

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BLUE

A radio play by David Baillie
Music by Jenny Gould

Episode 1

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SCENE 1

ACOUSTIC - A BUSY JAZZ CLUB, AN EAGER
AUDIENCE.

DAPHNE: I'd like to thank you all for coming out on such a stormy evening. It warms the cockles of this northern girl's heart to sing for a good, jazz-loving audience.

PERCUSSION STARTS AS SHE INTRODUCES THE
SONG

This one's called Little Bird.

APPLAUSE - AND A WOLF WHISTLE - AS THE
AUDIENCE REACTS TO THE SONG TITLE

SONG - LITTLE BIRD (See music appendix)

(ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE)

DAPHNE: Thank you. Thank you very much.

DAPHNE LEAVES THE STAGE. IN THE
BACKGROUND WE HEAR THE VOICE OF VINCE,
THE CLUB OWNER. THIS FADES AND BECOMES
MUFFLED AS DAPHNE MAKES HER WAY TO
THE DRESSING ROOM.

VINCE: (FADING) Daphne Fairmount, ladies and gentlemen. Let's hear your appreciation for Daphne.

(DISTANT APPLAUSE). A DOOR OPENS AND
DAPHNE GIVES OUT A SMALL GASP

DAPHNE: Oh! I wasn't expecting you. What are you doing here?
(HER TONE CHANGES) What are you –
(SCREAMING) No - no - wait?!?

DAPHNE'S SCREAMS ARE MUFFLED.

MUSIC FROM LITTLE BIRD FADES IN, AND
LINGERS FOR ABOUT EIGHT BARS BEFORE
FADING OUT.

SCENE 2

DETECTIVE JACK FOSTER INTERVIEWS TED
THE BARMAN IN THE NOW EMPTY JAZZ CLUB.

FOSTER: When was the last time you saw Ms Fairmount?

TED: Last night, at the end of her set.

FOSTER: Did you speak to her?

TED: No sir. (TAKES A DEEP BREATH) I just saw her leave the stage.

FOSTER: When was the last time you spoke to her?

TED: Before the sound checks, I think. About an hour before they let the customers in.

FOSTER: And how long have you been working at the... (READS HIS NOTES) Albatross.

TED: Last four years... Give or take.

FOSTER: You know if anyone had a grudge against Ms Fairmount?

TED: No - everyone loved Daphne. She was - (BEAT) Well...

FOSTER: What?

TED: She did have an ex-husband who came in here a couple of times. Not recently... But when he did he was never very happy. Real grouchy. Wouldn't ever have a nice word to say. You know the type...

FOSTER: Sometimes it seems like that's the only kinda person I get to meet.

TED SNIFFLES INTO A HANKY, FIGHTING BACK
A SOB

TED: I'm sorry. This is very difficult for me. Daphne was such a special person. I can't believe that now she's - she's

TED STARTS TO CRY

FADE OUT

SCENE 3

DETECTIVE FOSTER INTERVIEWS KERRY

SHADWELL

KERRY: I'm sorry, detective - I didn't catch your name.

FOSTER: Foster - Jack Foster. How long had you known Daphne?

KERRY: I'm so glad you didn't call her 'The Deceased'... You know – like they do on TV. It's so impersonal. She was lovely. She didn't deserve...

FOSTER: I don't mean to rush you Ms Shadwell, but –

KERRY: Please, call me Kerry.

FOSTER: OK

KERRY: I've known Daphne about six years. We've performed in most of the clubs in the city, but the Albatross is our main venue. Did you ever hear her sing?

FOSTER: I regret I never had the pleasure.

KERRY: She had the voice of an angel...

FOSTER: I understand that she had a very bright future in front of her. Someone (SHUFFLES THROUGH HIS NOTES) told me that a major record label had shown some interest in her?

KERRY: Both of us, actually. The A&R guy was in the audience last month and he loved what he heard.

FOSTER: Sorry - I'm confused Ms Shadwell - did you duet with Daphne?

KERRY: No - we always did our stuff solo.

FOSTER: Right. I don't suppose you can think of anyone that may have had a grudge against her?

KERRY: Oh yeah - for sure. I been thinking about this a lot Detective. See, I figure that whoever it was that got rid of Daphne... Well - I'm most likely next on their list aren't I? The only reason I reckon I wasn't killed first was that I was in -

FOSTER: Don't worry Ms Shadwell, we can arrange for an officer to keep an eye on you while we're investigating this. Who was it you thought might have had -

KERRY: The Luciano boys.

FOSTER: Luciano?

KERRY: Yup.

FOSTER: As in Joseph Luciano?

KERRY: Yeah - the gangster. He's been leaning real hard on Vince lately. Vince said that he wasn't going to pay no more protection money and Luciano sent round some boys to have a quiet word with him if you know what I mean.

FOSTER: Vince. He's the owner of the bar, right?

KERRY: Yeah - he sure is. You haven't spoken to him yet? He's an absolute doll! He takes good care of all of us here. He has a soft spot for me, you know, but he never lets it show. He always took just as much interest in Daphne's career. He says that he has to be impartial, see? So that no one -

KERRY CONTINUES BABBLING AS WE FADE
OUT

SCENE 4

FOSTER INTERVIEWS VINCE

VINCE: I - ah - I dunno if I should be discussing that with you, to be honest. It's business - you know?

FOSTER: Yes, but it could be important to my investigation, Mr Winters.

VINCE: Please, please - call me Vince. Everyone does. I shoulda called this place Vince's . No - that doesn't sound right, does it? Vinnie's maybe.

FOSTER: Mr Winters - has Joseph Luciano made any specific threat towards you or any of your staff?

VINCE: Ah - you know what he's like. He's partial to keeping you scared - keeping you on your toes. I just thought, what with the Albatross doing real well, 'cos of Kerry and Daphne, we didn't need no protection from him anymore. He wasn't too happy.

FOSTER: But did he ever threaten you or-

VINCE: You mean, like, do I think he had anything to do with Daphne's murder? I dunno - I wouldn't have thought so. We was still talking, see - that's not good negotiating is it? Rubbing out one of my girls. That's more like a punishment move, isn't it?

FOSTER: Do you have any ideas of your own then?

VINCE: Yeah, sure. There was this sister.

FOSTER: Sister?

VINCE: Sure - Daphne had a sister. Hadn't spoken to her for years - some sort of family dispute.

(FOSTER WRITES ALL OF THIS DOWN)

FOSTER: (DUBIOUSLY) What makes you think of her? In my experience it's unlikely that someone Ms Fairmount had been out of contact with for a long time would be involved...

VINCE: There was animosity there. You could tell. I mentioned her once, to Daphne - and she snapped at me. Very unlike her. You know, she never got angry at me. But she said (IMITATING AN ANGRY DAPHNE) 'Don't you ever mention that name again in front of me. I don't have a sister as far as I'm concerned'.

FOSTER: What was the name?

VINCE: Huh?

FOSTER: The sister. Her name?

VINCE: Erm... Huh... I don't remember, actually.

FADE OUT

SCENE 5

ACOUSTIC - A MODERATELY BUSY BAR. LIVE
JAZZ MUSIC IN THE BACKGROUND. FOSTER IS
ON THE PHONE TO HIS SUPERIOR.

BOSS (DISTORTED): Are you in a bar again, Jack?

FOSTER: Yes sir. It's been one of those days.

BOSS (D): No leads huh?

FOSTER: On the contrary - more leads than I want. None of them leap out and say 'pick me', though. Among the favourites at the moment are (TAKING A BREATH) an ex-husband who isn't happy for some reason, possible professional jealousy, a bunch of gangsters leaning on the club owner and a sister somewhere who hadn't spoken to the victim for the better part of a decade.

BOSS (D): This is going to be a high profile case, Jack. You do well on this one there's sure to be a promotion for you. I know you won't disappoint me.

FOSTER: Awww boss, if only you were a woman.

BOSS (D): Why? You'd be less likely to let me down?

FOSTER: No – but I wouldn't feel so guilty about it. I'll call you tomorrow.

FOSTER HANGS UP AND APPROACHES THE
BAR.

FOSTER: Usual please Henry

HENRY: You been drinking in other bars again, Jack?

FOSTER: Only the ones between where I was and where I am now.

HENRY: You know I get jealous. You're one of my best customers.

FOSTER: Don't worry – I won't be paying the tabs I run up elsewhere any faster than the one I have here.

A FEMALE VOCALIST BEGINS SINGING

SONG – IMPOSSIBLE (See music appendix)

FOSTER: Where'd you find a class act like her?

HENRY: I think maybe you've had too much tonight, Jack.

FOSTER: What do you mean? (BEAT) You're not going to serve me any more?

HENRY: No... Of course I am. Just try and make it here before you start talking gibberish tomorrow night. I got bills to pay, you know?

THE SINGER CONTINUES HER SONG.

WHEN SHE FINISHES THERE IS NO IMMEDIATE
APPLAUSE. FOSTER STARTS CLAPPING.

THE SINGER APPROACHES HIM.

SINGER: Thanks

FOSTER: No problem. Suppose this isn't the sort of place where you applaud but I thought a performance like that shouldn't go unnoticed.

SINGER: Thanks again. You're very kind.

FOSTER: Come to think of it... I don't remember there ever being any entertainment in here before. Is this a new idea Henry?

FOSTER WAITS FOR A RESPONSE THAT NEVER COMES

Henry? Oh never mind. Can I buy you a drink young lady?

SINGER: No thanks.

FOSTER: Well I'll have another then. Henry – another whiskey and tonic, when you're ready.

HENRY: You sure you haven't had too much, Jack?

FOSTER: Ah, you're not so deaf when there's money involved are you?

HENRY: Seriously – sometimes I worry about you. You're more than just an extra holiday a year to me.

FOSTER: I'll be fine, Henry. And while I appreciate your concern...

(A PAUSE, AS FOSTER THINKS BETTER OF HIS WISECRACK AND HIS TONE BECOMES MORE SERIOUS)

I'll make this one my last.

HENRY: Okay.

FOSTER: You sure you don't want one?

(THE SOUND OF DRINK BEING Poured FROM A
BOTTLE)

HENRY: No thanks Jack. Maybe another night

FOSTER: I wasn't talking to –

SINGER: So – you drinking to forget something?

FOSTER: No – forgetting's like regretting – there's no point so I don't
bother. I'm just trying to take the edge off the pain.

SINGER: What pain would that be?

FOSTER: Did I say pain? Sorry, whiskey makes me melodramatic. I
meant job. I'm a cop.

SINGER: Really? That must be exciting work.

FOSTER: Yeah – it must be. Been doing it for nearly twenty years now.

SINGER: Must be rewarding too. You know - helping people.

FOSTER: I'm a homicide detective. By the time I get there people're
mostly beyond helping, I'm afraid.

SINGER: Oh. (BEAT) You working on a case at the moment?

FOSTER: Well, not right this second, but I did start on a new one today. (TAKES A SIP) The first day's the hardest. It's when it's all still raw – but you know, you have to ask the questions anyway. Even though most of the people you're talking to really don't want to talk. But the longer you wait, the colder the trail gets.

SINGER: So what's the case? Gruesome?

FOSTER: Particularly. A young lady. A jazz singer, actually (BEAT) Strangled. In her dressing room after a gig last night.

SINGER: Really? Anyone I might know?

FOSTER: Probably. It'll be in all the papers in the morning anyway. Daphne Fairmount. An absolute darling, by all accounts. On the verge of hitting the big time.

SINGER: That's a shame. A crying shame.

(PAUSE)

FOSTER: What was that song called? The one you just sang.

SINGER: Impossible. Did you like it?

FOSTER: I did... Was that one of Daphne's numbers?

SINGER: Yes. It was one of her favourites.

FOSTER: Do I know you? You look kind of familiar.

SINGER: Well I never hit the big time, if that's what you're asking. And now, it looks like I never will.

FOSTER: Tough business, huh?

SINGER: You can say that again. (BEAT) Sometimes too tough for a girl like me to handle.

(ANOTHER PAUSE)

FOSTER: (SERIOUS AND SOBER) You're her aren't you?

SINGER: Yes. I am.

(FOSTER COUGHS INTO HIS HAND)

FOSTER: Then I really have had too much.

SINGER: No, you haven't. If anything, I think it made it easier for you to see me.

FOSTER: You mean no one else can?

SINGER: It certainly seems that way, doesn't it.

(FOSTER GULPS DOWN THE DRINK)

FOSTER: I need some fresh air. Want to walk a while? (CALLING OUT TO THE BARMAN) Henry – can I pay my tab?

HENRY (OFF): I dunno, Jack – can you?

SCENE 6

ACOUSTIC – FOOTSTEPS ON A WET PAVEMENT,

GENTLE RAINFALL.

FOSTER: So what's it like?

DAPHNE: Being dead?

FOSTER: Yeah.

DAPHNE: Much the same as being alive, as far as I can tell. I'm still figuring it out.

FOSTER: No light at the end of the tunnel, then?

DAPHNE: Not yet - I get the feeling that you don't get that until you've taken care of all your Earthly business.

FOSTER: Business? Or do you mean justice?

DAPHNE: When I figure that out, you'll be the first to know.
(EXASPERATED) I just wish I could remember more - it's all so foggy.

FOSTER: What *do* you remember?

DAPHNE: Singing. The audience. They loved me. And then -

FOSTER: Yeah?

DAPHNE: Nothing.

FOSTER: Nothing?

DAPHNE: Except - I'm sure I knew the killer. I can feel that.

FOSTER: If you could 'feel' me a name, that would be really helpful Ms Fairmount.

DAPHNE: I must say, detective – you're taking all of this rather well. I would imagine most people would have run from that bar screaming if a dead singer had struck up a conversation with them.

FOSTER: I still suspect you might be a whiskey-induced hallucination, to be perfectly honest. And anyway – I make a point of never running from a bar screaming. Especially if there's a pretty lady standing by it.

DAPHNE: So tell me, how do you plan to solve my murder?

FOSTER: Tomorrow morning I have some people I want to speak to. And after that I'll just have to rely on my years of experience and keen mind to see me through.

DAPHNE: Aren't you going to ask me any more questions?

FOSTER: To be honest, Ms Fairmount, if you're still around tomorrow when I'm sober I'll be very interested in what you have to say. But as it stands right now –

THE FOOTSTEPS STOP

This is my stop.

DAPHNE: You live up there?

FOSTER: I'm afraid so. They don't pay cops in this city enough to live in mansions. Well, not for being cops anyway – but that's another story.

DAPHNE: I don't suppose you're going to ask me up?

FOSTER: I'm already in love with one dead woman – I'd rather not make it two.

DAPHNE: Then goodnight, detective Jack Foster.

FOSTER: Yes, goodnight. (A BREATH) I really do hope we speak again.

DAPHNE: Oh we will. (WARMLY) I promise we will.

FADE OUT TO REPRISE OF LITTLE BIRD

CREDITS

END OF EPISODE