

## Fairy Tale - The Marionette

Once upon a time, there lived a marionette doll with master strings held by her parents. She gave away additional strings to various people for different lengths of time, serving many purposes, few of which seemed to direct the doll in the way she would have chosen personally and often in ways not necessarily chosen by the Creator of the doll, to Whom she desperately wanted to relinquish control.

Early on in the doll's life, she learned that allowing her parents to hold the master strings brought her a little bit of the attention she so greatly craved. She often made herself think she wanted to go in the direction in which her parents would pull her. She justified her decisions by the reactions of her parents, but she still did not perform to their expectations. The harder they pulled on the strings, the harder she tried to move in the direction of their pull, but invariably, she let them down anyway. The doll didn't understand. The few things her parents taught her seemed inaccurate or incomplete. Regardless of her efforts to please them, she was never able to make them happy. She tried so hard, and she excelled at everything she did, but it did not matter.

Occasionally, she tried to remove the strings from her parents' grasp and allowed boyfriends or other friends to hold the strings. She might think she had someone's approval for a while, but ultimately, she let them down too and still found that the strings held by her parents had merely been stretched, not broken. Often she was pulled in several directions at once.

Now the young marionette had met her Creator early in life. Initially, she was taught that He would only be pleased if she met specific requirements. So she tried very hard to meet those standards, but to no surprise found herself falling short over and over. As she grew up, she learned more about her Creator and came to realize that He loved her so much that she could really trust Him. As a result, she would hand Him a pair of strings now and then and ask Him to lead her in the direction He had chosen for her. Interestingly, her parents, who had taken her places where she had met and spent time with her Creator, sometimes disagreed with the choices made by Him or simply disagreed that the Creator was the one leading. More accurately, her father disagreed and her mother simply stayed quiet, never voicing her own thoughts or beliefs or supporting those of the marionette. The poor doll didn't know what to do. She came to believe she was incapable of leading her own life. Every time she felt a tug by her Creator, she first experienced the euphoria of believing she was created for something big until she realized she was likely to mess it up or fall short despite her best efforts. She wondered if she should even try.

At a ridiculously young age, she was diagnosed with a Bipolar Personality Disorder without the slightest defense by her father, who claimed to be a psychologist. So each time the doll felt moved to dream big and contemplate the vast plans of her Maker, she was convinced it was a manic phase of her non-existent mental disorder, and she would subsequently plummet to a low feeling of depression in realizing her inadequacy until finally, she quit allowing herself to dream. She hung her head in failure, feeling as if any efforts she put forth to perform were mere attempts to relieve some of the tension resulting from someone's tug on her strings. She experienced much anxiety about meeting the expectations of others. She wasn't sure she would be able to stand on her own if she disconnected the strings. Although she sometimes felt confident that her Creator held her firmly within His grasp, she continued to be confused about the need to dance around to try to please Him. She wanted so much to learn to rest in Him and allow Him alone to have control of her strings, but to this day she remains a marionette controlled by many strings and feeling the weight of much pressure to conform to the desires of her parents and the uncertainty of her Creator's ability to steer her in the direction she should go without her inevitably finding a way to mess it up and let Him down too. She feared when she messed things up, her Creator would certainly not straighten things out but let her live with the consequences of her mistakes, because that was what she deserved. She knew how big her Creator was and most certainly knew what He was able to do, but she always questioned what he would

choose to do on her behalf because, after all, she would never be good enough. Despite knowing she was living under grace, she lived as if her Creator wanted her to walk around in the desert for years and years to learn a lesson or two. After all, what was He trying to teach her? She feared she would miss the mark and maybe already did.

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Then one day, the marionette's Creator rearranged the circumstances of the doll's life to allow her the opportunity to take a long look at her life to this point. He hand-picked other creations of His to join the doll and help her see past the reflections of circumstances to the reflection of her heart, the very one he had placed within the marionette when He had knit her together. As He peeled away the layers of dust and tarnish the doll had collected over the years and allowed her to see who He had really created her to be, she finally understood that the Master Creator had not, in fact, intended for her to be a marionette but a beautiful hand-crafted work of art, a doll so carefully and skillfully designed that she had already been given everything she would ever need to live her life on her own, with no strings attached. After she detached the strings that had bound her to other people for her entire life, she looked around for her Creator. At first she wondered how she was to know which direction He would choose for her, since she wanted so much for Him to lead her. But as she returned once more to examine her own reflection, she began to see resemblances of her Creator within her. She finally understood that He was truly right inside her, ready to guide her more freely now without the strings attached. Suddenly she realized the impact of the events that had just transpired. She was free! The truth had set her free!