



DIVA DAVE AND FAT SUE

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# DIVA DAVE AND FAT SUE

*by*  
**Gez Walsh**



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**To my lovely sister, Theresa.**

**Keep smiling.**



## **Introduction**

It is often said that you can take the boy out of the northern town, but you cannot take the northern town out of the boy. However, for David Hardy this was never true.

He lived in a typical northern town called Halifield. There was nothing unusual or of note about where he lived. Like lots of northern towns, the traditional industry had disappeared, leaving only a feeling of emptiness and hopelessness. Men knew how to be men, but not the kind of men that the women of the town read and dreamed about.

Most young men of this town dreamed of being a football player or a rugby player when they grew up. David Hardy dreamed of wearing women's clothes and singing songs from the shows!

The men of Halifield thought men who were interested in computers were strange, so there really was no hope for David, not that he was bothered. He openly sang and danced where ever he was, to him life was just one big performance. Although it was safe to say that he did get hit quite a lot. But all David would say was, 'all geniuses have to suffer for their art darling' and boy, did the other lads at school make him suffer.

A teenage boy who has dyed bright red hair and wears eye-liner and pink nail varnish while singing 'I am what I am' on the rugby pitch at school tends to get targeted.

But for David it was just part of life, he knew he would one day move on and leave all their hate behind. He knew he was destined to be a star, a 'Diva,' and that was what people called him, 'Diva Dave'.

There are no prizes for guessing that David didn't have many friends, but he did have *one* friend. They were more than just friends; they were soulmates; neither of them felt as if they belonged in their environment. Each of them would chat for hours about their future, and both had a similar dream. David's friend

was called Susan Hopkins, she played the banjo and thought of herself as a blues musician. She was once told by another musician, when hearing her play that, “Those licks are really fat, man!” She didn’t know what it meant, but she thought it sounded cool. As all blues players tend to have nicknames like “Howling Wolf”, or “Seasick Steve”: she decided to call herself “Fat Sue”. Which was really quite funny, as she would make a straw look obese! She had long greasy hair and tended to wear baggy clothes; her appearance was not a priority, her music was. While David’s appearance was everything.

The one dream that they both shared was to be on the “The Factory”, a long-running talent competition on TV. But both had different reasons.

David wanted to meet Steve Cooper, the billionaire owner of “The Factory”. He was thought of by many as a rude and arrogant man, but not by David. He knew that Steve Cooper knew talent when he saw it, and Dave knew that he had talent. Steve Cooper was the one that could make his dream come true.

Sue wanted to go on the show because she fancied Donald Davis, one half of the

show's presenters, Arthur and Don. Her plan was to get on the show and snog the face off him, leaving him with no option but to marry her.

So they had both agreed that the best way to achieve their dreams was to work together, David would sing Barry Manilow songs while Sue accompanied him on her banjo. They would be known as 'Diva Dave and Fat Sue' what could go wrong?



## Chapter 1

“Mum, have you seen my school blouse?”

“*Shirt*, David, have I seen your *shirt*! Yes I have, it’s hung up in your wardrobe next to your gold dress.”

David’s Mum was used to his ways, and thought he would either grow out of it, or find his own way in life. As long as he was safe and happy, she didn’t really care. His Dad, on the other hand, hated everything David loved. His Mum and Dad had split up four years ago, when his Mother discovered that his father’s idea of “working away for a week” meant a week in Bridlington with Kelly Lewis, or as David’s Mum referred to her as, “Kelly loose knickers”.

David’s Father had decided the only way to make a man out of his son was to take him to the football every week. At first, David

put up a fight, there was no way he was going to stand on the terraces with lots of ignorant fools singing out of tune. And the songs they sang! “Who ate all the pies?” and “Get off his shirt it wont fit yer!” Really! If they had sung proper songs such as “Cabaret” or “The Copacabana” he might consider it.

But that has all changed now; he goes to the football every week that the local team plays at home. His Dad was so pleased to see his son turning into the man he wanted as a son. Little did he know that David turned up every week merely to see the cheerleaders who performed at half time!

“The costumes and the dance routines were to *die* for” he would later tell Sue.

He had even tried to *join* the cheerleaders but lots of the girls had protested, saying the sight of him in full makeup and a short skirt freaked them out.

“David...”

“Yes Mum?”

“Make sure you wear a pair of trousers and not a skirt to school, I can’t afford to be called out of work again.”

“But Mum It’s sexist to say that boys can’t wear skirts!”

“Look. Both you and I know that you only wear them to wind people up, now stop it! What is up with you?”

“Mum.”

“What?”

“These trousers make me look gay...”

“David, go to school will you please, I don’t have time this morning, love.”

“I’m going, but if I get bullied because you sent me to school in gay trousers, I hope that you can live with yourself!”

“I’ll try. And David...”

“What?”

“Pull your shirt down, and stop tying it up like that. You’re not Britney Spears!”

“How dare you compare me to her? I have style and flair, darling!”

“Bye, David.”

“Bye, Mum!”

He wore a big grin on his face, just thinking about the conversation that he had just

had with his Mum. No human could love another like he loved his Mum. At times he felt that it was him against the world, but always just when he needed her, she would be there, with a smile or a cuddle. For David, that was all he needed to recharge his batteries and send him off to annoy the world.

He walked on down his road, to the intersection of the busy main road which led into the town centre. At the bottom of his road was a row of shops, where he caught his bus to school, Sue was already there, waiting for him.

He hated going to school, because it made him conform. He had to stop wearing his makeup and nail varnish, because the head said it was causing disruption amongst the other pupils. David, as usual, had argued that that was *their* problem, not his. But he then became unpopular with every female student in the school, except Sue. He argued if the girls could wear makeup and nail varnish, why couldn't he? So makeup and nail varnish was banned for the whole school. Not only was he public enemy number one among the boys but also among the girls as well.

Sue waved as he approached; he waved

back, then launched into a song, “The minute I walked in the joint, they could see I’m real big spender. Not common, like all of you.”

The usual screams and threats came back at him from all the students at the bus stop. David smiled. He didn’t know why, but he loved irritating these people, and after all he *was* good at it.

“Batty boy!”

These words sent a shiver through his body; he recognised the voice calling out to him straight away. Kyle Travis was supposed to be the toughest boy in the school. He was tall and well-built. He was the one person that struck fear in David, who had been on the end of a few savage beatings from him in the past.

“Hey batty boy, wot you doing and ting?”

Kyle was of mixed race, his father being of West Indian descent, but he spoke in this peculiar way. Even though he had never left his home town, and had never met his father or any of his black relatives. What was worse was that all his cronies that hung around with him spoke exactly the same way as him.

“Sorry, were you talking to me? It’s just that I only speak English and a smidgeon of French!”

“Is you dissing I?”

David looked at Sue; she could see the fear in his eyes. But she knew that he wasn’t able to back down. This was all he hated, his enemy, his nemesis. For him to shy away now would be to admit defeat, and he couldn’t do that, and Sue knew that as well. Which is why she turned and punched Kyle in the face as hard as she could. He reeled back on his heels, nearly falling to the floor. A deathly hush fell across everyone at the bus stop. Even David felt a little bit of sick pop up in the back of his throat at what she had just done. But Sue knew something the others didn’t. She had a secret weapon. Her brother Jimmy was a boxer who had fought for England at the Olympics. He taught at the boxing club where Kyle trained and Kyle was scared stiff of him. Not only that, Jimmy often said that he would kill anyone who hurt his sister!

She knew it was Kyle’s call; he could walk away and lose face with the others. Or he could hit her back and lose his face altogether,

when Jimmy caught up with him!

Sue stared hard and long at Kyle as he tried to work out what the future had in store for him. She decided to give him a lifeline, “Our Jimmy said you could take a punch, that didn’t even bother you did it? And you’re not scared of upsetting my brother Jimmy, wow! Look lets just call it quits. The bus is here and we don’t want anymore trouble.”

Kyle often *acted* like a moron, but he wasn’t one; he knew he could save face this way, but he couldn’t work out why Sue had helped him. She knew that if she didn’t, sooner or later, there would be payback.

“I’m going to have words with your brother when I see him, he said you could punch! My hamster can punch harder than that!”

“YOU HAVE A *HAMSTER*!? HOW CUTE!”

“David, will you shut up!”

“What’s his name? Is it Fluffy? Please tell me you call him Fluffy!”

“David!”

He couldn’t stop; somewhere deep in his psyche, a switch had been tripped. For the first

time he could see a chink in Kyle's armour, a way of ridiculing him.

"Oh *please* tell me he has a little wheel! Do you take Fluffy out for a walk?"

Everything that Sue had just put right was now been unravelled again.

But Kyle came back with one of the best replies he could give, "I ate it, coz it bug me yous sees, just likes yous is now innit!"

"You is well dope man, respek!" laughed Carl Jennings, one of Kyle's cronies.

"No sorry you've lost me again, is it Hebrew that you're speaking?"

"David, stop it now!" snapped Sue.

He smiled, his mouth back in the control of his brain, "Anyway, it's been lovely to talk to you, but my friend here and myself must get on. Bye now, yous innit and all that!" with that, he grabbed Sue by the hand and did his best diva wiggle as they walked away.

"You idiot! You nearly got us both beaten up then!"

"I nearly got us both beaten up? I wasn't the one punching his lights out, so don't you be

laying no blame here, sister” he replied, with a wiggle of his finger in front of his face.

Sue burst out laughing, “Have we to give school a miss today, and go into town?”

“Susan Hopkins, you little minx, I have double geography this morning and there’s normally no way I would want to miss it. But Wallhams department store has a new season of ball gowns in, and there’s got to be one with my name on it, so what are we waiting for? Let’s go into town.”

“I don’t want to force you.”

“Darling. no one forces Da’vid Hard’e to do anything!”

“Your name’s David Hardy, stop trying to make it sound foreign”

“Foreign, moi? Never darling, just beautiful”.

“Do you have any money to buy some lunch with?”

“Of course darling, after all we are ladies that lunch”.

“You’re a boy, David, not a lady. You can drop the act with me; keep the camp stuff

for others.

“ME? CAMP? HOW VERY DARE  
YOU! I FEEL A FLOUNCE COMING ON!”



## Chapter 2

“Come on, let’s go to Wallhams!”

“I need some strings for my banjo, so I’m going to nip down to Darnleys, first.”

“Ok, I’ll see you by the café in Wallhams when you’ve finished.”

Sue walked on through the town centre. Halifield was a mixture of old and new buildings the old being beautiful sturdy eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings and the new being hideous concrete blocks from the nineteen seventies and eighties that were now falling apart. Sue always looked up when she walked through a town centre; her Grandfather had told her to do this.

“All shop fronts look the same; you

must look up to see the beauty of the building” he would tell her.

It was because of her Grandfather that she had developed the love of the banjo. He was from Ireland, and had played in traditional Ceilidh bands all his life. Ceilidh music is what used to pass as the dance scene in Ireland for centuries. Sue now loved anything that was banjo, but she could play lots of instruments. She missed her Grandfather so much. He had died two years ago from cancer, leaving a big hole in her life. She would call and see him every day, and he would teach her how to play the banjo, and mess about.

He was seventy-two when he died, but he behaved like a teenager; life never got at him, no matter what it threw at him. He had worked on the building sites all his life and had a terrible accident about twenty years before, when a pile of steel fell from a crane, cutting both his legs off, from the knees down. This would depress most people, but her Grandfather soon learned to walk again, on what he called his ‘bionic legs’ and they had hours of fun thinking of ways to use them for practical jokes. Sue’s favourite prank had been on the beach at Whitby; they found a hole that someone had dug in the sand,

and Granddad took off his legs and sat in the hole while Sue and her brother Jimmy filled the hole back in again. They then stuck his legs in the sand in front of his face, but pointing the wrong way. It looked as if he had been folded in half and his legs twisted around. They then hid, leaving Granddad on the beach alone. A lady walked past with a little dog on a lead. Granddad shouted to her, "Help me, please! My parachute didn't open!"

The woman took one look at him, then promptly fainted on the spot.

Because he had false legs, he was always falling over, but had told Sue it was because the legs had been fitted with a mind of their own, and that unfortunately *his* legs had the mind of a small puppy. After one particularly bad fall, he told Sue that he had been walking through the park, minding his own business when a cat ran past him, "Didn't my legs chase after it!? They dragged me through the park with me flat on my back. When the police found me I was laid out on my back with both my legs trying to climb a tree after the cat!" Sue had believed that story for years.

“Hello Sue, shouldn’t you be at school?”

The voice made her jump, because she had been lost in her own world. It was David’s Mum. She had forgotten that his Mum worked in the central library, well, she did for now, until they were all closed down.

“Just been to the dentist.”

“Ah the standard answer, been to the dentist. Are you going back to school?”

“Yeth.” Sue thought it would be more believable if she spoke with a lisp.

“If you see David, would you tell him that I shall be late home today, we have a big meeting about the library’s future and I don’t want to miss it.”

Sue nodded her head.

“See you later.”

“Yeth, thee you later Mithith Hardy!”  
damn that lisp.

She walked on, down past the library which was one of the concrete blocks from the nineteen eighties, and down to Darnley’s music shop. The shop had retained the front of an old Victorian building but inside was a musician’s

dream. There were instruments of all types and sizes. If it was musical, it was in the shop.

Darnley's was a family business and, because none of the major chain stores had opened in Halifield, it had developed into a unique shop, a mixture of old and new. The owner was Lee Darnley; he was the third generation of the family. He had long grey hair tied in a ponytail to hide the bald patch on the back of his head. He wore dirty Motorhead t shirts and jeans so tight that they cut off the blood supply to his stomach, which hung over the top of them. It was rumoured that his band 'The Plastic Pigeons' had once supported Status Quo on tour.

His son worked in the shop; well he turned up some days and sulked in the corner of the room. He was a Goth, so there's no point telling you what he looked like except to say he was very Gothy. He had so many piercings that it looked like he had been blasted by a shotgun.

Sue always spoke to Lee about what she needed; as a former guitarist he knew what he was talking about. She waited for him to look through his many boxes of strings. In the front of the counter was a row of brand new guitars

some plugged in to amps. Above them was a sign saying 'NO STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN!'

After thirty years Lee could no longer bear scruffy young lads coming into the shop and picking up a guitar and strangling the Led Zeppelin classic. It was then that she noticed it, the poster! It was the poster that could change the lives of both David and her, forever.

**'The Factory' auditions,  
20<sup>th</sup> June,  
Manchester central.**

She couldn't catch her breath, she was so excited. She ran from the shop, not even waiting for her new strings. She had to find David quickly; the auditions were only a week away! They needed to practice. Manchester Was only thirty minutes away by train.

Donald Davis, get those lips puckered, Fat Sue is on her way to money, fame, and love not necessarily in that order. And nothing, or no one, was going to stop her. She would do this for her Grandfather. Besides you had to have a sob story if you wanted to go far in the competition!