



multiplay

# VS09

Hayley Squires

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## **Characters**

DOROTHY, *female, twenty-three, Welsh*

ANTHONY, *male, twenty-eight, Irish*

AUDREY, *female, twenty-nine, American*

GEORGE, *male, twenty-nine, Southern or Northern English*

CATRIONA, *female, twenty-seven, RP English*

THOMAS, *male, twenty-five, English*

LAUREL, *female, between twenty-six and twenty-nine, any British accent*

**Setting**

The Skyline Bar and Eatery, Terminal 3, Departures Lounge, Heathrow Airport.

**Note on Text**

- Indicates the following line of dialogue cutting in without a break. No overlapping.
- Also indicates characters having a through-thought, interrupting each other to speak, but their own thought continuing through the following lines

## Prologue

LAUREL *stands talking to the audience. He has a coat on over his uniform and a small wheelie suitcase at his side. He is smoking a cigarette before he goes into work.*

LAUREL *stands talking to the audience. He has a coat on over his uniform and a small wheelie suitcase at his side. He is smoking a cigarette before he goes into work. He quotes, verbatim, the famous opening speech from Love Actually, about love and the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport.*

*Beat. He lights a cigarette.*

Hugh fucking Grant. *Love fucking Actually*. What a resounding barrelful of forgery. I wonder how many people, who have been bereft of a great love and are thus walking around decapitated with their severed head in one hand and their lobotomised heart in the other, decide to take themselves on a day trip to the arrivals gate at Heathrow Airport, believing it to be the arena in which true love flourishes, free and unashamed in all its cinematic glory. And I wonder just how many of those people had their final prescription of faith turn sour when all they saw were jetlagged citizens and bewildered visitors rolling through those doors, as though emerging from the back of an ambulance post-trauma. The ones there to greet them do so with poorly written signs and a shit cup of coffee, or a hefty pocket of change ready for the mortgage they'll have to pay to retrieve their car from the car park.

*Beat. He smokes.*

That is not to say that this place holds no hint of affection at all. There are of course one-armed hugs or pats on the backs or joyous comments made about how quickly said returnee managed to get through baggage claim. But that's it. Even that 'should be cinematic' moment when two lovers are reunited is numbed by oversized suitcases with stubborn wheels, puffy eyes and the lingering smell of a pressurised cabin and artificial sleep. And so all one can do is bury their face in the other's neck and allow the silence to say, 'Hello, love, thank you for coming back to me.' Occasionally you see a lone traveller arrive home, with a bulging heart that shines blue through their skin from the pain of leaving the place they've just been, and returning to somewhere that is no longer home because, just as in Hugh's world, home is where your love is, and for that individual, this for certain isn't it.

*Beat. He smokes.*

I do of course understand the sentiment. The love that actually is all around at the arrivals gate is ordinary, human, quiet but full and real nonetheless. It's what makes the world go round. However if you have been bereft of the aforementioned great love you need a little something more than a display of domestic amore for the planet to rotate again. What you need is hope. Hope that you may leave the place that holds you in your misery and heartbreak, hope that propels you with the force of a trillion catapults to that place where home is, or might be, or will be, could be.

Departures holds hope. Departures is the top of the tree and in front of you is the whole rolling world ready for you to tumble all over just as soon as you are released. Hope that release is even possible, if only you could find the door or the lock for the key or the button for the ejector seat, or –

*Beat.*

The invitation. No one is meant to remain in departures.

*He puts his cigarette out and turns to go in. Lights up on the busy madness of an airport as the restaurant is constructed. A voiceover of: 'This is the final call for flight...', etc. Busy and noisy.*

## One

ANTHONY is sat behind a copy of the Financial Times so we can't see his face. Posh, professional carry-on by his side and a pot of tea in front of him. DOROTHY enters carrying a massive carry-on bag and has her arms full of Haribo and Capri Suns, struggling.

LAUREL shows her to the table next to ANTHONY. She tries to squeeze past with her big bag which knocks into his big paper, crumpling it.

DOROTHY. Oh, sorry. I'm so sorry –

ANTHONY. That's. Yep, that's – that's okay.

DOROTHY. Sorry

*She sits herself down and lets out a big breath.*

## Two

GEORGE and AUDREY sit at their table. She has an expensive-looking carry-on bag and he has a backpack. She has a glass of wine in front of her and he has a beer. Some silence. He looks at the menu, she looks at him.

GEORGE. Fucking starving

AUDREY. Eat something

GEORGE. Fucking – could eat a horse

AUDREY. Eat a burger

GEORGE. I might have steak

AUDREY. You like burgers

GEORGE. Fucking –

*Beat.*

Could eat a whole cow

### Three

CATRIONA and THOMAS approach a table, both wheeling suitcases. CATRIONA is carrying an expensive-looking dry cleaning bag that has a dress inside. THOMAS is lagging slightly from what has just happened.

THOMAS. That was horrific –

CATRIONA places her stuff and then runs her hands over the table.

CATRIONA. Sticky –

THOMAS. I can't believe what you have actually just done to that woman –

CATRIONA. I mean, of course it's one of those places where the tables are sticky. I said oyster and champagne bar, company account but oh no –

THOMAS. I have never seen a member of security be reduced to tears by somebody that they're searching –

CATRIONA. Where's the waiter – ?

THOMAS. I mean, it's supposed to be the other way around –

CATRIONA. Beer-sticky –

THOMAS. And all because your bottle of foundation was too big for carry-on and she dared to confiscate it –

CATRIONA. Onion-ring-sticky, oh god, brown-sauce-sticky –

*She goes to her designer carry-on bag and pulls out a pack of antibacterial wipes to clean the table with.*

THOMAS. I mean, she's had to go and sit in the medical office to calm down, you've made her that distressed –

CATRIONA. If you want something done, do it yourself –

THOMAS. That was truly horrifying

### Four

DOROTHY slurps loudly on the remainders of a Capri Sun. This goes on for some time.

ANTHONY eventually has to look up from his work.

DOROTHY. I love sugar

ANTHONY. I can see

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. Didn't sleep last night

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. Because of flying?

DOROTHY. Yes.

ANTHONY. That's common.

DOROTHY. Is it?

ANTHONY. Yes. Very common

DOROTHY. Are you a doctor?

ANTHONY. No. No, I'm not a doctor

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. How do you know, then?

ANTHONY. I'm sorry?

DOROTHY. I mean, like, how do you know it's common?

ANTHONY. I. I read an article.

DOROTHY. I see

*He goes back to his work.*

And what did the article say?

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. That. That it's very common to suffer from a lack of sleep the night before you go on holiday

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. But I'm not going on holiday

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. Before you fly is what I meant

DOROTHY. I see

*He goes back to his work.*

And why do you think that is, then?

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. I'm not sure.

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. Didn't the article pose any theories?

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. None that I can remember off of the top of my head

*He goes back to work.*

DOROTHY. Why do you think it is then?

*He looks at her.*

ANTHONY. I suppose it's dependant on the person

DOROTHY. Right. Do you sleep before you fly?

ANTHONY. Rarely

DOROTHY. Do you fly a lot?

ANTHONY. A reasonable amount

DOROTHY. More than the average person?

ANTHONY. I would say so

DOROTHY. You must have a little theory about yourself, then?

*Pause.*

ANTHONY. I would say that for myself it's the anxiety of knowing what I have to do the next morning. It's out of the ordinary, isn't it? The sheer level of organisation it takes to be prepared the night before, to try and dispel the fear of sleeping through your alarm, even though you've set five of them. Getting to the airport and through security and to the gate and on the plane in time and that's all before you've even taken off and are actually fifty thousand feet in the air. It can be particularly difficult when you have to do it on your own. I find.

*Beat.*

DOROTHY. I don't think it's that

ANTHONY. No?

DOROTHY. No. Not for me anyway.

ANTHONY. I did say it was probably dependant on each person

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. No, for me it's excitement.

*He looks at her.*

I get too excited and have a little bit of a wriggly energy in me, then I can't sleep

ANTHONY. As I said, different people, different problems

*He goes back to his work.*

DOROTHY. I don't sleep and then I get tired and then I need sugar and so I drink these because it's orange which is fruit which is natural from nature, isn't it? I am really, like, aware of what I put in my body. Like for example, you would never catch me with a can of Red Bull and a packet of ProPlus. Are you going on holiday?

*He looks to her.*

ANTHONY. No, I'm not.

*ANTHONY smiles politely and returns to work. LAUREL crosses past the table.*

DOROTHY. Excuse me. Can I have a pint of Coke please? And also please can I have the Philadelphia bacon cheeseburger, please, double-stacked

LAUREL. Double-stacked beef?

DOROTHY. Is that a question? Like, as in, are you suggesting that there are other options to double-stack?



LAUREL. Beef, chicken, veggie or mix-and-match

DOROTHY. Right, and by mix-and-match you mean –?

LAUREL. A choice of two of the three. One beef, one chicken. One beef, one veggie. One chicken, one veggie and so on. In fact not so on. Those are the only three possible combinations.

DOROTHY. That is mental.

LAUREL. What exactly is mental about it?

DOROTHY. The way that you can just mix up double-stacked patties like that. I've heard of it in Slush Puppies or ice cream, but not with burgers

LAUREL. Yes. We're very proud of it. The capacity of magic that can occur in the SkyLine Bar and Eatery abounds even the broadest of imaginations. As long as you believe in the possibility of it

DOROTHY. Of magic?

LAUREL. As long as you believe in it

DOROTHY. What a staggering philosophy

LAUREL. You have to have hope, miss –

DOROTHY. Dorothy –

LAUREL. You have to have hope, Dorothy. Consistent and unflinching hope. You have to. Otherwise we will all just probably stop living

DOROTHY. Amen to that.

*Beat.*

So, double-stacked beef then, please

LAUREL. Fries, curly fries or jacket potato with that?

DOROTHY *blows out a big puff of a sigh.*

DOROTHY. Fries. No! Curly fries. No! Fries.

LAUREL. Fries?

DOROTHY. Yeah, fries. Curly fries will only send me off on a tangent.

## Five

GEORGE. What are you going to eat?

AUDREY. Nothing

GEORGE. What about sausage and mash?

AUDREY. I'd like to have sausage and mash.

GEORGE. You like sausage and mash

AUDREY. It's one of the reasons I love this ugly country, sausage and mash

GEORGE. Have sausage and mash then

AUDREY. I'd like to but I won't

GEORGE. But they've got it and you want it

AUDREY. Yes, but just because I want it doesn't mean I should have it

*Beat. He stares at her.*

GEORGE. You're not sharing my burger

AUDREY. That's okay

GEORGE. I'm just letting you know in case you think I'm going to let you. Even if it's a really proper chunky one, you're not having none of it.

AUDREY. I understand.

GEORGE. So maybe you should order sausage and fucking what's-it –

AUDREY. Mash

GEORGE. Yeah

AUDREY. I don't want to eat

GEORGE. But you'll be hungry, Audrey

AUDREY. That's okay

GEORGE. But then you'll get proper fucking miserable, Audrey

AUDREY. I won't, I promise.

GEORGE. Don't promise when you know that you absolutely will –

AUDREY. I prefer to remain empty.

GEORGE. You don't. You prefer to have a full stomach. That's just a fucking fact, lady

AUDREY. Flying does something strange to my stomach. If I fly with something in my body then I can be in agony for days afterwards

GEORGE. Agony?

AUDREY. Yes, for days. Something to do with the pressure or your body being so high up off of the ground, the unnatural nature of that perhaps or something, I don't know, but having food in my body when I fly can cause me agony for days, sometimes even up to a week. I get swollen and not just my stomach but my whole body. It's like my blood is replaced with gas that won't bubble and pop so it just expands and pushes my veins out into my muscles, which makes the walls of my muscles push into my bones, which makes my bones bend, which makes my skin swell. After I fly it takes a long time for me to deflate.

GEORGE. That sounds really fucking horrible

AUDREY. Agony

GEORGE. You shouldn't eat anything then. Not if it will cause you agony.

\*

## **A Nick Hern Book**

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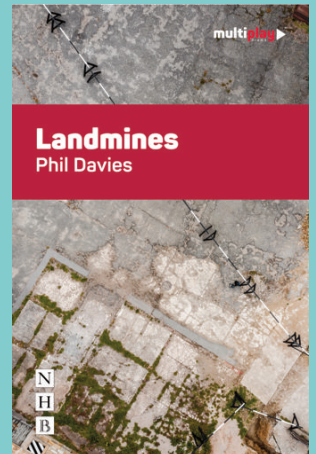
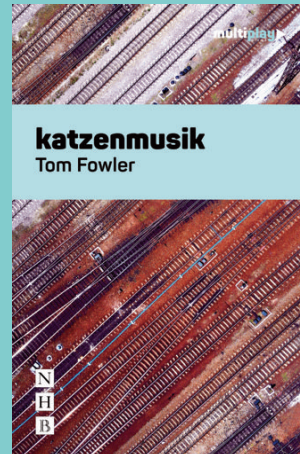
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