

BLUE MURDER AT THE BLUE PARROT

AUDITION PIECES

HARRY FERRARI

- Ruby:** Well, what do you fink, 'arry? **(Stops dancing.)** We've been practising our dance moves all week.
- Harry:** Is that it? No wonder the club is half empty every night.
- Rose:** We usually wow the punters, Harry.
- Harry:** I need something livelier than that to bring the punters in – a gimmick or speciality act. Can you girls dance with fans?
- Ruby:** I'm not dancing semi-naked, Harry. It's in my contract.
- Harry:** **(Puts hand on Ruby's arm.)** You didn't mind a few years back, Ruby.
- Ruby:** **(Pushes hand away.)** That was then, I prefer to keep my clothes on these days. We don't do nudity, do we Rose?
- Rose:** No. I like to keep my vest on because of my chest.
- Ruby:** She's a martyr to her chest, aren't you dear?
- Rose:** I'm a martyr to my chest.
- Harry:** If Mollie had her way, you girls would be clad head to foot in sacking cloth.
- Rose:** Me and Ruby were talking... about a pay increase.
- Harry:** I pay you the going rate, plus you get to keep ten percent of your tips.
- Ruby:** **(Sarcastic.)** Generous to a fault.
- Rose:** Just a bit more, Harry – you can afford that.
- Harry:** If I pay you girls more, I'll have to pay the band more as well.
- Ruby:** I could do with an extra few quid.
- Harry:** Forget it. I'm struggling to stay afloat as it is. Giuseppe Dolce has got a stranglehold on Soho, he's choking the life blood out of small businesses. Since that double-crossing no good lowlife opened the Candy Club, the Blue Parrot has taken a dive.
- Rose:** This place is a dive.
- Ruby:** We've worked in better establishments than this.
- Harry:** **(Stands.)** If you don't like it, girls, there's the door – I won't stand in your

way. Club singers are two a penny these days.

Rose: Steady on, Harry. Your Mollie may have something to say about you auditioning new singers.

Harry: Do you know that woman is the bane of my life.

Ruby: You hum it...

Rose: And we'll join in the chorus.

Harry: That's all I need – a bunch of low comedians.

Ruby: Here, who's he calling low?

Harry: Two hours until curtain up – you'd better get your act together, pronto. I need to find some investors. If that falls through, you girls will have to take a cut in wages.

Rose: We can't live on ten percent of our tips – I 'ardly get any tips.

Ruby: Rose is right – you can't do that to us, Harry.

Rose: We barely survive on what you pay us now.

Harry: **(Turns on Ruby.)** Don't push it, girls. I'm the boss and what I say goes – remember that.

Ruby: We know enough about your dodgy dealings, Harry...

Harry: Don't you threaten me.

(Harry exits.)

MOLLIE FERRARI

Mollie: Lipstick. **(Applies lipstick.)** Harry loved lipstick. You know how people have these little habits that get you down? Like my Harry. He always had lipstick on his collar. Harry liked the ladies. Not one lady. A whole string of them. Well, he strung me along once too often. One day, I caught him schmoozing one of his floozies on my new cushions. BLOOD RED LIPSTICK! ON MY NEW CUSHIONS. **(Does stabbing motions on the word over.)** I stabbed those Cushions *over* and *over* and *over* again! Now Harry's dead. **(Slight pause.)** He won't be stringing anyone along anymore!

PENNY PINCHER

Penny: Tricks. Harry was up to his old tricks again. He only had himself to blame. Harry played dirty. He was a rat, a lying, cheating, dirty rat. Harry broke my heart long before he broke my sister's. He gave both of us the run around once too often. Well, he's not running around anymore.

SUZIE ARINGA

Suzie: Dog. Harry was a dog – up to his old tricks, schmoozing the ladies and begging them for money. He had it coming. Harry charmed me into bed – he wasn't even a good lover. Harry just wanted to get even with a business rival. He saw me as a pushover, but I have a ruthless streak. Yes, I'm ambitious. You could say I woke up and smelled the coffee. I was never going to be just a 'sleeping' partner. You need to have killer instinct in this business. It's a dog-eat-dog world. It looks like Harry just rolled over and played dead. For good!

RUBY

Ruby: Lies. Harry owed me, it was payback time. If you'd have known Harry, you would have done the same. He was a born liar. I met Harry Ferrari when I was sixteen years old. We were both club singers back then. We hit it off straight away. He told me he was single. That was his first lie. He told me he would look after me and treat me like a lady. That was his second lie. I realised that Harry was poison. Do you know what? I stuck by Harry through all his faults. I lent him money one last time. "You'll get it all back with interest", he said. That was his last lie. *Lying, lying, lying* cheat. Now he's lying – back there. **(Short pause.) DEAD.**

ROSE

Ruby: Well, what do you fink, 'arry? **(Stops dancing.)** We've been practising our dance moves all week.

Harry: Is that it? No wonder the club is half empty every night.

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Rose: This place is a dive.

ALICE BUTLER

Alice: Poison. Harry was poison. My father loaned Harry money years ago. Once Harry had the money in his grubby little hands, he ignored him. Cut him out of his life. My father took to drink. Harry was responsible for my father's death – a dead man walking. I started working at the Blue Parrot to get some inside information on Harry so that I could shop him to the police, but he started coming on to me, like he did with all women. My father drank himself to death. You could say Harry drank himself to death, too. Revenge is sweet. **(Laughs.)** Mother always said I had a sweet tooth.

GIUSEPPE DOLCE

Giuseppe:(Menacing.) Where is he hiding?

(Alice rushes in.)

Alice: I tried to stop him, Harry.

Harry: I don't hide from anyone, Giuseppe.

Giuseppe:(Notices Harry and shouts.) *Mi devi.*

Harry: *Non mi spaventi.*

(Johnny moves to calm the men down.)

Johnny: Gentlemen, gentlemen. **(Offers hand to Giuseppe.)** Good to see you, Giuseppe.

Suzie: Harry, we must offer our guest a drink.

Harry: He's not staying.

(Giuseppe sits down.)

Giuseppe: Make mine a brandy.

Alice: I'll get it. Do you want your usual, Harry?

Harry: Of course.

Johnny: **(Sits down.)** Just a small rum for me.

(Alice walks over to get the drinks.)

Giuseppe: I'm surprised you get any customers in here, Harry. Same tired old musicians. Same tired old singers. Same tired old wallpaper. **(Looks around.)** The place looks shabby.

Harry: We're changing the décor.

Giuseppe: That costs money. Have you had a sudden windfall?

Suzie: A few cosmetic changes here and there shouldn't break the bank.

Giuseppe: You've got a few outstanding debts to pay before you start splashing the money on a paint job, Harry. I hear your creditors are queueing up around the block.

Harry: You should get your hearing checked out, Giuseppe, because you hear wrong.

Giuseppe: My hearing is as sharp as me. I keep my ear to the ground, it's surprising what you hear on the Soho grapevine.

(Alice pours and serves drinks to Harry, Giuseppe and Johnny.)

Johnny: **(Raises glass.)** Your good health, Gentlemen.

Giuseppe: **(Raises glass.)** *Saluti.*

JOHNNY WALKER

(Johnny Walker enters, carrying a briefcase.)

Harry: The late Mister Walker.

Johnny: I'm here now. What's so urgent, Harry?

Harry: Did you bring all the paperwork?

Johnny: **(Takes sheaths of papers from briefcase.)** Everything you asked for, Harry. We need to sit and go through the accounts at some point.

Suzie: How bad is it looking?

Johnny: **(Looks at papers.)** You're haemorrhaging money, Harry.

Harry: I had a run of bad luck. Let's just say I had a few dead certs that turned out to be donkeys.

Johnny: Forget the horses. You need new investors.

Suzie: Or a business partner. Someone who loves the club as much as you do and who is willing to put money into it.

Harry: **(Doubtful.)** A business partner? I'm not sure about that.

Johnny: Suzie has got a point. A business partner is ideal, they can take some of the pressure off you.

Harry: No, it wouldn't work. Someone telling me what to do all day? I get that from my wife. I'd want a sleeping partner.

Suzie: (Pats Harry's hand.) What if sleep is the last thing on her mind?

Harry: What – you?

Suzie: Yes, why not me? I have my inheritance and a shrewd business mind. I work hard, know this club, clientele, and local area inside out. I can also hold a tune if one of the singers doesn't turn up.

Johnny: That sounds like the perfect solution.

Harry: Yes, I need more money, pronto.

Suzie: That's no problem. The money would clear your debts, and put me on an equal footing, Harry.

Harry: Equal partners? As in fifty-fifty?

Suzie: Yes, and I could do the hiring and firing – I could persuade Mollie that we need new acts at the club. Just think of it, Harry. New speciality acts at the Blue Parrot would put us back on the map.

Harry: I don't know.

Johnny: What's to know? It's a great idea.

Harry: But mixing business with pleasure...

Suzie: Think of the kudos and wiping that smile off Giuseppe Dolce's face when the Candy Club lose their clientele to us. Think of all the money you'd make, Harry.

Johnny: It's a winner from where I'm sitting.

Suzie: So, what do you say, Harry?

Harry: I need time to think about it.

Johnny: Time is money, Harry – neither of which you've got at present.

INSPECTOR MAYDAY

Mayday: Stay where you are – I am the police.

Giuseppe: Rozzer! What's your name?

Mayday: Rozzer Watt is not my name. I am Detective Inspector Mayday. I have been called in by Scotland Yard.

Ruby: Did he say he was from Scotland?

Rose: He doesn't sound Scottish, Rube.

Mayday: I do not have to be Scottish to be the best Detective Inspector in the whole of London, Madam.

Ruby: It's Miss, Inspector.

Mayday: Then I stand corrected, Miss Inspector.

Giuseppe: *Cretino!*

Mayday: No, thank you, I don't drink on duty.

Rose: **(Points to Mayday's jacket.)** Why are you wearing a thistle if you're not Scottish?

Mayday: A long walk in the tall grass with a short dog.

Ruby: That explains it then.

Johnny: Can I get you a drink, Inspector?

Mayday: No, thank you, it is against police policy for a police inspector to 'ave a tippie whilst he is on duty, Mister...?

Johnny: Johnny Walker, Inspector.

Mayday: I just told you that I don't drink on duty.

Suzie: Can we get down to business please, Inspector?

Mayday: **(Loosens his collar.)** Thank you for your kind offer, Miss, but it is against police policy for a policeman to engage in any shenanigans whilst he is on duty. **(Aside.)** My shift finishes at midnight. Do you work here, Miss...?

Suzie: Aringa – Suzie Aringa. I'm manager of the Blue Parrot.

Mayday: **(Sings.)** If you knew Suzie, like I know Suzie. **(Stops singing.)** It has a nice aringa to it.

Ruby: I hope that wasn't an audition.

Rose: Don't call us – we won't call you...

Ruby: Don't give up your day job, Inspector.

Mayday: Ah yes, my day job. I am Detective Inspector Mayday. I am here at the Blue Carrot.

Suzie: **(Exasperated.)** It's parrot!

Mayday: **(Comedy business as he looks around.)** Parrot – where? I am allergic to birds of the feathered variety.

Suzie: My club is the Blue Parrot, not carrot.

Mayday: **(Checks his notepad.)** I shall rectify my notes. I am here to investigate the death of Harry Ferrari at the Blue Parrot not carrot club.