

= Daphne Clarke =

Daphne Rose Clarke (previously Lawrence) is a fictional character from the Australian soap opera Neighbours , played by Elaine Smith . Daphne was created by Reg Watson as one of Neighbours ' twelve original characters . The producer had originally wanted Rebecca Gibney to play the role , but she joined the cast of another television series . When Smith came in to audition for a guest part , her appearance , particularly her short haircut , caught the attention of the casting director , who had been looking for an " outrageous image " for the character of Daphne . Smith won the role and she made her on @-@ screen debut in the soap 's first episode , which was broadcast on 18 March 1985 .

Daphne was portrayed as a smart , confident and independent woman from a good background . She sported a short haircut and bright clothing , which made her stand out from the other female characters on television at the time . Daphne was not embarrassed by her profession as a stripper and her " no @-@ nonsense approach " to life made her an immediate favourite with the viewers . Daphne gave up stripping when her grandfather gave her the lease to the local coffee shop . She used her position to help customers with their problems and gained the trust of many of the teenage characters , particularly Mike Young (Guy Pearce) .

Daphne 's marriage to Des Clarke (Paul Keane) was central to many of her storylines . After a brief relationship with Shane Ramsay (Peter O 'Brien) and two engagements , Daphne married Des in July 1986 . She gave birth to their son , Jamie (S.J. Dey) , in July 1987 . That same year , Smith announced her departure from Neighbours . Not wanting to kill off a popular character , the producers sent Daphne to care for her dying father . However , viewers were not satisfied with this ending and Smith returned to conclude Daphne 's storyline . The actress asked for Daphne to be killed @-@ off and the producers agreed . She made her final appearance on 25 March 1988 , becoming the first regular character to die .

= = Creation and casting = =

Daphne is one of the twelve original characters conceived by the creator and then executive producer of Neighbours , Reg Watson . When it came to casting , Waston had initially wanted actress Rebecca Gibney to play the role . However , she joined the cast of children 's television series Zoo Family instead . Elaine Smith had previously made several small appearances in various established television series . In 1984 , she came in to Neighbours to audition for a guest role and her short , spiky haircut caught the attention of the casting director . Smith told Hilary Kingsley , author of Soap Box , " The casting director of Neighbours was looking some outrageous image for Daphne , this stripper ? he didn 't quite know what , but my haircut was it ! " Smith revealed that the idea of playing a stripper amused her and quipped that Daphne was the only stripper who never had to take her clothes off .

= = Development = =

= = = Characterisation = = =

The character of Daphne was introduced to Neighbours as a " saucy stripper with a heart of gold . " In their 1989 book , The Neighbours Factfile , Neil Wallis and Dave Hogan wrote that Daphne came from a rich , but uncaring family . They were rarely mentioned on @-@ screen , making her past somewhat of a mystery . Daphne had received a good education and worked in an office as a secretary , until she told her sexist boss to " jump in a lake . " Daphne then chose to become a stripper rather than ask her mother , Tina (Beverley Dunn) , for a loan . Of Daphne 's profession as a stripper , Smith explained " The whole point of Daphne being a stripper is that she 's completely counter to the black stockings and garters cliché . She 's a bright girl from a good background who gets fed up with being ogled and pinched by men in her secretarial job and says , right I might as

well make some money out of it . "

With her spiky hair and bright clothing , Daphne stood out from other female characters on television at the time . She was portrayed as a strong , smart and independent woman . She was often shrewd and " a warm friend " to those around her . Tony Johnston , author of *Neighbours : 20 years of Ramsay Street* stated that Daphne had " an appealing mix of cheek , savvy and the @-@ girl @-@ next @-@ door . " She was a woman in charge of her own life , which helped her to become the serial 's first " sweetheart . " Smith told Kingsley that her favourite aspects of Daphne 's personality were her confidence and stubborn streak . Smith also commented that Daphne wore " zanier clothes " than she did and was more outgoing . The fact that she embodied a " no @-@ nonsense approach " to life and was not embarrassed by her profession as a stripper , meant Daphne became an immediate favourite with viewers .

The way she treated the serial 's teenagers as adults also endeared her to the younger viewers . Daphne gave up her career as a stripper to run the coffee shop , which her grandfather Harry Henderson (Johnny Lockwood) gave to her , after he won it in a poker game . Kingsley commented that Daphne ran the business like " a pro " . Daphne 's position in the coffee shop meant that customers often confided in her and she helped mediate between several parents and their children . She also gained the trust and affection of the teenage characters , most notably Mike Young (Guy Pearce) , who she took under her wing , later becoming his legal guardian .

= = = Marriage to Des = = =

The first episode of *Neighbours* saw Daphne hired to strip at Des Clarke 's (Paul Keane) bucks party . When the night was interrupted by a neighbour , Daphne left some belongings behind and returned the following morning to collect them . Des 's fiancée assumed she had spent the night and called the wedding off . Realising that Des needed a lodger to help him pay the mortgage off , Daphne moved in . Des was instantly attracted to Daphne , but he tried to hide his feelings and became awkward around her . Josephine Monroe , author of *Neighbours : The First 10 Years* , wrote that the local men queued up to date Daphne , but it was Shane Ramsay (Peter O 'Brien) who first caught her eye and they soon began a relationship .

During *Neighbours* ' first season finale in 1985 , Daphne broke up with Shane and proposed to Des , who accepted . However , on the day of their wedding , Daphne 's bridal car was hijacked by a bank robber and she was late to the church . Having been stood up five times in the past , Des gave up waiting and left . The couple failed to sort out what had happened and their relationship ended . Daphne rekindled her romance with Shane and they became engaged , but Daphne became worried about rushing into marriage on the rebound and they eventually ended their engagement . Following advice and encouragement from his mother , Eileen (Myra De Groot) , and friend , Clive (Geoff Paine) , Des tried to " woo Daphne back . "

In June 1986 , Stephen Cook from *TV Week* announced that Daphne would accept a proposal from either Des or Shane , which would definitely result in her getting married . Smith told Cook " I don 't know whether Daphne actually needs a man in her life but she 's certainly got two men there . It 's a triangle that 's developed , but to try and give a rational explanation to it is next to impossible . " Smith thought Daphne was ideal for Shane and that she had a great deal of love for him . On the other hand , Daphne also loved Des , who she trusted and had become good friends with . O 'Brien stated that as far as Shane was concerned , Daphne was the only woman he ever loved and thought that he was more suited to her than Des . Keane commented that despite being engaged five times and stood up once by Daphne , Des had always loved her . He added " It was love at first sight for Des . "

Cook later revealed that it was Des who would propose to and marry Daphne . The wedding episodes were broadcast in July and Cook quipped that from the moment Daphne moved into Ramsay Street , there had always been a feeling that she and Des would eventually marry . Despite Shane having once been Des 's " rival in romance " , he acted as best man . Cook added that the wedding , which saw most of the regular cast on @-@ set , was " no small affair " . A few months after the wedding , Daphne became pregnant . Her pregnancy lasted over the usual nine months

and Smith explained that the producers had stretched it out for longer , so they could tie it into other storylines . Daphne and Des 's son , Jamie (S.J. Dey) , arrived in July 1987 and became the first baby to be born in Neighbours .

= = = Departure = = =

In 1987 , after two and a half years of playing Daphne , Smith decided to leave Neighbours and asked to be written out . She felt that while Daphne had been " a bit of a challenge at first " , she felt trapped by her persona . Smith also believed that the role no longer offered her variety and she did not want to stay to be bored , but comfortable . As Daphne was one of Neighbours ' most popular characters , the producers chose not to kill her off . Instead Daphne 's father , Allen (Neil Fitzpatrick) , re @-@ entered her life and told her he was dying . Realising that she only had a short time to make her peace with him , Daphne took Jamie and moved away to nurse Allen . Viewers were not satisfied with this ending for the character , especially as it meant Daphne and Des would have to break up , a situation that they would not accept .

Smith agreed to return for a few days in 1988 to finish off Daphne 's storyline . This time , the actress asked for her character to be killed off . Smith told Robyn Harvey from The Sydney Morning Herald , " I wanted Daphne to die . I didn 't want to be stuck in a television series for the rest of my life . I 'd taken Daphne as far as she could go . She 's run the gamut of every life experience she could possibly have . I 'd had enough . " Daphne was critically injured during a car crash on the way to her father 's funeral and she was left in a coma . Off @-@ screen , representatives from the serial 's production company tried to persuade Smith to sign a new contract , but she refused . Daphne briefly regained consciousness to say " I love you Clarke " to Des , before becoming the first regular character to die .

= = Storylines = =

Daphne is hired to perform at Des Clarke 's buck 's party in Ramsay Street . She returns the following morning to collect her watch and emerges from the bedroom when Des 's fiancée , Lorraine (Antoinette Byron) , arrives with her parents to call off the wedding . Daphne comforts Des and helps clean up his house . Shane Ramsay flirts with Daphne and asks her to watch him train at the pool some day . He tells her that he wants to see her again and she agrees to go to dinner with him . Daphne decides to move into Number 28 with Des to help him pay off the mortgage . Daphne becomes good friends with Des and she begins dating Shane . Daphne falls in love with Des and after breaking up with Shane , she proposes to him and he accepts . On the day of their wedding , Daphne 's car is hijacked by a bank robber dressed in a gorilla suit and she is late to the church . Des assumes that Daphne has changed her mind and he leaves . After failing to sort out what happened , Daphne moves out , while Des 's ex @-@ girlfriend , Andrea Townsend (Gina Gaigalas) , turns up and claims that Des is the father of her son , Bradley (Bradley Kilpatrick) . Daphne rents a room from Clive Gibbons at Number 22 and her best friend , Zoe Davis (Ally Fowler) , also moves in .

Daphne 's grandfather , Harry gives her the lease to the local coffee shop and she gives up her career as a stripper . She renames the business ' Daphne 's ' and despite an initial struggle , the coffee shop soon begins making a profit . Daphne gets back together with Shane and they become engaged , but she starts to have doubts about whether she is moving on too quickly . When Des learns that he is not Bradley 's father , he tries to win Daphne back . Shane becomes jealous of Daphne and Des 's friendship and when he verbally attacks them , Daphne breaks up with him . She gets back together with Des and they eventually marry . Daphne and Des become Mike Young 's legal guardians when they learn that he comes from a violent home . Daphne helps Mike when he is banned from seeing Jane Harris (Annie Jones) by her grandmother , Mrs. Mangel (Vivean Gray) . Daphne soon discovers that Sue Parker (Kate Gorman) has been sending poison pen letters about Mike to Mrs. Mangel and exposes her . Daphne contracts meningitis , but she recovers and then learns that she is pregnant . Daphne and Des 's marriage becomes strained when she learns that he

has been in contact with Lorraine . The couple eventually talk and Des explains that he had just given Lorraine some financial advice .

Mrs. Mangel offers to help Daphne paint the nursery and she is knocked off a ladder by Mike 's pet Labrador , Bouncer , and suffers amnesia . Mrs. Mangel threatens to sue and Des decides to settle out of court , so that Daphne does not become stressed . But when Daphne learns what Des has done , she is angry with him for keeping it from her . During a picnic , Daphne goes into labour and Beverly Marshall (Lisa Armytage) delivers her son , Jamie . Daphne briefly suffers from postnatal depression following Jamie 's birth . During Jamie 's christening , Daphne 's mother , Tina , turns up . She and Daphne sit down and talk through their problems and part on speaking terms . Shortly after , Daphne learns that her father is dying . Des persuades her to make things right with Allen . Daphne then decides to nurse her father and she takes Jamie to stay with him . Months later , Gail Robinson (Fiona Corke) offers to drive Daphne and Jamie back to Ramsay Street after Allen 's funeral . During the journey , they are involved in a car crash , which leaves Daphne in a coma . Des stays by her side and is holding her hand when she briefly wakes up to tell him that she loves him . Daphne then suffers a cardiac arrest and dies .

= = Reception = =

Josephine Monroe , author of *Neighbours : The First 10 Years* , stated that Daphne became one of the most popular and colourful characters to have been in *Neighbours* . A writer for the BBC 's *Neighbours* website thought Daphne 's most notable moment was " Going into labour with Jamie at a riverside picnic . " Claudia Pattison from mobile network operator Orange branded Des and Daphne one of the most popular couples in the serial 's history , while a Virgin Media writer thought that they had " one of soapland 's happiest marriages " . The Sydney Morning Herald 's Michael Idato called them *Neighbours* ' first supercouple . Mary Fletcher from *Inside Soap* commented that Des and Daphne 's troubled romance was " one of *Neighbours* ' best storylines . " The couple 's wedding gained a lot of attention in the UK and Terry Wogan even discussed the episode with Rolf Harris on his talk show the day after it aired .

Tim Teeman and James Jackson from *The Times* named Daphne 's death as one of their top 15 most memorable *Neighbours* moments . They commented " Like , was that her in the bed or an actress with a Daphne wig ? The romance of Des and Daphne (Mr Ordinary and the ex @-@ stripper) was an early *Neighbours* classic so we felt this one hard " . A Herald Sun reporter also included Daphne 's death in their list of top ten *Neighbours* moments . The reporter wrote that Daphne was a popular character during the serial 's peak in 1988 and called Des " her soulmate " . They added that her death was watched by millions of viewers in Australia and the UK .

Sarah Megginson from *SheKnows* placed Daphne 's death at number three in her feature on the eight most memorable *Neighbours* moments . She called the relationship between Daphne and Des " one of the series ' classic romances . " She added " The couple were the first to tie the knot on the show , so when Daphne was fatally hit by a car , Des ? and the *Neighbours* viewing audience across Australia and the UK ? was suitably devastated . A columnist from *NOW* said that the moment Daphne dies was " a tear @-@ jerking moment . "