

Simply to Die For

Roving Rogue Productions

2021

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 FOUR:

Scene One:

NARRATOR

Alright, let's get you caught up.

If you haven't figured it out by now, this party isn't a great one. It started with Dr. J Jameson being strangled in May Day's office. Then Mrs. Terry Bull, wife of the Mayor, ended up dead at the bottom of the servant's stairs.

Although, I don't know if we're counting that as murder or not yet. The telephone line was cut, with Millie

Graham and Robin Hyde looking to see if they could fix it. While they are outside, Lew Scannon, Noah Goodman, and Skip Dover are investigating the tree that came down on the lane. At least, they were before something came their way.

So, who will get knocked off --or out-- next?

MARY

What's taking them so long?

BELLE

The storm's pretty bad out there. What if something happened to them?

EDDIE

Ah, I'm sure they're fine. Young men like that are strong. Well, your pansy of a boy might not be.

BELLE

Hey! Skip is the best fella out there.

EDDIE

Sure he is, old girl.

RICK

I think I'm going to go see what's taking them so long. And check on Robin and Millie.

BELLE

I'll go with you.

RICK

Hate to say it, but I don't think it'll go too well in those heels you're wearing.

BELLE

I've got a change of shoes downstairs. Let me get my coat.

MARY

Are you sure you should be going out in this storm?

RICK

I've gotta make sure Lew is okay. Don't worry, we'll make sure your husband comes home too.

MARY

Thank you. I'd go myself...

RICK

Don't even think about it. This isn't something that a lady in your condition should be doing.

MARY

Thank you. I appreciate it.

BELLE

Ready, Mr. O'Shae?

RICK

Got your hair covered and everything? I don't want you squealing that your hair got wet.

BELLE

That I do. Once we check on the boys, we can stop around and see your girl too. Best to not go out alone.

RICK

Pretty and smart.

BELLE

Flattery will get you everywhere with me, Mr. O'Shae.

Come on, vamoose.

NARRATOR

The two venture out together in the storm. At least the wind has lessened a bit.

RICK

I'm actually surprised you volunteered to come out here. Vera would never do that.

BELLE

Vera probably didn't grow up on the wrong side of the tracks like I did.

RICK

If she did, she wouldn't go back.

BELLE

I care a whole lot more about my people than material items. Heels can be replaced. Family can't be. Skip is really all I have.

RICK

So you two...?

BELLE

Are as thick as thieves. Have been since we found each other.

RICK

Sounds like me and Lew.

BELLE

You been working for him long?

RICK

We met when we were both just underlings for the Banks family. You ever hear of them?

BELLE

That gang that May took out years ago?

RICK

Yeah, we both worked for them as kids. I was 20 when they got killed, and Lew was just 18. But he saw an opening and filled it. It's taken us a while to get on Day's level, but we're a threat to her and she knows it.

BELLE

That's why there are all the spats between the Days and Lew?

RICK

Aye. Bad blood between us. Losing your gang is like losing your family.

BELLE

Like a singer losing their band.

RICK

Exactly.

BELLE

Well, that explains why you've seemed so uncomfortable.

RICK

I feel like we're in the lion's den with no protection.

BELLE

Then let's find our boys and head back. Do you see them?

RICK

I think I see the tree up ahead.

BELLE

Skip? Noah?

RICK

Scannon?

SKIP

groan

BELLE

Skip! Oh God, what happened?

SKIP

I... I don't know... ugh, my head... I feel like I hit the broad side of a barn.

BELLE

What were you doing?

SKIP

Just trying to get a look over the tree. I must have fallen while climbing up.

RICK

Then what happened to Scannon and Goodman?

SKIP

They both went towards the ends of the tree to see if we could get around it.

RICK

You two alright? I'm going to go see if I can find them.

SKIP

I should go... oh...

BELLE

Oh no, you don't. You're going to sit here until you're not swaying on your feet.

RICK

Just holler if you need anything.

NARRATOR

Our hero, at least for now, walks along the tree, searching until he finds Noah, face down in the grass. This certainly isn't looking good.

RICK

Goodman? You okay?

NOAH

-groans-

RICK

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph... Goodman, can you hear me?

NOAH

Oh... Yeah... Give me a second...

RICK

I don't see any blood. What happened?

NOAH

I feel like I got punched in the gut.

Yeah, something smacked me, knocked the air out of me. Must have taken me down.

RICK

Think you can stand?

NOAH

Yeah, give me a hand up?

-groans while standing-

It's not too bad now that I'm upright. What are you doing out here?

RICK

You guys didn't come back, so Belle and I went looking for ya. She's with Skip right now.

NOAH

Is everyone else okay?

RICK

We thought Skip just fell, he said he was climbing up the tree and slipped. But with you...

NOAH

Yeah, I didn't fall.

SKIP

Noah! What the hell happened to you?

NOAH

I'm okay.

BELLE

Damn... come over and sit here on this branch.

RICK

Scannon come back?

BELLE

Not yet.

RICK

Okay, let me go down and look for him.

BELLE

I'll go with you, so you don't have to go alone.

NOAH

No, I'll go.

BELLE

No, you two will sit right here until we get back. Give you some time to get your feet back under you.

SKIP

I wouldn't argue with her if I were you. You won't win.

NOAH

I think you're right. Alright, Miss Tone, we'll sit right here like good boys.

BELLE

Good. Come on, O'Shae. Let's find your boss and get us all out of the rain.

RICK

Yeah, I don't like this. I want to make sure Robin is okay.

BELLE

I'm sure she is. She and Millie were together, and right near the house. If anything happened, someone would have heard.

RICK

You're right. And I know she can handle herself.

BELLE

Wait, what's that?

NARRATOR

Ahead is a figure, staggering a bit, as if drunk.

RICK

Scannon?

LEW

O'Shae?

RICK

What the hell happened to you?

LEW

-groaning-

I don't know. I was walking along here looking for a way around the tree. Then I woke up with my face in the mud. Some piker snuck up on me.

BELLE

Someone went after all three of them.

LEW

All three of us?

RICK

Found Dover and Goodman in similar positions.

LEW

Damn.

BELLE

Let's get you three back to the house and dried off.

LEW

I wouldn't say no to a hot drink.

RICK

Can do. Can you walk?

LEW

Yeah, I think so.

BELLE

Lean on me, just to make sure you stay on your feet.

NARRATOR

Our little ragtag crew joins back together again, helping each other along. Belle and Lew grip onto one another while Noah lets Skip, still unsteady on his feet, lean on him. Rick keeps his hand at his side, eyes continuously scanning the area before he glances down, bending down for a closer look.

Wonder what's in the mud... I can't get a look around him...

BELLE

You okay, Rick?

RICK

Yeah, sorry. Just thought I saw something. Must have been a trick of the light.

LEW

Yeah?

RICK

Yeah, just some broken glass. Must be a bottle Day ships her booze out in.

NARRATOR

He straightens and continues, hand still resting close to his hip as the group continues on back to the house.

I wonder what he's got under there...

Scene Two:

VERA

Lew-ie-kins! What happened!

NARRATOR

-groans-

Why is she always the first one to notice things?

VERA

Oh my gosh! You're soaked! And your face!

LEW

It's not that bad. I'm mostly just covered in mud.

RICK

Did the girls come back yet?

ROBIN

Right here.

NARRATOR

Standing in the front hall is Robin, soaked to the skin with mud down her skirt and her hair messed.

RICK

Lass, what happened to you?

ROBIN

I'm not sure. Someone snuck up on Millie and I, smacking us both across the back of the head. It didn't knock us out, but certainly had us down for a bit. What happened to you all?

RICK

Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Are you alright?

ROBIN

Yes, yes. We're both alright, just wet and muddy.

LEW

Now that explains why you look like us.

ROBIN

Right, so now answer my question: what happened? Rick?

LEW

Same thing. All three of us got attacked.

SKIP

But thankfully, we're all still alive.

VERA

Oh, thank god! I don't know what I'd do without you, Lew-ie-kins!

LEW

Careful, Vera. I wouldn't want to get mud all over your pretty dress.

VERA

Oh, so very true!

BELLE

Did any of you see what happened?

SKIP

No, I honestly thought I just fell. A branch broke from under me, but for all, I know it could have been someone swiping at my feet to knock me off.

BELLE

I didn't look to see if there was a broken branch or not.

SKIP

Neither did I.

NOAH

Someone snuck up and knocked the air out of me. I don't know how long I was laying there before I was able to get air back in my lungs.

ROBIN

What about you, Lew?

LEW

Got snuck up on. I figure I must not have heard them over the storm.

BELLE

Did any of you see anything?

LEW

I was looking at something before I got knocked out. But I don't remember what it was. Hopefully, it'll come back to me.

SKIP

I didn't see anything. Goodman?

NOAH

I saw a light in the woods, but I thought it was one of you two. I didn't pay much attention since we all had lights out there. Think it could have been our killer?

VERA

-wails-

LEW

Vera, it's okay. We're all fine.

VERA

But you could have been killed!

LEW

Like I said, it's a whole lot harder to kill me than a knock to the head.

VERA

But-

SONNY

Whoa! What happened to you all?

LEW

We were attacked out by the tree.

SONNY

Where's Millie?

ROBIN

Downstairs, finding me some dry clothes.

SONNY

I think you could all use them. Come on, upstairs with you all.

NOAH

Give me a moment, I'm going to check on Mary first. I'll just leave my shoes here so I don't track mud all through the house.

SONNY

Perfectly fine. She's right in the front room.

NOAH

Thank you, Miss Sonny.

Scene Three:

NARRATOR

I'm going to follow Noah because I can already hear Vera tutting over Lew and I would rather keep my lunch down. Besides, Noah and Mary, they're a cute couple. At least, when you get to know them and Mary isn't off laying down in her delicate condition.

You know, she kind of just feels a bit like a place filler... Maybe we'll have to fix that.

NOAH

Mary?

ANITA

Noah! What happened to you.

NARRATOR

Damn it, forgot she's going to be here too. Please say Mayor Bull isn't here also...

EDDIE

Son, you look like you're covered in horse shit.

NARRATOR

Lovely...

NOAH

Just mud. We had a bit of an altercation out there.

MARY

Are you okay?

NOAH

Yes, darling, we all are. Just sore and soaked to the bone. I wanted to check on you first before going upstairs to dry off. You're doing okay?

MARY

I was worried about you. You're not hurt?

NOAH

Promise. And you? You didn't answer me.

MARY

As well as can be expected.

ANITA

Well, I am not. Some psychopath just tried to kill my brother!

NOAH

No one tried to kill me. They just... knocked the wind out of me. Like you used to do when we were kids.

ANITA

I did no such thing.

EDDIE

You get a look at the man?

MARY

What makes you think it's a man?

EDDIE

Let's be honest, old girl. I'd guess it was a woman if people were getting poisoned. But attacks like these? Strangled? And beaten? Possibly pushed down the stairs? That's something you need some strength for.

NOAH

I suppose so. Although I knew some strong girls growing up.

EDDIE

Those aren't like the ladies we have here today, am I right?

MARY

So this really is a killer? We can't just hope that it was a one and done?

NOAH

I don't think so.

MARY

Oh...

ANITA

Well, I for one won't stand for this. I want to get out of here and go home where there are no murders!

NOAH

Hate to tell you this, 'Nita, but we're stuck here. No way we're getting around that tree until we've got some light and the storm lets up.

ANITA

What? So we're just expected to stay here until morning? That's practically, 20 hours away! I don't think I could sleep here if I wanted to.

EDDIE

I don't think you should want to sleep. Makes you a sitting duck.

NOAH

I don't think we have any reason to be concerned.

EDDIE

That's what all the guilty ones say.

NOAH

Are you insinuating something, Mayor Bull?

EDDIE

Only that I know your family just lucked into our social standing. Who knows how your people settle disputes.

NOAH

My family worked hard to get where we are. And at least we tell people when we don't like them, instead of pretending to be everyone's friend and hiding behind fake smiles like politicians.

EDDIE

But no one of my class would ever dare to raise a finger against someone else.

NOAH

Sure you wouldn't. You'd just do it in the shadows and destroy lives instead of hurting them out in the open. Is that how you sleep at night? You might have destroyed a person for your own gain, but at least you didn't kill them yourself?

ANITA

Noah!

NOAH

Then it's not your fault. They just couldn't handle the pressure of living a life of leisure. Is that it? Because God forbid we all be good people. Who cares about the person who's clawed their way out of poverty when they get torn down. Just proves that they should have learned to stay in their place. Isn't that right, Mayor?

MAY

-bursts in-

What the devil is going on here?

NOAH

At least we are honest with ourselves and others when we say we dislike them.

MARY

Noah, please... I...

NOAH

-immediately calms-

Oh, Mary, I'm sorry. Let my temper get the best of me.

MARY

Noah.

NOAH

I'm sorry. Are you okay?

EDDIE

She's got you wrapped around her little finger, doesn't she, son?

NOAH

Unlike you, I care about my wife and want to see her happy. Including when I'm being a brainless nitwit. Leave us alone.

MAY

Mayor, why don't we all give everyone some space?

EDDIE

Yes, I think that would be wise. Hate to hurt anyone else's fragile sensibilities.

NOAH

-growls-

MARY

Noah, please, not now.

NOAH

I'm sorry, he gets under my skin so easily. I know you don't like raised voices.

MARY

I know he does. Let's just not think about him right now. You're alright, that's all that matters to me.

NOAH

Yes, we're all fine.

You should go lay down for a bit. Relax after everything, while I go change.

MARY

That would be nice.

NOAH

Let me ask if there's a room you can lay down in.

MARY

Help me up, and I'll go with you.

NARRATOR

The young couple starts up the front stairs, Noah carefully steadying his wife. At the top is Sonny, overseeing everything.

NOAH

Is there any chance there's a room where my wife can lay down for a bit?

SONNY

Oh, of course. Are you unwell, Mrs. Goodman?

MARY

Just a bit tired. Nothing some time to relax won't fix. This attack has rattled my nerves.

SONNY

I understand completely. Let's see, I'm not sure exactly what rooms are occupied right now...

ROBIN

I'm done in this room. Thank you for the fresh clothes.

SONNY

Of course. I would hate for anyone to catch a chill. Right this way, Mrs. Goodman. You can use my bedroom. I don't think I'll be getting any sleep tonight anyway.

MARY

Thank you, Miss Day.

NOAH

You just holler if you need anything at all, darling. I'll be right there.

MARY

Don't worry about me. I'll just take a moment and I'll be down again soon.

SONNY

Take all the time you need.

(DOOR CLICKS SHUT)

ROBIN

What would you like me to do with the wet clothes?

SONNY

In this basket. Millie said she'd take them down to soak.

VERA

(DOWN THE HALL)

But Lew-ie-kins!

LEW

Give me a moment, woman!

VERA

Well, I never!

(VERA STORMS PAST)

ROBIN

-groans-

SONNY

You don't like her that much.

ROBIN

Let's put it this way, none of the gang does. But what can we do? Lew knows how we feel about her.

SONNY

And he doesn't care?

ROBIN

He says it's part of a master plan but won't tell us anything else.

SONNY

I see.

ROBIN

But, what can we do? I suppose if you love someone, you love them. And Lew's family. So, we'll put up with his... questionable taste in women.

SONNY

I think most men have a few questionable partners.

ROBIN

That they do, Miss.

Thank you for the fresh clothes. I'm going to go down and get a nip to drink. Try and warm up.

SONNY

Oh yes, please do.

(ROBIN LEAVES)

NOAH

-clears throat-

SONNY

Oh, Mr. Goodman. I'm so sorry. You need to change, don't you?

NOAH

At least getting out of these wet clothes would be nice.

SONNY

Hmmm... Let's see what rooms are open.

NARRATOR

Sonny moves down the hall, knocking on doors.

(KNOCK)

RICK

That you, Robin?

SONNY

Sorry, no. Just trying to find an empty room

(KNOCK)

LEW

Vera, I said stop- Oh, sorry. I thought it was Vera again.

SONNY

No, just looking for an empty room for Mr. Goodman.

(KNOCK)

BELLE

Yes? Oh, Miss Day.

SONNY

Oh, I'm sorry. I was just looking for an empty room for Mr. Goodman. Excuse me-

BELLE

Oh, you can use this one. I'm done here. Let me just grab my shoes and I'll be out in two ticks.

SONNY

Well, that was lucky. Thank you, Miss Tone.

BELLE

Of course. My daddy always said to share and be generous. I'm done and I already cranked up the radiator so it's nice and warm.

SONNY

We're looking for some clothes for you gentlemen right now, Mr. Goodman.

BELLE

Don't worry about Skip. We always come with a change of clothes so we don't travel in our performing outfits.

SONNY

Thank you. I'll tell Millie. Feel free to warm up and clean up, Mr. Goodman until we find some clothes.

NOAH

Thank you, I appreciate it.

(DOOR CLOSSES)

NARRATOR

Isn't it so nice when people come together like this?

MILLIE

Miss, I can take your wet clothes?

BELLE

Oh, thank you, Millie.

MILLIE

I think Collins has brought up some fresh drinks and something hot for everyone downstairs.

BELLE

Thank you, I appreciate all your hospitality during all this, Miss Day, Millie. I'm sure this can't be easy.

SONNY

We do what we can, right, Millie?

MILLIE

Yes, Miss.

BELLE

Well, it's appreciated. Now, I'm going to take you up on the offer of something warm to drink.

(HEELS ON STAIRS)

-wait for a beat-

SONNY

Millie, are you alright? Robin said you were hit too?

MILLIE

I was. But I'm alright, Miss.

SONNY

You're sure?

MILLIE

Yes, Miss. A bit of a headache, but I'll be fine.

SONNY

Were your shoes ruined?

MILLIE

Huh? Oh, yes. Covered in mud from the gardens. I left them in the kitchen. I hope you don't mind me being in my stockings.

SONNY

Not at all. I'll try to keep Grandmother off you about it.

MILLIE

Thank you, Miss.

-beat of silence-

SONNY

This hasn't turned out as I expected.

MILLIE

Miss?

SONNY

What do you think?

MILLIE

Me, Miss?

SONNY

Don't pretend you don't know, Millie. Maids see everything. This whole thing is just... odd.

MILLIE

I'd have to agree with you, Miss. Not many dinner parties turn into murder parties.

SONNY

At least, not usually like this. I just wish I knew what was going on.

MILLIE

Would now be a good time to mention that a reporter had called a few days ago? Wanting to know who was invited and who was coming?

SONNY

Why didn't you say anything?

MILLIE

Because I handled it. I know how much you and your grandmother like your privacy so I told them it was a private party and not to be covered in the society pages. Then I hung up on them.

SONNY

You know, Grandmother doesn't give you enough credit. Thank you, Millie. For protecting us, and for telling me about it now. It wouldn't have been anything to worry about before, but now it does have me wondering who might have a vendetta against us.

MILLIE

I'm not sure, Miss. But I think it would be foolish if you didn't watch your back. You never know who might be up to something.

(SOUND OF LIGHTS POPPING AND GOING OUT)

NARRATOR

And what mystery isn't complete without suddenly turning off the lights on everyone? Maybe we'll get into some mischief.