

**NOW BOARDING**

By Catherine Erhardt

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Cast of Characters

Lainey, 33

Ryan, 35

Raymond, 52

Passenger, 20

Place

Airport Gate Waiting Area

Time

Any

## ACT 1

### Scene 1

Setting: Airport terminal boarding gate waiting area. The stage is blank, aside from a couple of chairs that sit just off-center; and LAINEY's bag, that sits beside her in an empty chair.

LAINEY sits alone, visibly agitated. She wears a baseball cap.

RYAN enters from Upstage, taking a seat near LAINEY. He looks at her. After a few moments:

RYAN  
Afraid of flying?

LAINEY  
Excuse me?

RYAN  
You look nervous. I thought you might be afraid of flying.

LAINEY  
Me? No. I'm not afraid.

*(Pause)*

LAINEY (CONT)

I actually love it. Flying. When I'm up there, it's like Heaven. It's the only time I feel at peace.

*(Pause)*

RYAN  
So, what takes you to Auckland?

LAINEY  
Auckland? Oh, no. I'm actually supposed to be at that gate over there.

RYAN  
Sydney?

LAINEY  
That's the one.

RYAN  
Too crowded over there?

LAINEY  
You could say that. I'm avoiding someone.

RYAN  
Oh, I see. Boyfriend? Husband? Mom...?

LAINEY  
Manager...boss.

RYAN  
Traveling for work?

LAINEY  
...yes. What takes you to Auckland?

RYAN  
My ex-wife. Well, soon-to-be ex-wife. We have our final mediation hearing tomorrow. She cheated on me. Not that you asked-

LAINEY  
No, please tell.

RYAN  
She slept with her professor.

LAINEY  
Her professor? How old is she?

RYAN  
Oh no, it's not like that, she's 32. Went back to get her Masters. And really "mastered" the art of deception.

LAINEY  
Wow, that's a real scandal.

RYAN  
It was. I tried to get him fired, but he's permanent.

LAINEY  
Brutal.

*(Pause.)*

RYAN

Sydney, Australia, huh? With the boss you're avoiding. Did he do something to you? Is he trying to get you fired?

LAINEY

I wish! He's just, uh, trying to get me to do something I don't want to do.

RYAN  
A project?

LAINEY  
Exactly.

RYAN

You're not qualified to do it?

LAINEY

I'm very qualified to do it, I just don't want to. But he thinks I need to because we'd both make a lot of money.

RYAN

How much money are we talking-

LAINEY

Oh no, he's looking this way!

*(She dives under the chair and pops up behind Ryan.)*

LAINEY (CONT)

He's coming over here! If he asks, you haven't seen me!

*(LAINEY runs off Stage Left)*

*(RAYMOND enters from Stage Right and approaches Ryan.)*

RAYMOND

Excuse me, there was just a woman sitting next to you. Brown hair, petite. Did you see where she went?

RYAN

No, sorry, I don't know what you're talking about.

*(RAYMOND starts to exit.)*

RYAN (CONT)

Wait! Come to think of it, I did see a woman that fits that description. She went that way.

*(He points Upstage.)*

RAYMOND

Great, thank you!

*(RAYMOND takes off Upstage)*

*(LAINEY enters from Stage Left)*

LAINEY

Is he gone?

RYAN

You dodged the bullet.

LAINEY

Sure did-

*(PASSENGER enters and stares at LAINEY, then approaches her.)*

PASSENGER

Excuse me? Sorry to bother you, but could I take a photo with you?

LAINEY

Of course.

*(She stands and they take a selfie.)*

PASSENGER

Thank you so much!

*(PASSENGER rushes off, flying high.)*

*(RYAN looks at LAINEY, waiting for an explanation.)*

LAINEY

That was weird.

RYAN

Super weird!

*(A ringing sound comes from LAINEY's bag. She ignores it.)*

LAINEY  
Probably just my boss.

RYAN  
This project he wants you to do, maybe it wouldn't be such a bad idea?

*(Beat.)*

LAINEY  
It's not that the project is bad, it's just...conventional? It'll bring...unwanted attention.

RYAN  
Like it'll make you famous? Haha.

*(Beat.)*

LAINEY  
What if I come with you to Auckland?

RYAN  
What?

LAINEY  
What if I buy a ticket and just come with you to Auckland?

RYAN  
And run away from...whatever you're trying to run from in Sydney?

LAINEY  
Maybe...is that wrong?

RYAN  
Maybe...maybe not-

LAINEY  
Ugh he's coming over here again!!

*(She dives under her chair and runs out Stage Left.)*

*(RAYMOND enters Stage Right and approaches RYAN.)*

RAYMOND  
I saw her over here. Where did she go?

RYAN  
I really don't know, dude.

*(RAYMOND is not convinced.)*

RAYMOND  
What did she tell you?

RYAN  
About what?

RAYMOND  
She's getting on that plane with me.

RYAN  
Okay.

*(RAYMOND leaves, murmuring to himself.)*

RAYMOND  
...she's getting on that plane, if it's the last thing I do. We shouldn't even be out here, we should be in the lounge...

*(LAINEY returns.)*

LAINEY  
Is he gone?

RYAN  
I think he's obsessed with you.

LAINEY  
I think he is too!

RYAN  
I think you should go with him. Prove to him that you can do the job.

LAINEY  
Really?

RYAN  
Yes. It could be good for you.

LAINEY  
What if he's an axe-murderer?

RYAN

I don't think he could fit an axe in that carry-on.

LAINEY

You'd be surprised what he can fit in there.

RYAN

Why do you want to come with me?

LAINEY

You seem interesting. Like you're not concerned about...conventional...things.

RYAN

You like that word, conventional.

LAINEY

...mainstream.

RYAN

Is that the vibe I give off? I don't care about "mainstream" things? Pop culture and celebrity gossip and all that.

LAINEY

...yeah, kind of. It's not a bad thing.

RYAN

No?

LAINEY

No. So far, I'd say it's the best thing about you.

*(Pause.)*

LAINEY (CONT)

Still think I should go to Sydney?

RYAN

Hmmm. I'm debating.

GATE AGENT (V.O.)

Attention passengers: we will now start the boarding process for flight 07117 to Sydney, Australia.

LAINEY

Last chance.

RYAN

Is this crazy? I mean, I don't even know you.

LAINEY

That's the best part. You don't even know who I am.

RYAN

What if we just met up here, when we're back in town. I'm back on Tuesday, when do you come back?

LAINEY

I'll be in Sydney indefinitely.

RYAN

Damn. Maybe we'll meet again someday.

LAINEY

I hope so...um...

RYAN

Ryan.

LAINEY

Ryan. It was really nice talking to you, Ryan. Good luck in mediation. May the best spouse win.

RYAN

Good luck with the project. You'll do great.

LAINEY

Thanks. Maybe you'll get to see it someday.

RYAN

How would I see it?

LAINEY

Bye, Ryan.

*(LAINEY picks up her bag and turns to leave.)*

RYAN

Goodbye...wait, I didn't get your name-?

*(She turns around.)*

LAINEY

Lainey.

RYAN  
Lainey.

*(LAINY exits.)*

*(PASSENGER watches her in awe, then turns and shakes their head at RYAN. RYAN notices this.)*

RYAN (CONT)  
Hey, you ! Can I help you with something?

PASSENGER  
I can't believe you let her go.

RYAN  
I'm sorry, what?

PASSENGER  
You do know who that was, don't you? That's Elaina Shaw!

RYAN  
Elaina...? No, Lainey...Something

*(They giggle hysterically.)*

PASSENGER  
That's Elaina Shaw! The movie star?!

RYAN  
Elaina who...

*(RYAN suddenly realizes.)*

RYAN (CONT)  
Oh sh---

*(Lights out.)*