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# **MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME HOW TO SING**

**by**

**DAF JAMES**

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**Tuesday 17 January 2017 0930-1730**  
**Wednesday 18 January 2017 0930-1730**

**Edit:** 19, 20 & 23 January 2017

**Tape Number:** PCF1703/16DC2608

**Proteus No:** PEL29001053/AAA

**Project Code:** PAH-6824-JAME

**Transmission:** Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017 @ 1415 on R4

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**My Mother Taught Me How To Sing**  
**By Daf James**

**Prologue**

1. Social Worker Describe what your parents were like and what role they played in the family?
2. Narrator **When I was little Mum and Dad seemed like clearly defined roles. Mami stayed at home. She cooked. She cleaned. Dad went to work and came home in a suit. Mum mostly gave the cuddles. Dad mostly gave the rows. Sometimes they swapped but mostly men were men and women were women. Life was much simpler back then. Except it wasn't. Because I used to like wearing a pink dress, pretending I was Annie, then singing 'Maybe' whilst having a little cry.**

Music: *Maybe*

Doc This is the cupboard I used to make my friends go in there and pretend they were orphan Annie, and they were only allowed to come out when they were actually crying and not from an abusive way (he laughs) but I was trying to channel what it would be like to be a sad orphan.

6. **A few years ago my partner and I decided we'd like to adopt. It was an idea that crept up on us gradually until it felt like the natural next step: a good fit We wanted to raise children, we didn't have the equipment to produce any between us, and there were many children out there who needed adopting. Then, while we were waiting to be approved, my mum died. She was only 67.**

8. **In the days that followed, amidst the grief, I couldn't help but think how, if we made it through the adoption process, my children would never know a mum like I knew mine. Would two Dads lack what a mother and father might offer? What does it mean to be a mum?**

### **Act 1**

9. **Narrator** **It all began with a phone call.**

FX: Dialing tone.

10. **Daf:** **Oh Hello, yes, my name is Daf James. We'd like to adopt a child please.**

11. **Narrator** **OK, so I might not have used those exact words because this is a reconstruction.**

12. **In reality we filled out a form and a social worker paid us a visit.**

13. **Social Worker** **When a child is considered for adoption it means that all other options have been exhausted. Most children who are adopted will have experienced a degree of neglect or abuse.**

14. **Narrator** **We were questioned on our relationship and our family history. We were warned that this might feel intrusive.**

16. Social Worker Describe your relationship?  
How long have you been together?  
Do you ever argue?  
What is your occupation?  
How much do you drink?  
Have you ever taken drugs?  
Do you smoke?  
What is your combined income?  
How do you deal with stress?

17. **Narrator** **In the midst of all this, my mum suffered a severe stroke.**

18. Social Worker What kind of relationship did you have with your parents, growing up?

19. **Narrator:** **After she died I thought the only recording I had of my mum was this Songify thing on my phone. Basically, it's an App that turns speech into song.**  
FX. The Songify track.  
  
**This was particularly funny to me because my mum was tone deaf.**  
FX. The Songify track... “My name is Mair James, I’m the mother of Dafydd and Sian...”

20. **And then I remembered the tapes.**

## **Scene 1** Documentary Recording - Cowbridge

FX: Daf shows us where he found the box of tapes. And the box itself.

Talks to his Dad, Doug James, about the box.

21.      **Narrator**      A rectangular box in blue leatherette. 'Cassettes' printed in gold on its lid.

Doc      Doug J      It goes back a long time, probably about 40 years, is it?

## Daf What the box does?

Doug J You picked up some of the tapes that Mum and I used to record you playing around.

**Narrator** I love this particular tape. 'Siân a Dafydd', that's my sister and me. It's a Green German tape and it contains the first decade of my life in 90 minutes.

## Scene 2 – Documentary Recording – Listening to Tape 1

CD 1: 0:00-1:25

## Fx Sian singing Humpty Dumpty

22. Doc Daf So that's not me. That's my sister, she's much cuter than I am. She's got the Welshest accent in the world, that's really odd.

23.      **Narrator**      **The year is 1978. The place is Cowbridge: South Wales.**

FX Sian singing Jack and Jill

**Imagine the type of house you'd be drawing in  
school with four windows and a door in the  
middle.**

24. Doc Daf And that's my Dad clapping. She's singing about  
two little dogs going to the forest  
With a new shoe on each foot  
Two little Dogs coming back home  
Oh they've lost one of their shoes  
Two Little Dogs.

Mam Dechre to

26. Doc Daf And that's my mum, sounding really strict. 'Dechre to'  
means start again, start again, get it right, get it right.  
You don't know who will be listening in the future.

27. Narrator **I like to imagine that Mum's wearing her blue and  
white dressing gown. When I think of my Mum  
from my childhood she's always in that floral,  
blue dressing gown.**

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### Scene 3 - Documentary Recording – Listening to Tape 2

28. Narrator **And then a few years later this happened:**

CD: 1: 6: 06 - 6:20

'Na, Siân'

Fx Sian singing  
Young Daf Na, Sian!

29.	<b>Narrator</b>	Ok yeah, I've arrived. That's me trying to get the microphone off her because I obviously didn't want her to have a go.
Fx	Young Daf	singing <b>The family unit has been disturbed. 'I bet they're really glad they decided to have another one'.</b>
Fx	Young Daf	singing
30.		<b>I can hear who I became so clearly in these recordings; but is that because I was already formed or because who I would turn out to be seems inevitable now?</b>
31.	Social Worker	Imagine the lives of your future children as a vessel of juice. When they come to you it will already have been filled a little: and this can't be taken away. That first layer will always be part of their history – it can't be erased and nor should it, as it is part of their story –your job will be to help add other colours, flavours. Through playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy and love, you can facilitate the dilution of any early trauma and help shape who they might now become.
FX:	Young Daf –	singing
32.	<b>Narrator</b>	<b>When I was little, I would often go to the 1970s teak unit to fetch the plastic container where the microphone lived.</b>
Doc	Doug J	It's probably still here, do you want to have a look? ..
	Daf	I remember it was in a box (they look for it)
	Daf	Oh there it is, got it?
	Doug J	Found
	Daf	I remember this

Doug I don't even know how to put it together  
Daf This is old school.  
Doug We probably had it with our first stereo  
Daf Oh look Sony 1.7 stereo microphone F99B  
Doug Leading technology  
Daf I thought it was amazing. The fact you could just speak into it. I remember being fascinated by it would then end up on tape.

**It would steal your voice.**

Fx Young Daf singing

**That was, and still is magic. And clutching that miraculous object in my hand, I made a life changing decision.**

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**Act 2**  
**Scene 4 – Int. House**

33. Little Daf: Mami, I'm going to be a singer!

34. **Narrator:** Ok. That's not actually me on the little green tape. That's a young actor pretending to be me. What's your name?

35. Little Daf: Little Daf.

36. **Narrator:** Hey, he's really got into character. Are you excited about playing me, Little Daf?

37. Little Daf: Kind of. But I'd rather play Gareth Bale.

38. **Narrator:** Right. OK. Let's go again. Where were we?

39. Little Daf: Mami, I'm going to be a singer?

40. **Narrator:** Oh yes!

41. Little Daf: Mami, I'm going to be a singer!

42. **Narrator:** Mum couldn't sing. At all. Not a note. I tried forcing her to sing once.

43. Little Daf: Sing this mum. (*he sings*) Lah.

44. **Narrator:** Lah, she said.

45. Little Daf: No Mum (*he sings*) Lah.

46. **Narrator:** Lah, she said.

47. **Narrator:** How could she not hear music the way I heard it?  
And yet, she would, without fail, phone me every year on my birthday and sing *Happy Birthday* as boldly and tunelessly as she could; and she always encouraged me to do the same.

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### Scene 6 – Documentary Recording – Tape 3

CD 1: 7: 25 - 8: 30

Rhaid Gwisgo Cot

Fx      Young Daf      Singing Rhaid Gwisgo Cot

49. Doc Daf: When I heard this, my heart skipped a beat. I hadn't heard this tape in years.

Let me translate

*Daf sits at a piano and sings.*

50.      Daf            'I must wear a coat  
                  I must wear a hat  
                  I must wear a glove upon each hand  
                  Say goodbye to our school  
                  And say hello to Mami  
                  Hello,  
                  Hello,  
                  And say hello to Mami'

Fx tape    Young Daf        (sings last line with him)

*The piano continues under the narration.*

51.      Narrator        **This is the song we'd sing every day in nursery school. The fact we had to wear gloves all year round before waving hello to mami says as much about the weather in Wales as it does about gender inequality.**

52.                    **I wonder, when I pick my child up from nursery, if they'll have a version to accommodate all potential familial variations? (sings)**

Fx      Child Daf        'So fe mewn fynna':

53.      Doc Daf:        I'm saying, 'It's not in there'. I'm obsessed it's not going into the machine.  
                  'Odi, ma fe', Mum says: 'Yes it is... Do it again'.  
                  I'm actually surprised she sound quite fierce, actually.  
                  Stubborn perhaps. She's quite stubborn.

## **Scene 7 –**

55. Social worker Describe happy / sad memories from your childhood.

Daf and his father

Daf Do you remember, because there are tapes here of songs that I've written. Do you remember me playing piano and recording?

Doug Yes

Daf Was it annoying?

Doug I probably didn't show much interest

56. Narrator **Jesus and Ethiopia were topics of choice. But then my Wncwl Trefor died. I'd been intrigued by death ever since Philippa Evans had told me that when her uncle had died he'd been put in a box in the lounge. I was convinced he was still there, in a cardboard box behind the sofa. So when Wncwl Trefor died I realised that here was an opportunity to combine two of my favourite things. Singing AND crying.**

57. Little Daf: I've written a song.

58. Dawn: What's it about?

59. Narrator **Dawn was one of my best friends in school. She was taller than me and used to pin me up against the wall just for laughs.**

60. Little Daf: It's about dead uncle Trefor. It goes like this:

*He died*

*He died*

*He died in blood and a grave*

*He died with a clean heart*

*He died in blood and a grave*

Daf Of course I'd be singing in Welsh

Daf (sings it in Welsh at the piano)

61.      **Narrator**      **Granted, it's a poor lyric. It's also factually incorrect: Wncwl Trefor was definitely not covered in blood when he died, and I hope to God he'd drawn his last breath way *before* he got to his grave or the undertakers in Camarthen would have a lot to answer for.**

62.      Dawn:      I like it. Can I sing it too?

63.      Little Daf:      Alright.

64.      Dawn:      My grandad's dead as well.

65.      Little Daf:      Is he?

66.      Dawn:      Yeah. We can both sing it together. You about your Wncwl Trefor and me about my Granddad.

67.      **Narrator**      **We were like an infantile, gothic version of Elton John and Kiki Dee. It was the best playtime ever: two six year olds walking with their arms around each other, singing about death. And we cried. Like proper cried. We sang and sobbed our little hearts out. I don't think I was really crying about Wncwl Trefor. There, holding Dawn, I realised not only that one day I would die, but that part of the**

**experience of living was the endurance of profound loss.**

68.      **Narrator**      **On the 26th of October 2015 Mum was standing in the kitchen doing the dishes. Dad had called her name but she didn't respond. She had frozen in a moment in time. He managed to get her to lie down and called the ambulance.**  
**I've never seen my Mami look so small; so fragile. She was like a paper doll on that bed. We gathered around her – her tribe – as miracle workers did all that they could. At first it wasn't a question that we would lose her; it was a question of how much of her we would get back.**

69.      **Social Worker**      How were feelings expressed within the family?

70.      **Narrator**      **My mum couldn't speak but her eyes spoke volumes: they spoke of fear. We held her tightly. I remembered in that moment a time when I was a teenager and we had had a family argument.**

Doc Daf and Doug

            Daf      You and I had had an argument, I can't remember what it was, Mum was involved in it too, but afterwards you and I sat down, and I'd calmed down by then and we analysed. We would sit and talk about what had happened in quite a methodical way, and Mum got a bit upset and I remember I used to say this to Mum, Oh Mum, don't be so childish which must have been so annoying as a teenager, but, anyway, she got a bit upset that we were rationalizing. And she said, that's not the way I do things. I don't understand what you're talking about, almost. And then about an hour later when I was

doing my homework in the kitchen, she came in and she sat next to me and she just gave me a big hug and walked away and I remember it being profound at the time, because I went, ah, there's different ways of doing things.

71.      **Narrator**      **Whenever I feel vulnerable, even as an adult, I feel a deep-rooted need for my Mami. Mami, in all her 'Maminess', but whatever it that is, I'm not sure if it's something I can ever possess, let alone give to my child.**

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### Act 3

#### **Scene 8** - Playground

FX: Music: Solo Piano version of the Wncwl Trefor song.

72.      **Narrator**      **It turned out I hadn't actually composed the melody at all for the song about Wncwl Trefor. It was, in fact, the theme tune from the Interflora advert slowed down to half-speed. But soon I discovered that you could slow any melody down to create a poignant, elegiac effect.**

Fx *Dogtanian Theme Tune*

**My finest moment was when I discovered you could do it with the theme tune from Dogtanian.**

*Excerpt from Dogtanian Theme Tune “One for all and all for one...”*

Fx piano

73.      **I would make my friends lie down on the yard as if they'd been slain in battle, then walk around them with leaden steps as though I was processing to my own funeral and sing mournfully:**

74. Little Daf: One for all, and all for one, muskehounds are always ready...

75. **Narrator** **In my head I was being accompanied by sweeping violins and looked like Diana Ross.**

76. **Narrator** **It was time to show the world what I was made of.**  
**It was time to show the world that I could sing.**  
**And so I did what every welsh-speaking child in his right mind would do. I decided I was going to compete in the Urdd Eisteddfod.**

Hywel Gwynfryn on the Eisteddfod ....

Well, I suppose the first thing you'd say about the Eisteddfod is that it's a cultural festival.

**Narrator** **This is Hywel Gwynfryn**  
And is held every year.

**Narrator** **He used to introduce the coverage of the Eisteddfod**  
For seven days  
**And he was one of my heros, still is.**

One of our leading dramatists once said, only the Welsh would erect a pavilion and spent 7 days walking around it. (laughter)

And to some people, of course, there is still a pavilion, that is the Eisteddfod, it's a place to meet friends that you haven't seen since the last Eisteddfod. And for others, like yourself, it's a place to go and compete. But you can compete on cerdd dant which is very very difficult and a Welsh art form as well. And you can dance your way to victory. You can write a poem in strict meter to win a chair

77. **Narrator** **The competition I had my eye on was the under 8s solo. In order to compete I would first have to get through the local round and win the county round. All being well I'd then attend the prelims, where the top three competitors would be put through to perform on the Urdd Eisteddfod Stage(*magical musical sting*). Now, the Stage (*magical musical sting*) was Mecca. The Stage was a sacred space in a pavilion in a field, somewhere in Wales. For democratic purposes it's a different field every year but the stage (*sting*) is always the same. There I would sing my little heart out and Hywel Gwynfryn would say my name on the radio.**

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**Scene 9 – School Assembly**  
FX: School Assembly

78. **Mrs Simpson:** Ok, ok, settle down. Settle down. Now, who would like to compete in this year's Urdd Eisteddfod?

79. **Narrator** **My little hand shot up like a greyhound from its gate.**

80. **Mrs Simpson:** Dafydd James?

81. **Little Daf:** Yes Mrs Simpson.

82. **Mrs Simpson:** What would you like to do, a bit of reciting is it?

83. **Little Daf:** I want to *sing*.

84. **Narrator:** **Her face grimaced slightly.**

85. Mrs Simpson: Are you sure?'

86. Little Daf: Yeah!

87. **Narrator:** I was actually a bit more excited than that, Little Daf.

88. Mrs Simpson: Are you sure?

89. Little Daf: YES!!!!!!

90. **Narrator:** EXACTLY. At the school gate at the end of the day, Mrs Simpson approached my mum tentatively.

### **Scene 10 – Car Park**

91. Mrs Simpson: Mrs James? Dafydd wants to enter the solo competition in the Urdd, did you know anything about that?'

92. **Narrator:** My Mum shook her head. This was the first time she'd heard about it.

FX: Car.

93. **Narrator:** As I sat in the back of the little red fiesta, tightly clutching my own personal copy of the sheet music to 'Dacw'r Hedydd Bach yn Codi', I imagined my victory. 'Dacw'r Hedydd Bach yn Codi' roughly means 'Look at the little lark rising'. By the final verse the little lark has flown so high its song ceases, perhaps disappeared to heaven,

never to come back down again. It was slightly morbid and I LOVED it. I imagined how I would use my eyes to demonstrate the little bird's flight. Looking in the rear view mirror I practised widening my eyelids as far as they could possibly go whilst inflating my nostrils so they gave the impression of wind rushing through them; and I looked marvelous. Mum sat – and listened to me in the kitchen over and over again. It's there on the little green tape.

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**Scene 11** – Documentary Recording – Tape 4

CD 1: 24:46 - 25: 03      Child Daf sings  
Ehedydd Bach

94.      **Narrator**      **In my mind, my lark was as light as a feather. It flipped and it soared....**

**Unfortunately, it also bombed.**

Fx school playground

95.      **Dawn:**      Hey, Don't cry. You did really well.

96.      **Little Daf:**      I came third.

97.      **Dawn:**      That's not bad.

98.      **Little Daf:**      Out of three. The girl who won sounded like a goat.

99.      **Dawn:**      That's because she was doing vibrato.

100.      **Little Daf:**      Vib what?

101. Dawn: Vibrato. All the best singers do it. If you want to win next year, throw in a bit of goat.

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### **Scene 13 – House**

Fx O Mio Babbino Caro...

102. **Narrator** **So that was the answer: I would have to learn vibrato. And once I'd learned it, vibrato the crap out of any song I sang. I listened to lots of opera and imagined I was Maria Callas. I'd walk around the house singing ...**

103. Little Daf (with best vibrato)  
*O mio babbino caro*  
*Mi piace è bello, bello...*

104. **Narrator:** **Whilst mum promptly shut lots of doors between us.**

FX: Door shut.

106. **Narrator** **To be fair my parents were always very supportive. They supported me when I wanted to learn the piano...**

FX: Little Daf playing the piano badly. The door is shut.

107. **And when I wanted to learn the violin....**

FX: Little Daf playing the violin badly. The door is shut.

108. **Even when I started on the trombone.**

FX: Little Daf playing the trombone very badly. The door is shut.

**109.      Narrator      So much of who I am today comes down to my parents.**

Doc      Daf and his Dad

Doug      As you probably remember, I was the chauffeur, I used to come home from work

Daf      I know

Doug      There was one particular year when the two of you were in different things and I'd be travelling back into Cardiff every night and I was ending up in work because there was no point in coming back to Cowbridge, so I'd be going in to work and they got 60 hours of me.

Daf      But you didn't mind.

Doug      It's part of parenting.

**110.      Narrator      My parents also had an extensive record collection I could raid.**

**111.      Narrator      At 9 years old I had developed a penchant for Nana Mouskouri.**

CD 1: 24: 10- 24: 32

Those were the days      Young Daf singing

**112.      Narrator      It was time for me to try that vibrato out in public. Our school was celebrating its tenth anniversary and we were putting on a pageant about Iolo Morganwg, the man after whom the school was named, and I'd been chosen to play the lead role.**

Cassette      Singing I know him so well.

**I was going to play a laudanum-addicted seventy-year-old literary forger. I grew my hair; I**

**experimented with talc, and I diligently prepared my musical 'number'.**

**My solo was to be sung to 'I Know Him So Well' from Chess.**

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**Scene 14 – Documentary Recording – Tape 5**

**Narrator      OK Here I come**

CD 2: 22: 13 - 23: 15

FX Daf singing I know him so well (Y gwr oedd mor brin)

**There I am. Oh and I have a string section and an oboe, my dreams come true.**

Fx song continues

**113.      Narrator      That was it, just 4 lines. but I remember feeling like Freddie Mercury on that Llantwit Major Comprehensive stage. Barbara Dixon eat your heart out.**

Doc      Daf and his Dad  
Doug      Your grandparents came down for that  
Daf      Yeah I remember  
Doug      I always remember it came to the end and everybody'd enjoyed it and all the rest of it, and all of a sudden, your grandmother got up and standing ovation  
Daf      Oh no  
Doug      And everybody followed  
Daf      Oh no she started a standing ovation, how embarrassing  
Doug      It was (laughter)  
Daf      Where you mortified, did you stand Dad?  
Doug      Yes

Fx      applause

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### **Scene 15 - Bus**

114.      **Narrator**      **But on the bus David Edwards asked me why my voice sounded like a mix between an old man and a drill:**

115.      Little Daf:      It's called vibrato.

116.      **And the other kids would all pinch and shake their throats violently in my face, as if a whole herd of angry goats wanted me dead.**

FX: Goats

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### **Act 4**

117.      Social Worker      Describe any experience of separation or loss that you had as a child.

118.      **Narrator**      **This was an important one to consider as –**

119.      Social Worker      After being placed, a child might grieve, not only the loss of their birth parents, but potentially their foster carers as well. They may well regress to earlier patterns of behaviour because of this trauma; and they'll need careful structure for their daily routines. You'll need to build up their trust so they might start to believe that when you say this is forever, you mean it.

120. **Narrator** **How does a child deal with all that? I couldn't cope with grief and I'm a 36 year old man.**  
Fx piano

121. **Narrator** **Over a period of three months, I received seven calls to say that mum was dying. The third time I rushed in to the hospital, one of the nurses, was just finishing her shift. She said her goodbyes. We all knew that it was likely that Mum would not make it through to the morning. Goodbye, Mair, she said. Very simply. Goodbye. Then she turned to us. She's a lovely lady, she said. And she slipped through the door.**

122. **When mum pulled through, again. I couldn't quite believe it. Typical Mum, my sister would say: so determined, so bloody stubborn.**

123. **But then it became an obsession. Not if she would die, but when?**

124. **Social Worker** **What feelings do you remember, what helped you through?**

125. **Narrator** **I remember wanting my mum.**

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**Scene 16 –**

126. **Social Worker** **How do you think you will deal with a situation where your children are bullied for having two dads?**

Doc Daf and his Dad  
Doug The only thing is how they'll approach it in school.  
Or how the other children will approach it.  
Daf We've thought a lot about it, but actually the school's in the community, it's the norm now. There's a lot of gay parents, and teachers who've adopted as well. It's quite different to when how I was growing up here in Cowbridge.  
Doug You'll have the occasional problem and you'll have to get over it.  
Daf Of course.

137. **Narrator** **As an eleven year old, when the other kids weren't saying I sounded like a goat, they were calling me things like 'nancy' and poof'. I used to dread going on the school bus. Michael Jenkins had already sellotaped me to the window and Dyfed Pierce had put a photograph of a naked lady with breasts the size of Kilimanjaro into my sewing bag.**

138. Little Daf: I just don't understand why everyone calls me gay all the time.

139. Narrator: Oh I'm a bit older now, Little Daf.

140. Little Daf: Right, (*much lower voice*) I just don't...

141. Narrator: Not that old...

143. Dawn: It's cause you're 'camp'.

144. Little Daf: I'm what?

145. Dawn: Camp.

148. Little Daf: What's camp?

149. Dawn: It's you. You're camp. People always assume camp boys are gay. Look at Dale Winton.

150. Little Daf: But Dale Winton is gay, isn't he?

151. Dawn: Probably.

**152. Narrator** **I decided to deal with this inner turmoil by writing more songs.**

Cassette: It's alright if you cry  
Fx singing And I cried.....

Daf in studio ....Sullen need to die, it doesn't even make sense?  
And continues song at the piano...  
It's alright if you cry...  
... even though she's gone away...  
A friendship never dies."

**153.** **My prolific song-writing career had by now attracted the attention of a small yet faithful fan base of girls who would join me by the piano every break to offer their backing vocals. And then it struck me. Some of the best songs were duets! Elton John and Kiki Dee, Sarah Brightman and Andrea Bocelli, Keith Harris and Orville... If I was going to succeed as a singer I needed to find a singing partner, and preferably one who was a better singer than me.**

## Act 5

154.      **Narrator**      **There was another girl in my year with beautiful soprano voice. Her name was Nerys. And in 1996 we started dueting in the hope that we might actually achieve the impossible. The National Urdd Eisteddfod was in Bro Maelor and I was going to give it one last chance. We were going to compete in a cerdd dant competition**

Daf and Hywel Gwynfryn –  
Daf      That was my aim in 1996 Bro Maelor in the cerdd dant duet competition, Hywel, do you remember that?

Hywel      I remember it well.  
Daf      Do you remember me and Nerys?  
Hywel      No (he laughs)  
Daf      You haven't got a clue, have you?  
Hywel      I haven't got a clue, I don't know what you're talking about (laughter)  
              Seriously though, why cerdd dant?  
Daf      I think at that age, I thought if you can sing cerdd dant you were properly Welsh. And also I used to put on a North Welsh accent on because I used to think that unless I had a North Welsh accent like your good self, I wasn't proper Welsh. I think I had a chip on my shoulder about being from Cardiff as a Welsh speaker.  
Hywel      Do you explain in the play, by the way, what cerdd dant is, and how you achieve greatness by singing?  
Daf      Why don't you explain it to us.  
Hywel      How can I say? The harp plays and tune, and you sing a tune, but the tune you sing and the one the harp plays are two different tunes, and as Ryan

Davies one of our famous comedians once said, it's everybody for themselves at the end and God help everybody in the middle.

Daf Yes.

**155. Narrator** **We rehearsed the set piece: Y Creyr Glas. This time we weren't singing about a tiny lark but a heron.**

**We sailed through the local and county rounds , attended the prelims in Bro Maelor with an air of excitement. And made it to *THE STAGE (magical stage sound)*. This was it! This was what I'd dreamt of since I'd been a 7-year-old singing:**

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**Scene 17 – Documentary Recording – Tape 6**

**CD 1: 24:46 - 25: 03**

Ehedydd Bach Young Daf singing

**156. Narrator** **I was going to sing on the Eisteddfod stage and all the people from my school would be cheering. I was going to be on national radio and television. Hywel Gwynfryn was going to say my name. *MY NAME*. It was akin to being touched by God. Dad was in work**

Doug I can't say I remember it  
**but Mum was at home, poised next to the video recorder and the radio ready to press record on the simultaneous broadcasts. As the broadcast began, she pressed the button.**

**CD 11:** Clapping and commentary by Hywel Gwynfryn

Fx Eisteddfod

157. Daf **That's Hywel Gwynfryn., see he just said my name, that's brilliant.**

Fx Broadcast.

**He's saying I've been accompanying lots of people already but that doesn't matter. I just want to be there singing, don't I. I just want to be singing.**

CD 11: Broadcast

Eisteddfod

158. Narrator **(translates) Dafydd plays the trombone in the County Orchestra.**

FX Harp

**It starts well. The harp begins and we're into it.**

Singing

**We're singing about the Heron. We're stroking that Heron for all its poetic worth. We're going to make the judge cry as she hears us sing about that God Damn Heron**

Daf **We're definitely doing all those Eisteddfod faces.. OK that's not too bad.**

*Fx tape fast forwards*

**The second verse ...I like that bit, when I go really low. Girly, no! My voice is mine. I am in control. We are in perfect harmony, a perfect symbiosis between soul and representation. This is who I was always born to be.**

159. **And then this happens.**

*My voice cracks. The music stops.*

160. **It's a small moment.**

*The tape rewinds. We hear it again.*

161. **It's just a small, tiny moment.**

*The tape rewinds. We hear it again.*

162. **I was never good at those high notes.**

*The tape rewinds. We hear it again.*

163. **The moment my voice cracks.**

*The tape rewinds. We hear it again.*

164. **There.**

*The tape rewinds. We hear it again.*

165. **Narrator** **There it is again. For me that crack reverberated around the auditorium, across the radio waves and television aerials of Wales.**  
*(reverberation)*

**Listening back now, I almost don't notice it; but at the time, it was the end of the world.**

166. **We came third. Out of three.**

## **Scene 18 - House**

168. Social Worker Let's take a look at general safety in the house. Is electrical equipment in good repair?

*A burst of TV static, out of which we hear an episode of Pobol y Cwm.*

169. **Narrator** **On Christmas Eve having left my mother one more time, not knowing fully if she'd make it through to the morning, I was sitting on the sofa watching television with my partner, Hywel.**

170. **Narrator** **We were watching watching the Welsh soap opera, *Pobol y Cwm*. I never watch *Pobol y Cwm* anymore but I'd grown up watching it and I found it comforting. My mother-tongue.**

171. Social Worker *Mother*. What does that mean?

172. **Narrator** **I don't know.**  
**As it ended I turned to Hywel and said I want to go to Capel. Alright, cariad he said**

173. Social Worker Do you believe in God?

174. **Narrator** **No. But we set off to Salem Chapel in Canton for their midnight mass service.**

175. **Narrator** **At the door handing out the hymnbooks was my first Headmistress at lolo Morganwg. She handed me the book and asked after my mother. The minister Evan gave me a huge hug and in we went.**

FX: organ music

I listened to Evan preach in Welsh. He talked of tolerance, and of love. He talked of Mary and the baby Jesus. Or *Mair* and the baban Iesu. *Mair*, Welsh for Mary. *Mair*, my Mum.

I thought about the image of the lady in blue cradling her baby. I thought of my mum in her blue dressing gown holding the microphone to my mouth.

Fx Daf playing piano

179.      **Narrator**

My mum was in the chapel that night. She was in the wood of the pews. She was in the wine of the communion. She was in the song. And I sang. As loud as I could muster. I sang. I sang the way my mother encouraged me to sing. Loud and boisterous and a little bit tunelessly.

180.

The next day – Christmas day – I took my keyboard down to Ward 20. Mum hadn't made it to carols so I thought I would take the carols to her. I asked permission from the nurses and set the keyboard up in corner of the ward. I played requests. We sang. Carl the tattooed auxiliary nurse wore a Santa hat and joined in.

181.

Did you hear my music, mum? Were you in there?

CD 1: 7: 25 - 8: 30

Cassette Young Daf

So fe mewn fynna' [it's not in there]

182.

And I just wanted to hear you say 'Odi ma fe' [yes it is], one last time.

183.      **Narrator**      **January 14th, the day she died, I cried like I'd never cried before. The sound I was making was inhuman. It shocked me so much I started to laugh.**

184.      **Narrator**      **My body knew that I was now unmothered. The place within which I had begun my life was no longer here.**

187.      **Narrator**      **And ten days later we were approved for adoption.**

Doc      Daf      Do you think there'll be a difference in having 2 Dads in a way than having a Mum and a Dad?

Doug      Doug      It'll come naturally I think. You've all got your talents and things you prefer to do, and you'll base it on that. It'll just happen automatically I would think.

188.      **A week before we met you, you were told that you forever family had been found. The foster carer put pictures of their two daddies all around the house and apparently you ran into the street one morning and announced to the world: 'Guess what?! I've got two Dads!'**

189.      **And here I am now – about to meet you for the first time. I'm sad you'll never get to meet my mum. She would have been your Mam-gu. She still is your Mam-gu.**

190.      **And I remember the very last thing my mother said to me before she lost her voice forever. I was telling one of the nurses, how we were hoping to become parents. My mum looked at me and said: 'You will be brilliant. You will be brilliant'.**

192. **I'm under no illusion that this will be easy; but I will do everything I can to try and give you what my mother gave me.**

193. **Narrator I will hold the microphone to you when you wish to sing, whatever the melody.**

Fx Songify

What do I say Dafydd  
You can say whatever you like, Mum  
Um, My name is Mair James,  
I'm the mother of , what do I say, Dafydd?  
You can say whatever you like, Mum  
Um, My name is Mair James,  
I'm the mother of Dafydd and Sian  
Dafydd lives in Cardiff and Sian lives in Magor  
We have two grandsons, Tomos and William  
Tomos is 6 and William is 3  
Who's your favourite child, Mum?  
Oh Dafydd & Sian.  
Dafydd lives in Cardiff and Sian lives in Magor  
We have two grandsons, Tomos and William  
Tomos is 6 and William is 3  
Who's your favourite child, Mum?  
Oh Dafydd I have to say that, you're sitting next to me.  
Dafydd I have to say that, you're sitting next to me.  
What do I say, Dafydd  
You can say whatever you like, Mum  
Um, My name is Mair James.

(music ends)

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The End