

# Simply to Die For

Roving Rogue Productions

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By CJ Corl

## CAST

Narrator	Announcer and narrator who sets the stage for the project
Sonia "Sonny" Day	Granddaughter of May Day and heir to the Day Gang
May Day	Matriarch and leader of the Day Gang, having taken over when her husband died
Tom Collins	Brewer and smuggler for the Day Gang
Millie Graham	Maid for May Day
Lew Scannon	Leader of the West Side Gang
Rick O'Shae	Enforcer and "muscle" along with Lew's second in command
Robin Hyde	Bookkeeper for the West Side Gang
Vera Piercing	Lew's on/off girlfriend and silent film star with an obnoxious voice
Belle Tone	Local Jazz singer who's been hired to sing at the party
Skip Dover	Belle's pianist and manager, along with the owner of the club she sings at
Eddie Bull	Local Politician who's trying to campaign all the time
Theresa "Terry" Bull	Eddie's wife who's increasingly unhappy with her marriage
Noah Goodman	Owner of the local telephone company along with his sister, Anita
Mary Goodman	Wife of Noah Goodman, from old-money who doesn't have money anymore
Anita Goodman	Sister to Noah and technically co-owner of the phone company
Dr. Jameson	Doctor who's struggling and invited in hopes of getting more into smuggling

# EPISODE ONE:

## Scene One:

NARRATOR

It's November 4th, 1927, the date of the annual Day Gala at the home of the infamous May Day. The Day Gala always happens at night. The event of the year, hosted by the leader of one of the largest gangs in the city. Anyone who's anyone is invited: friends, family, lovers, and enemies. Only the classiest are allowed into the Day Mansion, surrounded by glittering splendor. Not that anyone will ever admit to where the Day family got their money. But, the party is always the talk of the town. And this year, it will be a night no one will ever forget.

MAY

Girl? Is the food ready?

MILLIE

Yes, Mrs. Day. I was just about to help Collins bring a few more bottles of wine and brandy up from the cellar.

MAY

Good. See that he hasn't been nipping a few drinks for himself. Won't do me any good if he's drunk all night.

MILLIE

Yes, ma'am.

**(MAY EXITS)**

NARRATOR

May Day is the leader of the Day Gang, responsible for bringing a majority of the crime into the city. She also brings in a majority of the liquor. It certainly keeps the politicians off her back when she's keeping their liquor cabinets full. I know I certainly appreciate her work.

SONNY

Millie?

MILLIE

Miss Day?

NARRATOR

Sonia Day, or Sonny as she's more commonly known, is May's granddaughter and the only heir to the family fortune. She has also inherited her grandmother's keen and shrewd mind when it comes to handling the family business. I personally wouldn't want to mess with Miss Sonny. Although, her grandmother doesn't quite seem to trust her abilities yet.

SONNY

Let me know the moment the West Siders get here. I want to keep my eye on Scannon.

MILLIE

Yes, Miss.

SONNY

Thank you. Oh, and have you seen my diamond bracelet? I know the clasp is loose, but I wanted to wear it tonight.

MILLIE

Last I saw, it was on your vanity.

SONNY

Thank you, Millie. I must have missed it.

NARRATOR

Millie Graham was a quiet girl. Perfect as a maid to the Day family. She barely speaks and keeps her head down while she works. Easily forgotten and invisible. Just like a good servant should be.

**(DOORBELL RINGS)**

MILLIE

*-Exasperated and to herself-*

Goodness...

**(DOOR OPENS, A BIT OF A STORM OUTSIDE)**

Good evening.

EDDIE

What ho! That wind is picking up! There's going to be some rain tonight.

TERRY

Edward, can you help me with my coat?

EDDIE

Of course, it would be tonight of all nights. This storm better not ruin the party. You know there's an election coming up. I certainly would hate to miss speaking with some of my constituents.

MILLIE

Let me take your coat, Mrs. Bull.

NARRATOR

Eddie Bull and his wife Terry Bull are the elites in town. Eddie worked his way up the political ladder from lawyer to the city council to Mayor and now he's running for Congress. His wife is never far behind, supporting his ambitions with a gracious smile. They are seemingly the perfect political couple.

Honestly, Eddie is as slimy as every other politician out there and Terry is as quick as a whip behind that serene smile.

EDDIE

What's a man got to do to get a drink here?

TERRY

*-Hissed-*

Eddie

MILLIE

Right this way, sir. Collins should be in the parlor. He can get you a drink.

EDDIE

The old sport! He always makes the best drinks!

**(EDDIE EXITS)**

TERRY

Oh, wait a moment. I need to get my compact out of my coat pocket. Never know when one must powder her nose.

MILLIE

How right you are, ma'am.

**(DOORBELL RINGS)**

TERRY

Go ahead, dear, I can just pop in the closet and fetch it.

MILLIE

Yes, ma'am

**(DOOR OPENS, BEGINNING OF A STORM OUTSIDE)**

Good evening.

DR. JAMESON

Good evening, miss. I'm here for Mrs. Day's party? I do hope I'm not too early.

MILLIE

Not at all, doctor.

NARRATOR

Dr. J. Jameson is new to the gathering. Not exactly the type to be traveling with the social elites. He's just a local doctor, known for being very good to his patients.

Very good.

DR. JAMESON

Oh good, thank you very much.

MILLIE

Would you like me to take your overcoat, doctor?

DR. JAMESON

Oh yes, that would be quite nice, I think.

MAY

Girl? Where is that bl- Oh, Dr. Jameson. I'm so glad you could make it.

DR. JAMESON

As am I. I hope I'm not too early.

MAY

Friends are never too early. Please, come in, come in. My man, Collins, is pouring drinks. You can taste some of what he's been brewing. Perhaps between the two of us, we can sort out a few business deals.

DR. JAMESON

Oh yes, thank you. I'd uh... I'd like that.

NARRATOR

The good doctor may be considering expanding his business dealings. After all, he can write alcohol prescriptions for medicinal purposes. Who's to say that he wouldn't be taking on a few more patients in the future?

MAY

Give me just a moment so I can check in with my staff and I'll be right with you.

DR. JAMESON

Quite good, quite good.

**(JAMESON EXISTS-BEAT)**

MAY

Where is that blasted singer?

MILLIE

I'm afraid I haven't seen her, ma'am. But she may have come to the servant's entrance. I've been here taking coats and seeing to the guests.

MAY

Must I do everything in this house?

MILLIE

I'm sorry, ma'am. I can go down to the kitchens and check right now.

MAY

Be quick about it. I'm paying that damned woman and her queer friend enough that they could at least be on time.

MILLIE

Yes, ma'am. Of course, ma'am.

**(MILLIE SCURRIES OFF)**

MAY

Oh, Mayor Bull! How wonderful to see you! Or should I say, Congressman?

EDDIE

Oh, May, don't jinx me!

**(NOISE OF A SMALL PARTY, CHATTER, GLASSES CLINKING, ETC)**

DR. JAMESON

Mrs. Day? I was under the impression that you wanted to discuss some business with me this evening?

MAY

Yes, Doctor. I do, but first, a drink. Pick your poison: whiskey? Bourbon? I do have champagne if you prefer something lighter?

DR. JAMESON

Any chance your man can do an Old Fashioned?

MAY

Of course, he can. Collins! One Old Fashioned for the Doctor here.

TOM

Yes, Missus.

DR. JAMESON

He doesn't seem too thrilled to be bossed around.

MAY

That's just Tom. Always a bit of a grump, if you ask me. But he's my regular brewer. His family owned a brewery, which I often supported before that silly law was passed.

TOM

Old Fashioned?

DR. JAMESON

Oh, Thank you. I appreciate it.

TOM

*-grunts-*

MAY

I want to know what you think about it. Take a drink.

**(SOUND OF GLASSES)**

DR. JAMESON

You're right. Your man makes a good drink.

MAY

And you think you can provide some products that would meet this standard?

DR. JAMESON

Perhaps not for the pickiest palate, but to mix some drinks? Yes, what I can provide I believe would please you and your clients. I, uh, I don't know if you'd want to talk about this somewhere a little more private?

MAY

Oh, yes. Although, everyone here obviously knows my business. Let me finish greeting some of my guests and I'll meet you in the office down the hall? Millie or Tom can show you where it is.

DR. JAMESON

Wonderful, I brought a few samples, if you'd like to try?

MAY

My doctor, you are prepared. That would be wonderful. Tom can supply you with some glasses. We can toast to a successful business.

DR. JAMESON

Wonderful, I'll see you there.

**(BRIEF PARTY SOUNDS)**

Scene Two:

NARRATOR

A strong wind is starting up outside as more and more guests arrive. The last to show up is an almost ragtag group: a well dressed young man, a glamorous date on his arm. The other couple with them is still out by the automobile the four drove up in.

**(DOOR OPENS, STRONGER WIND FROM THE STORM PICKING UP)**

LEW

Hello?

VERA

No butler to open the door? I thought this was supposed to be where all the swanky people were going to be.

LEW

Day don't like to surround herself with too many people. Now, behave. You know we've gotta keep up appearances. Keep your friends close and enemies closer and all that.

SONNY

I certainly hope you don't think of us as enemies, Scannon.

NARRATOR

But enemies they are. The West Siders are the up and coming gang, contending with the Days. Commonly considered from the wrong side of the tracks, the West Sider's are growing more and more influential in crime circles. Their leader, Lew Scannon, is a smart man who grew up in the Banks Five, an Irish gang destroyed by the Days years ago. Now he uses his rough charm and good looks to get just about anything he wants.

LEW

I don't know what else you'd call us, Sunshine.

NARRATOR



He also loves to needle Sonny Day whenever he sees her.

SONNY

Don't call me that.

LEW

I suppose you're right. You're not really a ray of sunshine. More like a grumpy rain cloud.

Now, where is that delightful grandmother of yours? I need to thank her for trying to turn my boys over to the cops on Tuesday. They nearly got killed thanks to her.

SONNY

Maybe your boys need to pay more attention to what's going on around them.

LEW

Maybe you need to leave this work to the professionals. It's no place for little girls.

SONNY

I'm not a little girl.

LEW

Oh, sure you aren't, Sunshine.

VERA

Lew-ie! You didn't wait for me.

LEW

If I waited every time you had to check your lips, doll, I'd never get anywhere.

SONNY

Who's this? I didn't know you were bringing a guest.

LEW

Of course, I'd bring my girl. This is-

VERA

Vera Piercing. I'm sure you've seen me in all the pictures. Please, I'm not here to sign autographs. Just out for a nice evening with my Lew-ie-kins.

NARRATOR

Yeah, Vera is her own hype woman. And I really can't stand her voice, so we'll just leave it at that.

SONNY

Lew-ie-kins?

LEW

Shut it, Sunshine.

SONNY

I wouldn't dream of commenting. Come, drinks are this way, in the parlor.

VERA

Oh, what a lovely bracelet. Real diamonds?

SONNY

Yes, a gift from my parents. Thank you, Miss Piercing.

**(GROUP MOVES, PARTY SOUNDS NOW HEARD AS THEY JOIN THE OTHERS)**

Drinks? Collins is making some or there's champagne.

LEW

I wouldn't drink too much of the giggle water. Collins isn't the best distiller in the area.

SONNY

Lew Scannon, you don't know what you're talking about.

LEW

I know more than you and your granny do.

MAY

Which would explain why I have the largest enterprise in the city, Mr. Scannon?

NARRATOR

May always seems to know when someone is talking about her.

Honestly, it can be a little creepy.

LEW

You only have the largest because you've been at it the longest and chase off anyone else who tries to enter the game with you. Lucky for us all, I don't scare easily.

MAY

That's because you have bricks instead of brains in that head of yours. You'll never amount to much.

LEW

Oh, the granny has bite. What are you going to do, stab me with your knitting needles?

MAY

You'll wish that's all I'll do when I'm done.

LEW

Well, then may the best gang win.

*-silence for a beat-*

VERA

Well, I'm going to go get some champagne.

SONNY

I think I'll join you. Too much hot air being blown around here for my liking.

LEW

Hear that, May? Your granddaughter thinks you're full of hot air.

MAY

She means you, not me.

LEW

Well, I'm certainly full of something.

VERA

*-giggles-*

### Scene Three:

NARRATOR

After greeting and mingling, May escapes her guests, heading just across the hall to her office. It is out of this neat and orderly room that she runs one of the most profitable gangs in the city. May only flips on a desk lamp and table lamp, keeping the door partially closed, wanting to keep the conversation quiet from the others. She pulls out two cups, setting them on a low table between two chairs.

JAMESON

Mrs. Day?

MAY

Yes, doctor, please, come in. Have a seat.

JAMESON

Thank you. A drink?

MAY

Please, I'm intrigued by what you can get your hands on.

We don't have a whole lot of time, so I'd like to get straight to the point. If you'll allow me?

JAMESON

Of course.

MAY

I have a distiller on my payroll already. He makes decent stuff. However, I want to get my hands on some cheaper things. Spirits we can sell to the common fellow. Products that are more suited to quantity over quality.

JAMESON

I don't know if I can help you.

MAY

Don't be coy. We both know that you have a vast network of doctors who'd like to make some extra money. For years, you were excellent at this type of work.

JAMESON

And I got out of the business for a reason.

MAY

You never said that. One day, you just stopped.

JAMESON

Because I saw what you all do to each other. The War started and the US wasn't even involved before you all were at each other's throats. Smuggling and trying to get the upper hand. You didn't need scripts then, but you wanted all those medical supplies.

MAY

That's just the business of war.

JAMESON

People died.

MAY

People die every day, Doctor. You should know that more than anyone else.

JAMESON

I do.

MAY

... Why did you even come here if you weren't interested in the offer?

JAMESON

I didn't say I wasn't interested. Just that I'm wary. I know what happens in this business. People end up dead. I've stitched up enough boys who've been caught in the crosshairs between you and Scannon. Let alone the other gangs in town that you've gone after.

MAY

Then you should know that I'm not someone to be trifled with.

JAMESON

What? Going to force me?

MAY

Never. I just think this would be mutually beneficial to us both. Think about it, Doctor. Even if you personally never take one cent of money from me for your own gain? You could use it to improve your practice. You'd be able to help more people. What about all those men who came back from the war and are still screwy in the head? I know you have a soft spot for them.

JAMESON

I served with them.

MAY

And think of how much you'll be able to help them. How many other doctors will be able to do the same with some extra cash in your pockets.

JAMESON

How many scripts are you talking about a month? We can't do too many.

MAY

We'll start small. Just a modest number and gradually increase so we don't raise suspicion. If you want, you could even "hire" one of mine to work with you, so you don't even have to touch the stuff.

JAMESON

And you'll handle all the pickups and deliveries from the office?

MAY

That we will. You'll just have to let us know when.

JAMESON

And if we get caught?

MAY

That's the price of business.

JAMESON

That makes me nervous. I've got a family to provide for.

MAY

We all do. This will allow you to do more for them. That pretty daughter of yours? She's having a child soon, isn't she? Wouldn't it be nice to spoil that little one?

JAMESON

How much are you offering?

MAY

The going rate.

JAMESON

I want 60%. It's my neck on the line.

MAY

Oh no. It's my people who are doing all the heavy lifting.

JAMESON

50% and I get a cut for every other doctor I bring in.

MAY

50% and an additional 1% of the sales of each doctor you bring in.

JAMESON

5% of each doctor.

MAY

How about 3%? Right down the middle?

JAMESON

You drive a hard bargain, Mrs. Day.

MAY

I didn't get to where I am by being a pushover. Now, do we have a deal?

JAMESON

We have a deal.

MAY

Wonderful. I'll be in touch. Until then, I hope you enjoy the party. If you'll just excuse me. I need to go check on the help. Please, feel free to finish your drink here if you prefer. I know you're a man who prefers his own company to that of large crowds.

JAMESON

Thank you, Missus. A pleasure doing business with you.

MAY

And you as well.

NARRATOR

May steps out of her office, starting back towards the front hall.

LEW

Tisk, tisk. This is supposed to be a party, May. Not a business deal.

MAY

Scannon. What are you doing lurking around?

LEW

Oh, nothing. Just looking out the window. My two that came with me wanted to cover up the auto. I just wanted to check to see how they were doing. Make sure you're not taking them for a ride.

MAY

I'd never.

LEW

That's a lie and we both know it.

Scene Four:

NARRATOR

Meanwhile, downstairs...

**(DOOR SLAMS OPEN AND EVEN HIGHER WINDS ARE HEARD)**

BELLE

Damn. I thought we were going to blow right off the road back there. Do we have everything, Skipper?

SKIP

I've got the music. You've got your dress?

BELLE

Sure do. I'm going to need some time to fix myself up though.

SKIP

I'm sure we can find somewhere that we can freshen up a bit before heading out. I also want to see this piano before we get started. I wish we could have gotten here sooner.

BELLE

Yes, I know, I know. But looking this good takes time.

SKIP

It sure does, little bearcat.

MILLIE

*-rushing in and overworked-*

Oh, thank god. Please tell me you're the entertainment?

BELLE

Sure am, chickadee. Belle Tone, and my man, Skip Dover. Anywhere I can freshen up a bit? Don't want to go out looking like a rag-a-muffin.

MILLIE

Down the hall and second door on the right.

BELLE

Thanks, doll. I'll be right back, Skipper.

MILLIE

We were beginning to worry you wouldn't make it.

SKIP

Almost didn't with the storm out there. I've got some bad news for your mistress. I don't think anyone else will be getting in or out tonight. A tree fell in the woods, right behind us and over the drive. If we hadn't been buzzing up here to make it, Belle and I would have ended up right under it.

MILLIE

Oh, dear. I'll have to tell Mrs. Day. Perhaps we can phone someone to start working to get that out.

SKIP

I wouldn't bet on it. Wind's picking up. I bet it'll start raining in the next few minutes.

**(HARSH AND SUDDEN DOWNPOUR STARTS)**

Or now.

Look, I want to get warmed up and check out the piano. Can you point me in that direction and send Belle my way when she's done changing, Miss?

MILLIE

Just call me Millie. And yes, right this way.

NARRATOR

Skip Dover is the owner of Over and Down, one of the best jazz clubs in the city. Despite being a man of color, his clientele is broad. You can see the crime lords sitting alongside the upper echelons of society. As long as you have money, Skip doesn't care who you are. Helping him bring in all those guests is his star singer, Belle Tone. Her soulful voice and Skip's occasional time at the piano makes them a dangerous duo in the business.

It also makes them the couple everyone wants to be, with a loyalty to each other no one can miss.

Seriously, you can't miss it.

MILLIE

Mrs. Day?

MAY

What is it now?

MILLIE

The musicians are here. But I've got some bad news.

MAY

What kind of bad news?

MILLIE

They said a tree fell over the drive when they were coming up.

MAY

Oh, well, we can handle that. If guests have to stay the night, we have enough rooms. Once the rain has lightened, make sure someone gets out to clear that away.

MILLIE

Yes, ma'am.

*-a beat of silence-*

MAY

You can go.

MILLIE



Oh, yes, ma'am

MAY

*-claps hands-*

Wonderful news, everyone. Our musical entertainment will be ready shortly. So this would be an excellent time to powder noses, fetch another drink, or grab a little bite to eat before we head into the next room. I'll see you all in the music room at the end of the hall.

NARRATOR

The guests wander the first floor, enjoying food and drink, and the occasional bit of gossip. Belle Tone, finally ready for her performance, makes her way from the small servant's room to the music room where she'll be entertaining this evening. At least, she hopes she has the right room.

BELLE

*-humming/singing softly-*

**(DOOR OPENS)**

Skipper? You in here?

...

Skip?

*-scream-*

NARRATOR

And so it begins...