

SOUND EFFECTS

SOUND EFFECTS

CAST LIST

FRANK (82): Brought up during the Second World War in England
A family man. At the end of his life, widowed and blind he
chose to move into residential care.

JANEY (52): Frank's daughter. Busy professional with a family
of her own. She has moved around the country for work; feels
guilty about spending too little time with her parents.

ANNOUNCER: Male, with a very deep voice and a rich Barbadian
accent

INTRO MUSIC: "WE'LL MEET AGAIN" BY VERA LYNN

SCENE 1: INT. FRANK'S ROOM IN THE RESIDENTIAL HOME

FX: A MOBILE PHONE RINGS, PLAYING THE THEME FROM THE ARCHERS, 'BARWICK GREEN'. IT RINGS SIX TIMES AND THEN FRANK PICKS UP.

FRANK

(Flustered)

Hello?

JANEY

Oh my god. You're there. (Pause) Hello, Dad.

It's me.

FRANK

Hello, Chick. How are you?

JANEY

Is that - ? That is really you? (Beat) Did I -
did I wake you up?

FRANK

No, you didn't wake me. I could hear it
ringing alright but I couldn't find the damned
thing.

JANEY

How do you know it's me? Or perhaps you don't.

FRANK

How do you mean?

JANEY

I always wondered. Three sisters who sound
alike. So when I say 'It's me', it could be
any one of us. Or do you call us all 'Chick'
till you work it out?

FRANK

(Laughs)

Got you guessing, eh?

JANEY

Go on. Tell us.

FRANK

Well. You always say 'Hello Dad. It's me.'
Fran says, 'Hello. It's Fran' and Kate says,
'Hello Dad. How are you doing today?'

JANEY

Clever. I expect our voices sound pretty much
the same, don't they?

FRANK

Not to me, they don't.

FX: A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. DOOR IS OPENED FROM THE OUTSIDE. A
TROLLEY IS WHEELED IN, TEA POURED INTO A CUP, TEASPOON RATTLES
IN SAUCER.

FRANK

Oh, here's my cuppa. Can you put it here on
the left please? Near my hand. That's right.
Thank you, love.

FX: THE TROLLEY IS WHEELED OUT AND THE DOOR IS CLOSED.
FOOTSTEPS WHEEL THE TROLLEY AWAY OUTSIDE THE ROOM.

JANEY

And how are you doing? I still can't believe –
have you settled in?

FRANK

Oh, I'm grand. We had the Methodists in
yesterday.

JANEY

What don't tell me the Methodists got you
after all?

FRANK

(Laughs)

No fear. But they send in a team for the quiz.

JANEY

What? Like a pub quiz, but without the beer?

FRANK

More or less. Anyway, we beat 'em again.

Fourth time in a row.

JANEY

Good for you. And you got all the questions right, of course?

FRANK

Aye. It was too easy really. They always ask me when the hard ones come up. I can usually get 'em.

JANEY

All those Wednesday nights in the Three Merry Lads paid off then, Dad. Got a big advantage over the Methodists there.

FRANK

(Laughs)

Yes, being teetotal's all very well but it doesn't help them when it comes to general knowledge. Anyway, how are you? How's the family?

JANEY

They're doing really well. You'd be proud of them, dad. Peter's writing the music for a new radio series and Emma's well into her placement at the hospital. I wish we could come and see you, Dad. They could tell you themselves then.

FRANK

Oh well. (Beat) One of these days.

(Pause)

JANEY

I was just thinking about you the other day. I was putting the bean plants in. Do you remember when I was very little – that time we took the dog down to the allotment and she found an old wireless?

FRANK

I remember. You wanted to take it home and play with it.

JANEY

I must have been about four. I can still see it; all that lovely polished wood with patterns running through it, and the two dials on the front. I thought it was treasure. You wouldn't let me touch it. Said we had to report it to the police.

FRANK

Did I? That was our Sally sniffed it out. She was the best dog I ever had.

JANEY

(Laughs)

She used to let me play hairdressers and dress her up in my doll's clothes. Remember? (Pause) I could never understand why you wouldn't have a guide dog when you – you know –

FRANK

Went blind?

JANEY

Yes. We'd always had a lab around. Why not have a trained one when you needed it?

FRANK

It crept up on me, I suppose. Nibbled to death by ducks.

JANEY

What?

FRANK

You've heard that before, haven't you?

JANEY

I don't think so

FRANK

It's an old RAF saying. If one bit of the plane fails, you can stay aloft. Two, and you're probably still OK. But if three or four things go wrong at the same time, you've had it. Nibbled to death by ducks.

JANEY

You've lost me, Dad.

FRANK

I was severely short-sighted at six. Combine that with undiagnosed glaucoma and a detached retina and I didn't stand much chance, did I?

JANEY

I suppose not

FRANK

By the time my sight went altogether, I thought I was too old to start having a dog tell me what to do. It had always been the

other way round.

JANEY

Anyway, you had Mum.

FRANK

I had your Mum. (Pause)

(Frank and Janey speak the next two lines at the same time)

FRANK

That was the worst time -

JANEY

Do you remember how you used to - ?

JANEY

Go on, Dad.

FRANK

Doesn't matter, love. What were you going to say?

JANEY

Remember how you used to pick us up and dance round the room with us to 'The Archers' music?

FRANK

(Laughs)

One on the front and one on the back -

JANEY

And the little one in the middle -

FRANK

(Sings The Archers theme)

Dumpy dumpy dumpy dum. Dumpy dumpy dido -

JANEY

(Laughs)

That's it. How on earth did you manage to waltz all three of us round the room like that?

FRANK

Can't remember. I must have been exhausted. I did it every night for years.

JANEY

We loved it. Used to fight to be the one on the back.

FRANK

You used to fight about everything. Especially you and our Fran. How are your sisters?

JANEY

Busy; their kids are all growing up so you'd hardly recognise them. We're going to plant a tree for you and Mum in the forest of Arden come the spring.

FRANK

I like that idea. Better than a lump of stone with my name on it.

JANEY

Yes. (Beat) What were you going to say, Dad?

FRANK

I was going to say, that was the worst time, when your Mum had the stroke.

JANEY

Yes. Eight months in that hospital bed. Like a prisoner. Remember how she used to try and talk to us – at first, you know – when she tried to hold on to her thoughts and her speech? And she couldn't find the right words?

FRANK

I remember waiting in the hospital by those bloody lifts at visiting time. Dozens of people – and it took forever for one to arrive.

JANEY

And the speaking lift, you know, that announced the floors – he sounded Barbadian. Lovely accent, and that deep voice –

FRANK

And we thought it was the same man that announces the programmes on Radio 4. He's usually on before 'The Archers' in the afternoon.

ANNOUNCER

You are now arriving at Floor J. Floor

J FRANK

(Pause) Floor J, Ward 12E. Stroke unit.

JANEY

Towards the end, she'd be asleep and wouldn't wake up all through visiting time. And you'd sit and hold her hand. Just in case.

FRANK

I wanted to see her face.

JANEY

I know, Dad. (Pause) And when she's gone –you know – and the nurse said, did we want to see her. And I didn't but you did so I held your hand and we went in. I remember you touched her face and you gasped and pulled your hand back as though you'd been burnt.

FRANK

She was like ice. (Beat) What about these trees then? Forest of Arden, you said? You Mum and I used to go cycling all round there.

JANEY

They're replanting with native English trees. I thought we could plant one for each of you.

FRANK

Can I choose?

JANEY

I think so.

FRANK

I'd like a rowan tree. That's my favourite. And I think a hazel tree for your Mum.

JANEY

I always think about you when I'm gardening. My rowan's still there that you struck for me.

FRANK

It'll be big by now.

JANEY

It is. (Beat) I keep wanting to ask you things. That day you – that day. I was in the garden centre and I wanted the stuff you make compost with –

FRANK

Garotta

JANEY

Yes. I always forget its name. Anyway, I looked for my phone to call and ask you but I'd left it in the car. So then I remembered –

garotta – and I bought a huge tub of the stuff. And when I got back to the car there were seven missed calls from Kate.

FRANK

I know, Chick.

JANEY

So I knew something – I knew. And I called her and she just said, Janey, Dad's died.

FRANK

I know.

JANEY

I kept your number in my phone, Dad. Just in case. Dad. Dad?

FX: STATIC CRACKLE AND WHINE OF 1950S WIRELESS SET BEING TUNED PAST STATIONS, e.g. HILVERSUM, LILLE AND LUXEMBOURG, ALLOUIS, ATHLONE, DROITWICH, WARSAW AND MOSCOW, ETC., FINALLY FINDING BBC LIGHT PROGRAMME.

ANNOUNCER

And now we return to Ambridge where Martha and the other villagers are still puzzling over the mystery of the stolen wireless set.

FX: THE OPENING BARS OF THE THEME TUNE, 'BARWICK GREEN' PLAY US OUT.

FIN