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If God Wanted Us to Fly, He Would Have Given Us Wings!

by Kitty Burns

A Samuel French Acting Edition



New York Hollywood London Toronto
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Three One Act Plays:

TERMINAL TERROR 7

ON HOLD AT 30,000 FEET 35

IDENTITY CRISIS 65

THIS PLAY IS DEDICATED TO

JENNIFER ROPERS

TERMINAL TERROR

CHARACTERS

AGENT / PILOT:
About 30 Years Old – Anal Retentive
JENNIFER SUMNER:
Early 20's – "Princess" Attitude
LIZ DAVIDSON:
About 50 Years Old – Bossy, Overbearing
JACK DAVIDSON:
About 50 Years Old – Uncouth, Earthy
HERMAN SCHNEIDER:
30-50 Years Old – Polyester, Pushy Salesman

ORIGINAL CAST OF TERMINAL TERROR

Produced by The Rasputin Theatre Company
At The Studio Eremos in San Francisco, CA
June 8-16, 1991

CAST MEMBERS

Pilot/Agent ..... Brendon Nash
Jennifer Sumner ..... Liz Carr
Liz Davidson ..... Donna Canali
Jack Davidson ..... David Picariello
Herman Schneider ..... Leon Brenton
Girl with Barf Bag ..... Kitty Burns
Director ..... Jean Stein
Sound Production ..... Brendon Nash
Lighting ..... Leonid Turkin
Lighting Assistant ..... Lisa Woodward

Scene One

(JENNIFER SUMNER enters the lounge area of JFK International Airport in New York, Phoenix Airlines area, where there is one check-in desk with an Agent behind it and walks over to him. The Agent is changing the flight number and time on the boarding sign behind the desk and is wearing a black suit and white carnation.)

JENNIFER: Excuse me. *(The AGENT turns around)* Hi. I have a reservation on Flight 352 going to New London, Connecticut.

AGENT: Name?

JENNIFER: Jennifer Sumner.

AGENT: Ticket, please. *(JENNIFER hands him her ticket)* Smoking or non-smoking?

JENNIFER: Non-smoking.

AGENT: That was a joke. The plane only seats eight people. The whole thing is a non-smoking section.

JENNIFER: Oh. That's OK. I don't smoke anyway. *(As she is talking, JACK and LIZ enter the lounge area. LIZ sits down and JACK stands behind JENNIFER. JENNIFER pauses for a few seconds, thinking about what the AGENT just said)* Did you say the plane only seats eight people?

AGENT: Yes. I guess you've never flown with us before.

JENNIFER: No. Actually, I've never flown with anybody before.

AGENT: This is your first flight?

JENNIFER: Yep.

AGENT: Laughs to himself.

(The kind of laugh that makes JENNIFER nervous.)

JENNIFER: It's so empty in here. Am I too early?

AGENT: No. You're right on time. So, you've never flown before?

(Reaches over the desk and picks a piece of lint off her coat.)

JENNIFER: No. I've never had a reason or frankly the desire to fly.

AGENT: What brings you here today?

JENNIFER: I have to go to Connecticut for my sister's wedding.

AGENT: That's a nice reason for a first flight.

JENNIFER: To tell you the truth, I'm not real crazy about doing this. I don't like the idea of being 30,000 feet off the ground in a machine!

AGENT: Now, don't be nervous. You have absolutely nothing to worry about. Phoenix Airlines has been in business for over 50 years. Our planes may be small, but they're quite durable, and our pilots are among the best in the business. Now, you just have a seat over there, and our ground hostess will let you know when it is time to board. *(Hands her the ticket)* Oh, I should warn you. There is no bathroom on board, so if you need to go, better do it now.

JENNIFER: Thank you.

(Goes and sits down in the seat across from the woman.)

AGENT: Thank you.

(Takes a cloth out of the desk and wipes off the counter. JACK moves up to the counter and he hands the AGENT his ticket and they talk quietly.)

LIZ: Hello.

JENNIFER: Hi.

LIZ: Do you fly very often?

JENNIFER: *(Nervously)* No. Do you?

LIZ: Oh yes. I love it. My husband and I live in Connecticut and come to New York all the time. We're retired now, and come to see all the new Broadway shows. On this trip, we saw the David Letterman show. We're both big fans of his. Wait till you retire. I bet you'll travel a lot too.

JENNIFER: Oh no, not me. This is my first flight and it's going to be my last. I've always been afraid to fly.

LIZ: Oh, that's too bad. Are you afraid now?

JENNIFER: Petrified!

LIZ: Believe me, you have nothing to worry about. We fly all the time. This is only the second time we've taken Phoenix Airlines, but the last time we had great service and a very comfortable ride. You couldn't be in better hands.

JENNIFER: *(Looks puzzled)* How strange. For a minute there, what you just said sounded vaguely familiar.

(JACK comes over and sits by LIZ. AGENT wipes off counter when he leaves.)

LIZ: All set?

JACK: *(Not happy)* Yeah.

LIZ: Good. Honey. this young lady is flying for the first time today.

JACK: Oh really?

(Not interested.)
(Picks up newspaper and starts reading it.)

LIZ: How long are you going to be in Connecticut?

JENNIFER: Just for the weekend. I'm going to be in my sister's wedding.

LIZ: That's wonderful!

AGENT: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Flight 352 non-stop service from New London has been delayed due to adverse weather conditions. The plane will be arriving in approximately 15 minutes and you will be boarding shortly thereafter.

(HERMAN enters, wearing a plaid suit and carrying two small suitcases. He runs up to AGENT's desk.)

HERMAN: Thank God the flight's delayed. I was afraid I was going to miss it.

(Hands AGENT his ticket.)

AGENT: No, you've even got a little time to relax before departure.

(They talk quietly while AGENT works on HERMAN's ticket.)

JENNIFER: *(Looking out window)* I sure wish it would stop raining. How is that little plane going to stay up in a storm like this?

LIZ: Don't worry. If it was raining too hard or was too windy, they wouldn't fly. The pilot wants to land safely just as much as the passengers do.

JENNIFER: I guess so.

LIZ: What part of New York are you from?

JENNIFER: For the last 10 years I've lived on Long Island, but right now I'm going to NYU.

LIZ: Cause you look awfully familiar to me.

JENNIFER: No, I don't think we've ever met.

LIZ: Oh well. By the way, my name is Liz Davidson, and this is my husband, Jack.

JENNIFER: Nice to meet you. I'm Jennifer Sumner.

ALL: Hi.

LIZ: You know, I've been flying all my life.

JACK: *(Not looking up from his paper, interrupts her)* Yeah, but she's only been up in a plane twice.

(Laughs to himself.)

LIZ: *(Gives JACK a dirty look and repeats irritated)* I've been flying all my life and love it. It's the most relaxing and fun form of travel there is.

JACK: Yeah, where'd you read that?

LIZ: It's true. Once you're on board, you can put your seat back and go to sleep if you want to. You can read. On the longer flights, you can even listen to music or watch a movie. *(To JACK irritated)* You can't do that on a train.

JACK: *(To JENNIFER)* I wanted to take the train.

LIZ: You always want to take the train.

JACK: That's right. Trains don't take you up 50,000 feet in the air!

LIZ: Planes don't go any higher than 36,000 feet.

JACK: Whatever! Either way, it's a long way up and a long way down!

LIZ: Would you stop that! You're scaring her.

JACK: Hell, even John Madden won't get in an airplane. He bought his own bus so he wouldn't have to fly.

LIZ: Well, John Madden's a wimp!

(Everyone, including the AGENT and HERMAN, looks up and stares at LIZ as if they are shocked by what she just said.)

JACK: You don't see life insurance booths in train stations and bus terminals, do you?

HERMAN: *(Turns around at AGENT's desk)* Did someone say, "Life insurance?" *(Walks quickly over to people and takes business cards out of his inner pocket and hands one to each person)* Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Herman Schneider.

(AGENT wipes off counter when HERMAN leaves and continues cleaning around counter.)

JACK: *(Looks at the card and hands it back to HERMAN)* We have Prudential.

HERMAN: *(Walks over to JENNIFER)* Well, little lady, what about you?

JENNIFER: What about me?

HERMAN: Do you have life insurance?

JENNIFER: No. I'm college student. What do I need with life insurance?

HERMAN: Sweetie, everybody needs life insurance. You have bills, don't you?

JENNIFER: Just tuition and one credit card.

HERMAN: Well, Babe, do you want your parents to get stuck paying off your debts?

JENNIFER: I'm going to be paying off my debts. I'm 24 years old and in perfect health. I plan to be around for a long time.

HERMAN: Honey, Baby, we all plan to be around for a long time, but that's why I'm in business. You know what they say about the best laid plans. One little 747 goes down, and all of a sudden, 250 people who planned to be around for a long time bite the big one!

LIZ: Would you shut up! She's scared enough as it is. Jennifer, don't you pay any attention to him. We're going to be just fine.

AGENT: *(To HERMAN)* Sir, you forgot your ticket.

HERMAN: Oh, yeah, won't get far without that.

(Goes up to AGENT and gets ticket.)

AGENT: And you forgot to check your bags at the ticket counter.

HERMAN: I'm not checking these. This is my carry-on luggage.

AGENT: Carry-on luggage?

HERMAN: That's right.

AGENT: And just where do you plan to carry these on?

HERMAN: On the plane – where do you think?

AGENT: Sir, have you ever flown on our airline before?

HERMAN: No.

AGENT: I didn't think so. This plane has eight seats in it, ten if you count the pilot and co-pilot. There are no overhead compartments, and there is no room for anything, including your feet, under the seats. There is nowhere to put carry-on luggage.

HERMAN: That's crazy! What kind of a plane can't accommodate carry-on luggage?

AGENT: A small plane. Carry-on luggage is meant for airliners. This is a puddle jumper.

HERMAN: A what?

AGENT: Never mind. Now, let's just get a few things straightened out here and you can bring your bags to the ticket counter.

HERMAN: What do you mean, "Get a few things straightened out?"

AGENT: For starters, this ticket is a mess. I'm going to void it out and issue a new one.

HERMAN: That's not necessary.

AGENT: Yes it is. You can hardly read it because the ink is smudged, the copy is torn, and the date is wrong, and I refuse to scratch out or write over anything.

HERMAN: God, do you have to be such a damned perfectionist?

AGENT: Yes, I do. *(Hands him a new ticket)* There, now hurry up and get your luggage to the ticket counter so they can load it with everyone else's.*(HERMAN walks out and AGENT wipes off the counter, then says over the loud speaker)* Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Flight 352, non-stop service from New London has been delayed due to adverse weather conditions. The Plane will arriving in approximately 15 minutes and you will be boarding shortly thereafter.

JACK: That's what you said a few minutes ago.

AGENT: Well, I'm saying it again.

JENNIFER: *(To AGENT)* What's happening? Is something wrong with the plane?

AGENT: No, there's nothing wrong with the plane – just a little set back due to the storm – nothing to worry about.

JACK: *(To LIZ)* I told you we should have taken the train!

LIZ: Oh, be quiet! Between you and the Grim Reaper insurance salesman, you've got this poor girl scared to death!

JENNIFER: *(To LIZ)* You know, I really am getting scared. I don't think this was such a good idea. *(To JACK)* Is there a train going to Connecticut tonight?

JACK: I'm sure there is. If you find out, let me know. I'll go with you.

LIZ: *(Kicks JACK)* Knock it off! Relax – both of you! *(To JENNIFER)* Tell me about your sister's wedding. Are you going to be a bridesmaid?

JENNIFER: I'm going to be the Maid of Honor.

LIZ: Oh, that sounds lovely. I bet you're going to look beautiful. Have you ever been in a wedding before?

(HERMAN returns without his luggage.)

JENNIFER: No, this is my first. I'm having a lot of "firsts" this weekend.

LIZ: Yes, and you'll enjoy every one of them. When Jack and I got married, we had ...

AGENT: Ladies and gentlemen, Flight 352, non-stop service from New London, has just landed and is approaching the gate at this time. The passengers will be deplaning momentarily. We will prepare the plane for boarding as soon as possible. We regret the delay and thank you for your patience.

JENNIFER: I wish they'd hurry up. I'm dreading this enough as it is.

LIZ: Now, I told you, honey, you have nothing to worry about. We're going to have a wonderful flight. Besides, think of how awful it would be if we had to go everywhere by car or train or boat. Everything would be over crowded, and it would take forever. If you had to drive to Connecticut instead of fly, it would take you three hours. This way, you'll be there in a

half hour, 45 minutes tops. Besides, I'm sure you've heard that it's safer to fly in a plane than it is to drive in a car.

JENNIFER: Yeah, I've heard that before.

LIZ: Well, it's true. Last year, there were thousands of car accidents in this country and only 7 airplane accidents. If I had my way ...

(At this point, the door from the outside opens, and five people enter, wet and mad. Four of them are making comments like, "I'll never fly again. I'm going to church tomorrow and thank God we landed safely. I can't believe we made it here in one piece. I'm surprised she's the only one who threw up. [pointing to the fifth girl] I thought for sure I was going to." Fifth girl slowly walks over to the Agent and hands him a used barf bag.)

GIRL: Hi. What do we do with these when we're done with them?

AGENT: Oh, I see you just flew on our airline. Give it to me and I'll put it in the back with the others.

(The GIRL hands him the barf bag and walks out.)

JENNIFER: OK, I've seen enough, I'm going home. I'll mail my sister her wedding present and tell her I'm deathly sick and can't make it.

LIZ: Now, lying to your sister isn't going to do anybody any good.

JENNIFER: If I get on that plane, I won't be lying!

(The PILOT enters from the outside. He goes up to the AGENT and as they're talking, they exchange coats. The

AGENT puts on the PILOT's cap. The PILOT goes behind the AGENT's desk.)

PILOT: *(EX-AGENT)* OK you guys, let's go.

JENNIFER: Wait a minute. What's going on here? Who are you?

PILOT: I'm your pilot, your co-pilot, your stewardess, your ground hostess. You name it, I'm it.

JENNIFER: I knew it. We're all going to die!

Scene Two

(Everyone is on board. HERMAN and LIZ are sitting by the windows.)

PILOT: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Flight 352, non-stop service to New London, Connecticut. We will be climbing to an altitude of 20,000 feet, and our flying time is estimated at 35 minutes, so we should be arriving in New London at approximately 8:45 this evening. Please fasten your seat belts, and as we taxi down the runway, please familiarize yourselves with the safety instructions located in the seat pocket in front of you. In case of an emergency landing, you will be instructed according to the type of landing we are forced to make. Should we loose altitude at any time, oxygen masks will drop from overhead. Since we have a limited supply of masks, if there are more than four passengers on board, you will have to share. I hope you have a pleasant flight, and thank you for flying Phoenix Airlines.

ALL: What does he mean we'll have to share? We don't have enough masks?

JACK: Did you say we'll have to share oxygen masks?

PILOT: Well, let's see. *(Peeks at an index card in his coat pocket and repeats as if reading)* "Since we have a limited supply of masks, if there are more than four passengers on board, you will have to share. I hope you have a pleasant flight, and thank you" Yep, that's what I said.

JACK: How do you share an oxygen mask?

PILOT: I don't know. I've never had to do it before. I have my own. I guess it would be like sharing anything else. You take turns. In this case, you'd take turns breathing – one for you, one for me. *(Demonstrates with his mask)* But don't worry. There are only four of you on board, and besides, we hardly ever have to use these anyway.

(Puts his back where he got it.)

HERMAN: Hardly ever?

JACK: I'll get you for this, Liz.

PILOT: Prepare for take off. Everybody buckled up? Here we go. I love this part.

JACK: Someday, somehow, I'll get you for this.

LIZ: Now honey, just relax. Think about all the fun we had this weekend. Maybe try to take a little nap.

JACK: You know I can't sleep on these things.

LIZ: I know. Oh well, it'll all be over before you know it.

JACK: I guess so.

LIZ: *(Looks out window)* Hey, you know, this is weird.

JACK: What's that?

LIZ: Didn't he say we'd be flying at 20,000 feet?

JACK: Yeah.

LIZ: Well, it's still light out, but I don't see anything. I mean, at 20,000 feet, we should at least be able to see the

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