompanying Steve into his room. Steve had to light his oil-lamp, and turned on the radio which was playing a song that had recently won the Eurovision Song Contest. It was sung by Swedish pop group Abba and called *Waterloo*.

“Slugger will have taken Hazel to the pub and he’s staying there to bring her back when see finishes behind the bar tonight, but I’ll warm you up some stew if you like?” Steve asked.

“Yes please, I’m starving after all that work moving shovels full of muck all afternoon, and only had the egg and cress sandwich given to me by Slugger at lunchtime”, replied Sue, who was not yet disparaging about Slugger’s limited menus.

Once the stew had been eaten, the radio batteries failed. Other ideas would have to pass on their waiting time now.

Steve said, “I know you’re under age but I’ve got a couple of bottles of Bulmers in the cupboard. You’re welcome to have one with me if you like?”

He went to get the cider only to find one bottle was missing. Look’s like Hazel got here first, Steve thought to himself.



Sue sat on the end of Steve’s bed, hugging her knees to her chest.

“I’m not underage. I’m eighteen.” Sue said. “I’ve been left home a year now, and have my own place.” She looked at Steve coyly. “I’m not as young and naive as you might think.”

“I’m sure you’re not.” Steve smiled and raised his eyebrows. He took a glass from the top of his dresser, removed the bottle top with his Swiss army knife and poured out some cider for Sue. Looking around and finding no other glass, he took a swig out of the bottle.

Steve plonked himself down on the bed and sat facing Sue, his back against the bed head.

“So tell me how you came to be in Yorkshire and how you met Dave.” Steve asked.

“Only if you tell me about yourself, too!” Sue teased. She really liked Steve and wanted to know as much about him as she could. Sitting close together on the bed, Sue could smell the subtle scent of ‘Old Spice’ aftershave, given to him by his aunt for his last birthday. He had sneakily splashed some on after Sue had offered to clear up the plates from supper. Sue liked it but didn’t mind the honest, horsy smell on his clothes either.

“Okay, I’ll start.” So Steve told her about his life before Follyfoot and how the Colonel had given him a chance and a home. He talked of Dora, Slugger and Ron and how they had become his family and Follyfoot the only real home he’d ever had.

Sue listened in silence, engrossed in his story and enjoying the dulcet tones of his voice. She could listen to him all day! He was gorgeous, Sue thought. Gosh, how she fancied him! Unashamedly, she wondered what it would be like to kiss him! But it didn’t go unnoticed by Sue, that when speaking of Dora, his voice became softer and there was a certain look in his eyes.

After he’d finished, Sue told him of how she came to be in the West Riding. Steve was the perfect host, listening intently to her and taking a genuine interest. He loved her perfume, something that Dora never wore and thought how much he liked her, and what a sweet, down to earth girl she was. They were from similar backgrounds and social class, unlike Dora and himself, just the sort of girl he should be settling down with.

“My aunt runs the village Post Office and general stores in Emmerdale.” She started. “But became ill about a year ago, and as I had just finished my ‘O’-levels and was thinking of leaving school, I offered to lodge and help, so here I am living in the little self-contained flat above the shop... I’m quite independent.” “‘O’-levels, eh... clever girl.” Steve interrupted, looking impressed.

“Not really.” Sue blushed. “Just Commerce and English Language and Literature.”

“Well, better than me. I don’t have any qualifications but I was always good at English, it was my favourite subject at school, when I was there, anyway.” Steve laughed. “That’s something we have in common. Sorry, go on. How did you meet Dave?”

“He came into the shop occasionally to buy jelly babies, said they were for his mum but...” Sue rolled her eyes and smiled. “Anyway, his visits got more frequent. Think he’s got enough stamps to stock his own Post Office. We started going out for walks and bike rides, that was just after I moved up here.”

More talking and the cider was soon gone.

Sue looked up at the window. “Gosh, Steve, it’s nearly dark. Didn’t realise it was that late. Shouldn’t Dora and Dave be back by now?”

“Yes, I hope Dora... they’re okay?” Steve corrected himself and looked out of the window, the rain had stopped and a full moon was visible. Steve’s concern was realised by Sue who subconsciously fingered the St Christopher pendent hanging from a silver chain that Dave had bought for her recent 18th birthday.

“Slugger’s got the Land Rover, do you think we could ride and meet them, make sure they are okay?” Steve asked Sue, holding out a hand and helping her off the bed.

Sue stretched. “Yes, I think so.”

“Good.” Steve said. “We’ll go and get the tack on Davy and Marty.”

“...But Steve, I don’t think I’m confident enough to ride in the dark.” Sue said nervously, with second thoughts.

“Hey, don’t worry, I’ll be with you. I won’t let anything happen to you, I promise.” Steve smiled encouragingly and took her hand. “Come on girl.” He led her down the stairs.

—Part 5—

ALTHOUGH the rain had ceased, it was still very tricky underfoot and they had to take it carefully over the wet ground. Steve had put Sue on Davy, the old pit pony. Even though Davy was half blind from years down the mine, he was used to the dark and a steady, sturdy ride for Sue. Not being an expert rider, Sue did find herself slipping in the saddle a couple of times; The effect of the cider wasn’t helping either, making her light headed. But Steve riding very close to her side reached out and held her in the saddle with a firm hand, and calmed her when she became nervous and unsure, with comforting words. Sue was grateful for his support and attentiveness.

Meanwhile Dora and Dave had decided to start out back to Follyfoot not suspecting they were about to be joined by Steve and Sue coming along the bridle path in the opposite direction.

Only a mile from Follyfoot the four were all surprised but pleased to meet each other. Sue turned Davy round and brought him beside Dave, seated on Barney. Dave leaned down and gave Sue a loving kiss, delighted that she had come with Steve to look for him.

In the moonlight, Steve and Dora glanced at each other for a moment, long enough for her to imagine how wonderful it would be for Steve to kiss her so purposefully under a full moon. Steve thought he wouldn’t mind some of that too, but only he will ever know whether it was with Dora or with Sue?

They set off and reached part of the path with the hawthorn canopy. The moonlight turned to

total darkness. The horses were frightened by this and the sudden screech of a disturbed barn owl further spooked them.



But Davy carried on as if nothing was wrong, showing no fear of walking along this dark corridor. The three other riders were then able to prompt their horses to follow Davy’s lead, and before very long all emerged out in the open.

“Oh Davy, you got us through safely, what a hero.” Dora said affectionately to the old pony.

Steve quipped, “He has got some uses then... My dad used to work with them when he was down the Doncaster pit.”

And then said, “It’s too late now for you two to cycle back to Emmerdale tonight. Stay at Follyfoot until the morning.”

“Yes... you must”, Dora insisted, giving an expression of concern, although no-one noticed it in the darkness.

At midnight they were back at the farm and stabling the horses. Steve noticed that the Land Rover was not back and shouted to Dora, “Where the heck have Slugger and Hazel got to? They should have got back from the pub half an hour ago.”

Before Dora could reply the beam of headlights bounced up and down the stone frontage of the farmhouse and the Land Rover came into hearing range. Dora said, “They’re here now. I’ll go and put the kettle on.”

All six settled around the kitchen table.

“Blimey, I didn’t expect to see you two still here” Slugger exclaimed to Sue and Dave. Then adding, “What’s going on then.”

Steve butted in, “You’ve some need to talk, where have you two been while this time?”

Slugger explained how the Colonel had turned up unexpectedly to see for himself how Hazel was going on at *The Woolpack*. He only drank a couple of Scotch Whiskeys but it must have affected his medication. He said he didn’t feel like driving, so we dropped him off at his place on the way back. He was fine when we left him.”



After the tales of a very eventful day had been told and the mugs of cocoa drunk, it was time to think where the two guests were going to bed down for the night. By now all were very tired and ready for some sleep.

Looking at Dave, Dora said, “You two can have my bed, if that’s all right?” She felt both slightly embarrassed and jealous, as she wasn’t entirely sure of the nature of Dave and Sue’s close relationship.

Sue reddened at Dora’s assumption and Dave, grinning widely said, “We are not fussy, a bed of straw will do for us.”

Sue added insistently, “Really, Dora, Dave’s right, the hay loft will be fine. We don’t mind,

do we, Dave?” Sue looked at him, hoping he could read the expression on her face and agree with her. Sue had seen the disapproving look on Slugger’s face and would have been embarrassed to have shared Dora’s bed with Dave. Anyway, sleeping in the hay loft sounded much more fun!

“Well, if you are sure?” Dora replied, a little relieved.

“Sleeping in the hay loft, that brings back memories” Steve chortled. “It’s a long time since I slept in a hay loft, eh Dora?” He grinned at Dora, who smiled back recalling Steve’s first night at Follyfoot.

Holding Steve’s gaze but speaking to Dave and Sue Dora said. “We’ll bring some blankets and a torch over for you.”

Dave and Sue said goodnight to Hazel and Slugger and hand in hand made their way to the barn followed by Dora and Steve who had collected blankets from the linen cupboard and a torch from the kitchen. Settling their friends in, Steve and Dora stood side by side, their arms touching, at the barn door and looked out on to the moonlight night.

“They make a lovely couple, don’t they?” Dora asked tentatively.

“Dave and Sue, yes.” Steve replied quietly.

“Does it bother you?” Dora said without looking at Steve.

“Why should it?” Steve turned to Dora, his eyebrows furrowing.

Dora shrugged. “I thought, maybe you had a thing about Sue.”

“I like her, yes.” Steve said. “But I thought you and Dave...” Steve rubbed his chin thoughtfully, waiting for Dora’s reply.

"I like him too, but it's..." Dora swallowed hard. "It's you I want. It always has been, Steve."

"Oh, Dora. You don't know how long I waited for you to say that." Steve opened his arms and gathered Dora into them. Dora put her arms around his neck. "Oh Steve." Their lips met in their first passionate kiss.



Watching unseen from the hay loft, Dave and Sue smiled at the touching scene below. His eyes still on the kissing couple Dave squeezed Sue's hand. She looked at this man next to her, the dark hair, the warm brown eyes and beaming smile. Now she understood why she had taken such a shine to Steve. She chuckled to herself at the thought and reached over and gave Dave a kiss on the cheek and squeezed his hand back lovingly.

"I told you they were made for each other, didn't I." Sue whispered. "They just needed a little help from us."

"Clever girl." Dave winked. "Your scheming paid off, well done. A regular cupid, aren't you?" He looked at Sue and noted her feather cut hair style and the dark hazel eyes, and smiled to himself. "Time for bed, I'm shattered, it's been a long day." He yawned.

With one last glance at Dora and Steve, they left their new friends to the quiet, warm night, embraced tightly in each others arms, and whispering all the loving words that had gone unsaid over the last months and years.

Judging by the smiles over bacon and eggs the next morning, the night went well for both couples. It didn't go un-noticed by all there that Dora and Steve only had eyes for each other, and spent most of breakfast holding hands under the kitchen table. If they suspected matchmaking on Dave and Sue's part they never said. But did give the young couple, and now their firm friends, 'thank you' hugs before watching them ride off down the lane on their bicycles. Holding hands and smiling after Dave and Sue, Dora and Steve knew that their new friends would become welcome regulars at the farm.

Several weeks later Dave handed over the Jack Russell to Dora as Steve and Sue looked on. The puppy wagged his little tail as Dora fussed over him.

"Do you have a name for the little fella?" Dave asked.

Dora said, "I love this puppy and am going to call him Jake."



The End.

**ORIGINAL FOLLYFOOT FAN-FICTION PRODUCED
BY MEMBERS OF THE FOLLYFOOT FORUM**

—Continuity—

This story is set in 1974 and intended as what might have happened in a fourth series of Yorkshire Television's Follyfoot.



—Dedication—

The authors would like to dedicate this fan-fiction to the people who cared for Britain's retired pit ponies.

—Acknowledgements—

Sabrina is thanked for her excellent drawings used to illustrate the story and especially for the 'Dora with puppy' and 'Steve outside the tack room' sketches which were commissioned by the authors.

**ALL CHARACTERS APPEARING IN THIS WORK ARE
FICTITIOUS. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO REAL PERSONS IS
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