

Tessie

a.k.a. Tessie (You Are The Only, Only Only)

Words & Music:

Will R. Anderson (1902)

This has become a classic simply by virtue of being spoofed. It was originally from the Broadway show "The Silver Slipper". However, Boston Red Sox fan club "The Royal Rooters" adopted it and changed the lyrics to heckle Honus Wagner & the Pittsburgh Pirates during the 1903 World Series. "That damn Tessie song" did the trick and Boston took the series. They kept the song as a good-luck charm and it worked as the Boston Red Sox dominated the early years of the 20th century. The Rooters abandoned the song in 1918 and that was the last it was sung in Fenway until 2004, when the Dropkick Murphys resurrected their own punk-pub version. Lo and behold, the Sox finally won the series for the first time since 1918. (I'm an unabashed Boston homer and remembering that still makes me tear up with joy.) Anyway, I just read the obit of Katherine Mary "Kitty" Dooley whose father John Dooley was one of the Royal Rooters and instrumental in bringing the Red Sox to Boston. She & her sister "Lib" remained legendary Sox fans their whole lives. Enjoy.

1. Original Broadway version:

(chords obtained with the help of the Levy Sheet Music Collection at Johns Hopkins University)

G
Tessie is a maiden with a sparkling eye;
G Am D7/A C/G D7/F#
Tessie is a maiden with a laugh.
D7
Tessie doesn't know the meaning of a sigh;
D7 G G/B A#dim7 G/B
Tessie's lots of fun & full of chaff.
G
But sometimes we have a little quarrel, we two.
G C E7 Am
Tessie always turns her head away.
Am G
Then it's up to me to do as all boys do.
A7 D Daug
So, I take her hand in mine and say:

CHORUS:

G D
"Tessie, you make me feel so badly.
G
Why don't you turn around?
D7
Tessie, you know I love you madly.

G G D Em7 D7
Babe, my heart weighs about a pound.

G D7 D#dim7

Don't blame me if I ever doubt you,

E7 Am

You know I wouldn't live without you.

G G C E7 A7 D7 G

Tessie, you are the only, only, on-----ly."

Tessie has a parrot that she loves quite well.

Polly's just a-learning how to woo.

Tessie tells him ev'rything she has to tell.

Polly thinks he knows a thing or two.

Tessie gave a party at her home one night.

Polly said he'd like to sing a song.

Tessie thought she'd never seen a bird so bright,

When Polly started off in accents strong:

CHORUS:

2. Dropkick Murphys Variation (2004)

Words are by Jeff Horrigan, a writer for the Boston Herald. Tabbed by James F Brown. The song was written in hopes of breaking the 86-year curse of the Red Sox.

The Royal Rooters' heckling version in 1903 was specifically to Honus Wagner, the Pittsburgh Pirates' superstar shortstop. It started "Honus, why do you hit so badly? Go on and sit down" Apparently, they sang it relentlessly. This version accurately tells the whole story of the 1903 Series. And, yes, it is "Nuf Ced McGreevy" - spelled just that way by the man himself. Michael T. "Nuf Ced" McGreevy was the owner of the Third Base Saloon, home of the Royal Rooters. His nickname came about because whenever an argument got out of hand, he would bring it to an immediate end by slamming his hand on the bar and saying " 'Nuff said!". Notes provided where needed.

F Bb F

Bb

"Tessie!" is the Royal Rooters rally cry.

F

"Tessie" is the tune they always sung.

F

"Tessie" echoed April through October nights

Bb

F

After serenading Stahl, Dinneen and Young. [3 star Red Sox in 1903]

Bb

Tessie is a maiden with a sparkling eye,

F

Tessie is a maiden with a love.

F

She doesn't know the meaning of her sight,

Bb

F

She's got a comment full of love. [who knows what these lines mean]

Bagpipe solo over: Bb F | F Bb F

And sometimes when the game is on the line,

"Tessie" always carried them away

Up the road from Third Base to Huntington [the Sox' 1903 ballpark]

The boys will always sing and sway.

CHORUS:

[shouted] Two! Three! Four!

Bb

"Tessie", Nuf Ced McGreevy shouted,

Eb

"We're not here to mess around.

Bb

F

Boston, you know we love you madly.

Bb F
Hear the crowd roar to your sound.
Bb
Don't blame us if we ever doubt you.
Eb
You know we couldn't live without you.
F Bb F
Tessie, you are the only, only, on----ly!"

The Rooters showed up at the grounds one day;
They found their seats had all been sold.
McGreevy led the charge into the park;
Stormed the gates and put the game on hold.
The Rooters gave the other team a dreadful fright.
Boston's tenth man could not be wrong.
Up from third base to Huntington, they'd sing another victory song:

CHORUS:

The Rooters gave the other team a dreadful fright.
Boston's tenth man could not be wrong.
Up from third base to Huntington, they'd sing another victory song:

CHORUS:

PIANO SOLO:

CHORUS: *[these words only]*

Don't blame us if we ever doubt you,
You know we couldn't live without you
Boston, you are the only, only, only.

Don't blame us if we ever doubt you
You know we couldn't live without you
Red Sox, you are the only, only, only.