

# ***From May to Etta with Love***

by Danielle Fahiya

## Characters

**May Brown**, 20s playing age, heading to America to start a new life. May has come to 232 Bute St to have her photograph's taken for her sister Etta to remember her by.

**Fred Peterson**, 40s playing age, Photographer taking May's photographs.

INT. FRED PETERSON STUDIO

*May walks into Fred's studio humming along to the Jazz music playing on the gramophone. Fred is stood behind his camera setting up.*

FRED A fellow Jazz fan?

MAY Who isn't?!...I heard they call him King Oliver

FRED Do you mean Joe Oliver?

MAY Yes...my cousin out in New York wrote about seeing him perform one time in Chicago, his musical talent is spreading far and wide.

FRED Well he certainly can play the heck out of the cornet!

MAY This place it's so

FRED Big?

MAY Yes but I was thinking homely with your trinkets lying around

FRED Each one is from every country I've travelled

MAY That fits Tiger Bay then...everyone is from some place else

FRED I hope to make my subjects feel comfortable in here

MAY Subjects?

FRED I mean clients

MAY Oh I don't know if I qualify as that

FRED Of course

MAY This is my first time doing anything like this, we couldn't afford it growing up

FRED Then today is a special day

MAY I guess so yes

FRED Please, take a seat over on the chair

*May sits on chair.*

MAY Oh god look at my dress...I hope I haven't ruined my dress out in that ghastly rain

FRED You look great!

MAY You say that to everyone

FRED I just say what I see and I can see from your outfit that you want to look your best

MAY Well I didn't spend a week's wages on this to not look good!

FRED Who are the pictures for?  
MAY My sister Etta, something for her to remember me by  
FRED Remember you by?  
MAY I'm leaving. I'm boarding the steamship to New York in 2 weeks time.  
FRED Seeking the American Dream?  
MAY We all have dreams...but going away is about duty.  
FRED Duty to who?  
MAY To my Etta and our sick Mother who needs financial support for her care.  
FRED They must be proud of you  
MAY I'm not sure Etta feels that way  
FRED Why not?  
MAY She thinks I'll not come back  
FRED Keep your chin up.  
MAY I'm trying I am but...  
FRED No sorry I meant your actual chin  
MAY *(laughing)* Oh I see

*Fred takes a photo*

FRED I left somewhere too, probably a little bit older than you are.  
MAY Never assume a woman's age. Did your mother not teach you that?  
FRED My apologies  
MAY I'm only teasing. So where are you from?  
FRED Copenhagen  
MAY Where's that?  
FRED Denmark.  
MAY Is that the place with the famous sweet pastries?  
FRED Yes, the sweets of home are famous. I miss tastes, smells of home  
MAY You're making me hungry Fred!  
FRED But I sometimes have regrets of leaving  
MAY What regrets?  
FRED I too left a sick relative to try and follow my dreams.

MAY I'm not... (pause and sigh to consider) And did you?

FRED Some yes, others still evade me.

MAY What happened to your relative?

FRED My mother died not long after I'd arrived in Tiger Bay

MAY I'm so sorry

FRED Just as I was starting my new beginnings she was making her exit

MAY That must have been difficult to come to terms with

FRED It was but not everyone gets to be a part of your new journey. I've learnt that sometimes you have to go it alone

MAY But what if it scares you?

FRED Even more reason...change is inevitable, you have to learn to embrace its possibilities

*Fred takes a photo*

MAY How am I looking?

FRED Wonderful.

*Pause* I did notice you've ordered more copies of photographs. Who are they for?

MAY Just some agents, no big deal.

FRED Talent agents?

MAY Yes but it's not that simple.

FRED How come?

MAY I am going to be living with my cousin and her husband first as a domestic cleaner.

FRED But what do you dream of May?

*This is the first time May has revealed her dreams*

MAY I'm...in New York

FRED Yes

MAY Walking down Fifth Avenue

FRED Go on

MAY I can feel the steam rising up onto the pavement from its pipes and I look up and see the Coca Cola ad ahead of me in Times Square.

FRED What else can you see?

MAY I see the trams come passing by jam packed full of businessmen and ladies with small dogs on their laps all looking like they're heading somewhere important.

FRED And where are you heading?

MAY Broadway I suppose

FRED No suppose about it!

MAY Yes you're right! Its bright lights are calling me to see them shining on the names of those bright young things who dared to dream. Evelyn Preer, Josephine Baker and...

FRED You one day?

MAY (*singing*)

For nobody else gave me a thrill  
With all your faults, I love you still  
It had to be you  
Wonderful you  
Had to be you

FRED (*clapping*) Now that's some voice May!

MAY Thank you

FRED You must pursue your dream

MAY One day maybe

FRED It's not wrong to want more for your life

MAY What if Etta is right? And I don't return home...you never

FRED And you might not either but that fear shouldn't stop you from taking the chance to live your dream.

MAY Do you really think it's possible?

FRED Yes I do. So much awaits you on the other side of fear...if only you could see what I see in you.

*We are transported through the soundscape to a Broadway Theatre. Sounds of a packed theatre, excitement is in the air and people getting to their seats. Sounds of hush shhh echo around the theatre before silence falls.*

*Sound of the stage curtains being pulled back. Announcer speaks over the tannoy.*

ANNOUNCER Presenting to you for one night only at the Hudson Theatre...Miss May Tiger Brown!

*Crowd ruptures into applause. Charleston song begins to play before fading out.*

THE END