

BAGGAGE HANDLERS

by Greg Vovos

CHARACTERS:

GEORGE: A man around 40. Trying not to let his edge get the best of him. He's in transit in so many ways. Struggling to overcome alcohol.

BAXTER: George's unrelenting "sidekick." Has a hold of George and won't let go.

ALYSSA: A successful woman. 30s. She's overcome things, understands things, not afraid of much, but even she hasn't completely arrived.

TERESA: A woman with a unique perspective. 30s. Also plays the voice of SALLY the doll.

SETTING:

A nook in the airport, where weary travelers can catch a break before heading to their gates.

SYNOPSIS:

A man battles his demons while simultaneously trying to fill the hole in his heart.

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BAGGAGE HANDLERS

Lights up as GEORGE sits on a bench, a piece of open luggage next to him. He stares offstage. On the other side of the baggage sits BAXTER.

BAXTER

I see a rabbit. 2:00. And she's a looker. (*Holding out the flask*)
Drinky?

George ignores him.

Come on, George. You know you want a drink.

George steals a look at the flask, but still ignores Baxter.

Ignore me all you want, Georgie, but you'll never get rid of me.

GEORGE

I could kill you.

BAXTER

At your own peril.

George focuses his gaze offstage, on the unseen woman.

I know what's on your naughty mind. You'd like to bend her over this bench an—

GEORGE

Shut it! I know that woman. Now show some respect.

BAXTER

You know how it works, Georgie Boy. Take a drink and I'll stop yammering.

GEORGE

What I should do is take a gun to my head and put an end to my miserable--

George stops abruptly when he sees ALYSSA enter. She's George's age, but looks a decade younger -- life has aged these people differently.

ALYSSA

Do you mind if I sit here?

GEORGE

Of course. Uh...not. Of course NOT.

BAXTER

You are going to crash and burn, man.

ALYSSA

Thank you.

Alyssa glances at George. [NOTE: Even though Alyssa can't see Baxter, it shouldn't be readily apparent.]

Kinda weird. Being stuck at an airport on Valentine's Day.

George nods, barely looking at her, unable to speak.

You're Cameron's dad, right?

GEORGE

Um...yes. Yes, I am.

ALYSSA

I'm Alyssa. Missy's mom.

Pause.

BAXTER

Introduce yourself, you rude dillrod.

GEORGE

I'm...George. Cameron's dad. As you know because you already said so.

ALYSSA

He's a great kid. My daughter really likes him. Talks about him all the time.

GEORGE

Yeah, his mother has done a great job.

BAXTER

His mother?? Why would you bring up his mother?? Dumbass.

ALYSSA

I'm sure you have something to do with it too.

GEORGE

We're divorced. I don't have sex with her or anything like that. And I don't love her. I mean there's no love there. None. It's just...dead. Dead love.

ALYSSA

Okay...

BAXTER

That was really smooth, George. Maybe for an encore you can whip out your cock and rub it against a cheese grater.

George shoots Baxter an uneasy look.

ALYSSA

Are you...okay?

BAXTER

Jesus, she already knows you're a drunk. My Lord. (*Extending the flask.*) Take a drink and calm yourself, man.

GEORGE

Sorry...I'm just... I'm worried about Cameron. I worry about him when I travel.

ALYSSA

Tell me about it. I can't stop thinking about Missy. What's she doing? Is she okay? Am I doing the right things? Am I good mother? It's silly, I know.

GEORGE

No, it's not. I can tell you're a great mom. She's lucky to have you.

ALYSSA

Thank you.

BAXTER

Aww, aren't you precious?

GEORGE

I think my son has a crush on her.

ALYSSA

That's sweet.

GEORGE

Yeah, she's a great kid. Very pretty. Really beautiful.

BAXTER

Are you hitting on the mother or the daughter? Friggin' molester.

GEORGE

Just to be clear, I'm not into your daughter. I mean, I'm not into girls—young girls...*(Trying to get it right.)* I'm not into young girls at all.

ALYSSA

Why would I think that?

GEORGE

I have no idea. I say weird shit--stuff under stress. I blame my job.

BAXTER

It's always something, isn't it, George?

ALYSSA

What do you do?

GEORGE

I'm an actuary. I calculate how long people will live based on their health, occupation, stresses, stuff like that.

ALYSSA

Sounds depressing.

GEORGE

I guess. I mean...Well, come to think of it, I guess I am depressed a lot.

ALYSSA

Maybe we should get a drink? It might take the edge off. What do you say?

BAXTER

YES YES FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THINGS GOOD AND MERCIFUL DEAR LORD YES CAN WE PLEASE GET A MOTHER FUCKING DRINK UP IN HERE???

ALYSSA

It is Valentine's Day after all. And we're both alone in an airport. And we're not really strangers because our kids know each other. So I say we earned the right to have a drink together. Right?

BAXTER

George will fall off the wagon and then your clothes will fall off. Perfect.

GEORGE

Yeah, I better not.

ALYSSA

Oh, I see.

GEORGE

What?

ALYSSA

Nothing.

GEORGE

What?

BAXTER

She thinks you're a drunk idiot and she doesn't want to spend time with a man who's going to piss her bed. Jesus Christ, connect the dots, you good-for-nothing drunk.

GEORGE

I AM NOT A DRUNK!!

Silence.

BAXTER

Uh-oh.

ALYSSA
I didn't say you were.

GEORGE
Oh God.

ALYSSA
It was nice meeting you.

She stands to leave. He blocks her.

GEORGE
No, please don't leave. I'm just...

BAXTER
A lunatic? Freak? Cocksmooch? Any of those words will do.

ALYSSA
Can I get by, please?

GEORGE
Of course. Yes. Of course.

He's about to let her pass, but then...

You know I wasn't screaming that at you, right?

ALYSSA
Then who were you screaming at?

BAXTER
Yes, Mr. Suave and De-boner. To whom were you screaming?

George stares at Alyssa, not knowing what to say.

ALYSSA
Have a safe flight--

GEORGE
--Myself! I was screaming at myself.

ALYSSA
Yourself?

GEORGE
Yes.

ALYSSA
Do you always...communicate with yourself that way?

GEORGE
Sometimes.

BAXTER
(*Offering the flask.*) Just take a drink.

GEORGE
I don't want a fucking drink! (*Pause.*) Sorry. I'm not drunk. I assure you.

ALYSSA
I think I'd feel better if you were.

BAXTER
I know I would.

GEORGE
Here's the thing. I haven't had a drink in 113 days and it's been really... challenging. Plus I don't talk to beautiful women very often. And I've NEVER talked to anyone as beautiful as you. Add the fact that you're the mother to someone who knows my kid and I just...I don't know how to deal. I'm sorry. You're just...too amazing.

ALYSSA
What makes you think that?

GEORGE
It's just a feeling I get from you.

ALYSSA
Really?

GEORGE
Yeah.

ALYSSA

Would you like to know what feeling I get from you?

GEORGE

I don't know. Would I?

ALYSSA

I think you have a lot to work out.

BAXTER

You have no idea, lady.

ALYSSA

But I also think you're a good father. And that you're working hard to be a good man. And I think you'll get there. Eventually.

GEORGE

But what if you're wrong?

ALYSSA

Maybe when you get a few more months between you and your last drink, then you can call me. Just take a breath, George. And try not to be so hard on yourself.

BAXTER

Except while masturbating, of course.

ALYSSA

Okay, then. Bye, George.

She starts to walk away.

GEORGE

(A whisper) I love you.

ALYSSA

What?

BAXTER

Oh, Jesus.

GEORGE

I love you.

ALYSSA
You just met me.

GEORGE
I know but I do.

He goes to her, grabs her...

ALYSSA
I think...I think we should take this slowly. I'll talk to you another time.

She pulls away, but George won't release her.

Let me go.

BAXTER
You can't let her go, George.

GEORGE
I can't let you go.

BAXTER
If you do, you'll never see her again.

GEORGE
If I do, I'll never see you again.

ALYSSA
You're scaring me.

BAXTER
You don't mean to...

GEORGE
I don't mean to...

BAXTER
It just that you're so fucked up and you can't control yourself...

GEORGE
I'm fucked up and I can't control myself.

ALYSSA

You have to let me go now.

BAXTER

No, you have to love her.

GEORGE

No, I have to love you.

BAXTER

Hug her, George! Hug her!

George hugs her. Alyssa struggles to break free.

ALYSSA

Let. Me. Go.

BAXTER

It's not your fault that she's so hot...

GEORGE

Yeah, it's not my fault that you're so hot...

BAXTER

And that being this close to her makes you want to bend her over this bench and fuck her brains out.

GEORGE

It's true. Being this close to you makes me want to bend you over and--

Alyssa knees him in the balls.

ALYSSA

Stay away from me, you crazy perv. And keep your son away from my daughter.

George collapses in pain. Alyssa exits quickly.

BAXTER

Holy Mary Mother of God, George, that was truly majestic. A grandiose crash and burn of staggering proportions. Congratulations. Here, take a drink. To us! Happy Valentine's Day!

Baxter holds the flask out to George. George stares at him.

GEORGE

Why can't you just leave me alone? Why can't you stay out of my life?? Out of my head?!?

George jumps up, rips the flask out of Baxter's hand, and drives Baxter to the luggage, yelling...

I hate you. I hate you. I hate you...

As he does this, unbeknownst to him, TERESA (30s) enters, carrying a doll and a piece of luggage.

...I SHOULD JUST KILL YOU ALREADY!

George peers down at a cowering Baxter. The flask raised in the air, ready to strike. And then...as if from nowhere...

TERESA

THAT'S ENOUGH!

George turns to see Teresa...yelling not at him, but at her doll.

If you use any more negative language or are cruel to me or anyone else, you go right back in the bag until you learn better.

SALLY (*The doll played by TERESA in Valley Girl voice*)
Whatever.

Teresa sits on the bench. George stares at her, dumbfounded.

TERESA

(*To George*) Traveling would be so much easier if we didn't have to deal with all this baggage, am I right?

GEORGE

Uh...I...umm...

TERESA

I'm Teresa. This is Sally.

GEORGE

George.

BAXTER

She is one fine rabbit, Georgie. Go on, take a drink. Get your game on.

SALLY (TERESA)

Gag me with a spoon.

TERESA

I'm not going to tell you again. Be nice.

SALLY (TERESA)

It's not my fault he's grody to the max.

TERESA

That's it. Back in the bag.

Teresa stuffs Sally in the luggage.

BAXTER

You might want to go for this one, Georgie Porgie--I think she's crazier than you. Probably real kinky in the sack.

GEORGE

Your...uh...doll...she--

TERESA

--We're working on our communication issues. Sometimes she's so brutal, I want to set her on fire, but I know I can't really do that, because she's part of me. So instead I just stuff her in my bag until she's ready to behave properly.

BAXTER

That's a big 10-4 on the crazy. Come on, bottoms up!

TERESA

He won't always be so lifelike, you know? Eventually you'll cut him down to size, just like I did with Sally.

Baxter looks at Teresa, stunned.

(*To Baxter*) That's right. I see you. (*To George*) You don't really need that flask, do you?

BAXTER

Are you kidding? This wet-brained drunk's whole way of life is predicated on his primordial need for alcohol. If it weren't for me, this staggering, blabbering waste of sagging human flesh would have left his son fatherless years ago due to his inability to deal with life as stable people know it. Now, come on, George, drink up and I'll shut up. That's how we do it, right? That's our deal. DRINK!

George stares at the flask – he's more than a little tempted. Then...

George hands the flask off to Teresa, grabs hold of Baxter, and forces him toward the luggage.

George, George? What are you doing? George? Let me go! George??

George stuffs a struggling Baxter into his luggage, zips it shut.

George! Let me out! George!!

Sounds of struggle from inside. If need be, George sits on the luggage. George turns to Teresa, smiles, gestures to the flask.

GEORGE

No, I don't need it.

TERESA

Good. Well, time for me to journey on. Happy Valentine's Day and happy travels.

GEORGE

Yes. Happy...

Teresa leaves, sneaking a drink from the flask as she goes.

BAXTER

George? Are you out there? Please let me out. George?? It smells like fermented diapers in here!!! George!!!!

George sits atop his baggage, smiling, as lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY