

Songbirds: The Diary of Dana Ma : Part 2

By: Dino Mahoney

Characters:

Dana: A school girl.
Mrs Ma: Dana's Mother.
Mr. Ma: Dana's father, a businessman.

Synopsis:

In Part 1 of The Diary of Dana Ma we heard the inner voice of Dana, a schoolgirl, keeping a diary while her parents were splitting up. In this second episode we can hear some of what was actually going on around her at that time.

Scene 1

(SFX: Front door closing. Walking into room)

Mr Ma: Still up?
Mrs Ma: (Uptight) Where have you been?
Mr. Ma: You should have gone to bed.
Mrs Ma: Answer me Nelson... where have you been?
Mr Ma: (Sighs) Out with a client. (Yawns) I'm exhausted. I need to sleep.
Mrs Ma: With a client?
Mr Ma: Mister Horitaki.... He's over from Tokyo... He's an important client...
I had to take him out. Okay?
Mrs Ma: Take him where?
Mr Ma: What is this Martha? An interrogation?
Mrs Ma: I have been sitting here for...
Mr Ma: (Interrupting) I didn't ask you to wait up... you should have gone to bed.
Mrs Ma: And Dana's been difficult.
Mr Ma: What do you mean?
Mrs Ma: She wanted to wait up till you got back.
Mr Ma: That's ridiculous.
Mrs Ma: I sent her to bed but she kept coming out in her night clothes and asking if you'd come home yet.
Mr Ma: You're not strict enough with her.
Mrs Ma: She hardly ever sees you.
Mr Ma: Martha... I'm a businessman... businessmen work long hours, they come home late... it's part of their job.
Mrs Ma: You could have phoned... a quick phone call wouldn't have hurt.
Mr Ma: I was going to but...
Mrs Ma: (Interrupting) And why was your mobile phone switched off?

Mr Ma: It wasn't.

Mrs Ma: I know you hate me calling you on your mobile phone...

Mr Ma: I work hard Martha... I have to concentrate... I can't keep answering domestic phone calls during working hours.

Mrs Ma: It was late... I was worried... so I decided to call... but all I got was, 'The called party cannot be reached.'

Mr Ma: It must have been the building we were in.

Mrs Ma: What building?

Mr Ma: Some hotel.

Mrs Ma: What hotel?

Mr Ma: The... um...

Mrs Ma: (Quickly) Can't you remember? You've only just come from there haven't you?

Mr Ma: The Ambassador.

Mrs Ma: In Tsim Tsa Tsui?

Mr Ma: Yes.

Mrs Ma: Why were you over in Tsim Tsa Tsoi? Your office is in Central.

Mr Ma: Mister Horitaki wanted to see different parts of Hong Kong... he wanted to go over the other side on the ferry.

Mrs Ma: The ferry?

Mr Ma: Yes. He's unusual for a Japanese businessman... he likes to get out and see things.

Mrs Ma: He wanted to go to Tsim Tsa Tsoi.

Mr Ma: Yes.

Mrs Ma: What for?

Mr Ma: Don't be so suspicious Martha. We took the ferry over to Tsim Tsa Tsoi and then we walked around and we had dinner at the Ambassador and that was it.

Mrs Ma: It's two thirty Nelson. How long was dinner?!

Mr Ma: We went for a drink after dinner.

Mrs Ma: I see. A drink. Where?

Mr Ma: Martha... you sound like a police officer.

Mrs Ma: Where did you go for a drink Nelson?... Tell me.

Mr Ma: A bar.

Mrs Ma: In the hotel?

Mr Ma: Um... no... we went for a little walk after dinner and then we just popped into a local bar.

Mrs Ma: In Tsim Tsa Tsoi.

Mr Ma: Yes.

Mrs Ma: Were there hostesses there?

Mr Ma: Hostesses?

Mrs Ma: Yes. In the bar.

Mr Ma: No, I don't think there were. I don't really remember.

Mrs Ma: You don't remember? Why? It's a simple enough question. Were there or weren't there hostesses in the bar?

Mr Ma: There may have been but I didn't notice.

Mrs Ma: Isn't that what overseas clients want when you take them out? Good restaurants, bars... girls.

Mr Ma: Martha my company doesn't do business like that... some companies do... but ours most definitely doesn't..... Now I'm sorry but I really need to go to bed and get some sleep... I'm meeting Mr Horitaki at nine o'clock tomorrow to take him to a very important meeting with the directors.

Mrs Ma: Is everything you've just told me the truth Nelson.

Mr Ma: (Sighs) I won't even bother answering that Martha.

Mrs Ma: Does that mean 'no.'

Mr Ma: It means I'm your husband Martha and if you can't trust me... who can you trust.

Scene 2

(SFX: Ambient sounds. In a coffee shop)

Mr Sing: Mrs Ma?

Mrs Ma: Mister Sing?

Mr Sing: That's right. Pleased to meet you.

Mrs Ma: Pleased to meet you.

Mr Sing: Please... sit down.

Mrs Ma: Thank you.

Mr Sing: Would you like something to drink? A coffee, tea or something?

Mrs Ma: Um...

Mr Sing: Here's the menu.

Mrs Ma: Thanks... A peppermint tea please.

Mr Sing: Waiter. One peppermint tea and another cappuccino. Thanks. (Pause)
Sorry I asked you to come out all this way Mrs Ma.

Mrs Ma: That's okay.

Mr Sing: It's just that... in delicate matters like this I always think it's better to meet in a place where you're not likely to meet people you know.

Mrs Ma: I understand.

Mr Sing: People see you with me and tongues would start wagging and we wouldn't want that.

Mrs Ma: No.

Mr Sing: It's important to keep everything as quiet as possible.

Mrs Ma: Of course.

Mr Sing: Ah... here's your peppermint tea Mrs Ma.
(SFX: Cups being put on the table)

Mrs Ma: Thank you.

Mr Sing: They say peppermint tea's very good for you.

Mrs Ma: Yes.

Mr Sing: Keeps you calm.

Mrs Ma: Yes.

Mr Sing: That's good. Very good. Because I'm afraid Mrs Ma... you'll need to keep calm after what I have to tell you.

Mrs Ma: I see.

Mr Sing: Now then... shall we proceed to business or would you rather wait till you've finished your tea?

Mrs Ma: I've never done this before Mr Sing.
Mr Sing: I'm sure you haven't Mrs Ma... but sometimes... it's the only way to find out the truth.

Mrs Ma: And that's all I want to know Mister Sing... the truth.
Mr Sing: And that's what I'm hear for Mrs Ma. If I gave you anything other than the truth... well... I wouldn't be doing my job properly, would I?

Mrs Ma: Yes Mister Sing... and I want you to know that I appreciate your help.
Mr Sing: So... shall I proceed?
Mrs Ma: Please do Mr Sing.
Mr Sing: Um... could I just say that what I am about to tell you may be a little upsetting.

Mrs Ma: I see.
Mr Sing: Well I only mention that because we are in a public place and...
Mrs Ma: I am prepared Mister Sing and I shall listen to what you have to say without tears.

Mr Sing: Very good Mrs Ma... very good... You know some of my clients can be very emotional ladies.

Mrs Ma: Please Mister Sing... tell me what you have discovered.
Mr Sing: Okay. I'll read from my notes if you don't mind... that way I won't get anything wrong.

Mrs Ma: Very well.
Mr Sing: (Clearing throat) On Friday January 21st Mr Nelson Ma... left his office at 6 30 p.m. and proceeded to the Harbour View Hotel. At 7 p.m. he left the Harbour View Hotel in the company of another gentleman. Later enquiries revealed this to be a Mister Hirotaki, a Japanese businessman visiting Hong Kong from Tokyo.

Mrs Ma: Thank goodness for that.
Mr Sing: I'm sorry Mrs Ma?
Mrs Ma: Sorry to interrupt. I'm just... well... so relieved.
Mr Sing: Relieved Mrs Ma?
Mrs Ma: You see... that's what Mr Ma told me... and... I doubted him.
Mr Sing: But Mrs Ma... that is only the start of the evening... Did he tell you that he took the Star Ferry to Tsim Sha Tsui?

Mrs Ma: Yes, yes he did!
Mr Sing: And that he and Mister Horotaki walked around some of the side streets of Tsim Tsa Tsoi and up Nathan Road?

Mrs Ma: Yes... yes he did!
Mr Sing: And that they had dinner in the Ambassador Hotel?
Mrs Ma: Yes! How wrong I was to doubt him! Oh Mister Sing... thank you for all your hard work but I knew all of this already because... he told me himself!

Mr Sing: And did he tell you that after dinner he and Mister Hirotaki went to a bar at the back of the hotel?

Mrs Ma: (Happy) Yes... yes he did... he told me that!
Mr Sing: The Kitty Kat Club.
Mrs Ma: Well... he didn't tell me the name of the bar... but he told me it was a bar in Tsim Tsa Tsoi.
Mr Sing: It's a little more than just a bar I'm afraid Mrs Ma. It's a hostess bar.

Mrs Ma: A hostess bar? But I asked him and he said... Well I asked him if there were hostesses there and he said no... Maybe he didn't see any Mister Sing?

Mr Sing: I doubt it Mrs Ma... the place is crawling with them.

Mrs Ma: (Unhappy. Serious) I see.

Mr Sing: I was there Mrs Ma. I bought myself a drink and sat in a booth where I had a very good view of both Mister Horotaki and your husband.

Mrs Ma: It's those Japanese business men... they come over to Hong Kong and lead our husbands astray!

Mr Sing: I'm afraid Mrs Ma... it was the other way around. From what I could see... Mister Hirotaki was not interested in doing anything with the girls... in fact... he started showing Mr Ma his family photographs... he has a little daughter... Miki... and he's very proud of her... I know because one of the girls told me... You see, he was so proud of his daughter that he even showed the hostesses her photograph.

Mrs Ma: I see.

Mr Sing: (Reading from notes) At twenty minutes eleven Mr Hirotaki and Mr Ma left the Kitty Kat Club...

Mrs Ma: But Mr Ma didn't get home till half past two!

Mr Sing: And the reason why will become clear as I proceed with my report Mrs Ma.

Mrs Ma: Please. Go on.

Mr Sing: Mr Ma escorted Mr Hirotaki to the Star Ferry but... he did not pass through the turnstiles with him. At eight minutes to eleven he waved goodbye to Mr Hirotaki and returned to the Kitty Kat Club.

Mrs Ma: Returned?! Maybe he'd forgotten something... his briefcase or his coat or scarf.

Mr Sing: (Sighs) At eleven fifteen he left the club in the company of Miss Kiki Poon.

Mrs Ma: Kiki Poon?!

Mr Sing: A hostess at the Kitty Kat Club. They then proceeded to the nearby Prosperity Building that the owner of the Kitty Kat Club rents for the purpose of entertaining his clients.

Mrs Ma: Stop! Please. I... I think I've heard enough Mr Sing.

Mr Sing: I'm sorry Mrs Ma... I'm very sorry.

Scene 3

(SFX: Dinner at home. Chopsticks scraping against an emptied bowl)

Mr Ma: That was delicious Martha.

Mrs Ma: I'm glad you enjoyed it Nelson.

Dana: It was lovely mummy.

Mrs Ma: Did you enjoy it Dana? Good girl.

Mrs Ma: I was thinking... maybe... as it's Sunday night... we could all go out together to see a film.

Dana: Oh yes please! Yes please! Can we daddy?! Can we?!

Mr Ma: That's a lovely idea Martha... but I'm afraid I've still got work to do at the office.

Dana: Oh no daddy... don't go back to work... let's go to see a film!

Mr Ma: I'd love to Dana, but I can't... not this time anyway.

Dana: (Disappointed) Ohhh, it's not fair!

Mrs Ma: But it's Sunday night Nelson... surely you don't have to go to work tonight?

Mr Ma: I know... why don't you two go together... I'll give you the money... a treat... and you can buy a big tub of popcorn and tell me all about the film when I come home.

Dana: But we want you to come too daddy... don't we mummy?

Mrs Ma: (Sarcastic) It's alright Dana... your father has got better things to do with his time than go out with his family.

Mr Ma: Don't say that Martha... you know that's not true.

Mrs Ma: He has a very important meeting.

Mr Ma: Yes I do actually.

Mrs Ma: At the Kitty Kat Club?

Mr Ma: What?!

Mrs Ma: (Scornful) With a Miss Kiki Poon!

Mr Ma: Martha... have you gone mad or something?!

(SFX: Bowl being smashed to the ground)

Go then! Go to your meeting! Go on! Get out! And never come back!

Mr Ma: This is insane!

Mrs Ma: Go on... pack your bags and go and live in the Prosperity Building... I'm sure you'll be very happy there!

Mr Ma: I have no idea what you are talking about Martha! But if that's what you want! I'm leaving!

Dana: Daddy... no... don't!

Mrs Ma: Dana... go to your room.

Dana: Daddy!

Mrs Ma: Dana... your room!

(SFX: Door slams)

Scene 4

Dana: Sunday January 23rd 'Dear Diary... why is this happening? Why is this happening to me? It's not fair! Nothing is fair. I bury my head under the covers but I can still hear. It's driving me crazy. I don't know what to do or who to tell. The only person I can tell is you, my diary... What would I do without you? I'd go crazy. Quick, there's someone coming. Hide me!

(SFX: Bedroom door opening) (SFX: Bedroom door opening)

Mrs Ma: Dana.

Dana: I'm just finishing my homework.

Mrs. Ma: Look, I'm really sorry about what happened just now.

Dana: It's okay mum.
Mrs Ma: It's difficult to explain.
Dana: It's alright. I understand. I didn't really want to go to the cinema anyway.
Mrs Ma: (Sighs) One day... when you're a bigger girl... you'll understand.
Dana: Yes mum.
Mrs Ma: Okay... get on with your homework now... but don't sit up too late.... You've got school in the morning.
(SFX: Bedroom door closing)
Dana: (Writing) She saw! I wasn't quick enough. I heard her coming... but it was too late. But it's okay...she thought I was doing my homework.I'll have to be more careful in future. (Pause) Time for you to hide under the pillow. Under the pillow.

(SFX: Echo effect)

Dana: But we want you to come too daddy... don't we mummy?
Mrs Ma: (Sarcastic) It's alright Dana... your father has got better things to do with his time than go out with his family.
Mr Ma: Don't say that Martha... you know that's not true.
Mrs Ma: He has a very important meeting.
Mr Ma: Yes I do actually.
Mrs Ma: At the Kitty Kat Club?
Mr Ma: What?!
Mrs Ma: (Scornful) With a Miss Kiki Poon!
Mr Ma: Martha... have you gone mad or something?!

(SFX: Bowl being smashed to the ground)

Go then! Go to your meeting! Go on! Get out! And never come back!

The End