

THE ART OF TRAVEL

by

Alexandra Taylor

Alexandra Taylor  
107 Grange Road  
Kings Heath  
Birmingham B14 7RX  
UK  
+44 7961 163 607  
[alex@alexandrataylor.co.uk](mailto:alex@alexandrataylor.co.uk)

INT. FLETCHERS - EVENING

An urban, middle class pub - exposed brick, quirky fittings, board games, speciality beers, tapas menu, live music every other Friday.

It's Friday night, busy, but not heaving. A mixed CROWD, mid 20s upwards, relaxed and friendly.

At the bar is ANI - confident and dangerous, smouldering sensuality, outfit a little more glam and clingy than the other punters. She's clearly on the pull. She twizzles the straw in her cocktail while appraising the room. She sees DAV and fixes her eyes on him until he notices, then unashamedly mouths 'Hi' and sucks on her cocktail straw. DAV grins, indicates to his MATES that he's going for it, then swaggers over.

DAV  
Hi, I'm Dav.

ANI  
Ani. Nice to meet you Dav.

She offers a hand and he shakes it.

DAV  
Can I get you a drink?

ANI  
Thank you. I'll have whatever the local speciality is.

DAV  
Beer? Wine?

ANI  
Surprise me.

DAV orders, while ANI checks him out, a predator eyeing her prey.

DAV  
I've not seen you in here before.

ANI  
Is this your local?

DAV  
That's right. Just round the corner. Very convenient.

They hold each other's gaze, silently acknowledging the implied intent.

ANI  
So, tell me about yourself, Dav.

While DAV talks, ANI's attention is caught by YOFFA. At first glance he looks normal, but there's something slightly odd about his clothing. And he's far too interested in the room, is drinking his beer as if it's nectar, he's looking around as if he's at the Grand Canyon - marvelling at the wall art, feeling the tables, watching the other punters, fascinated.

DAV is still talking, but ANI is no longer listening, eyes narrowed on YOFFA.

DAV  
So, what do you do?

ANI  
(Walking away without even looking at Dav) Hold that thought.

YOFFA is sitting at a small table perusing the menu, gleefully reading the dishes out to himself and smiling in wonder. ANI sits down opposite and fixes her stare on him.

ANI  
Hello.

YOFFA  
(Surprised) Oh, greetings.

ANI  
Who are you?

YOFFA  
Er, my name is, um...

He glances round, sees a poster with the name 'Katy Haggard'.

YOFFA  
...Katy.

YOFFA instantly realises he's made a mistake.

ANI  
Katy? Isn't that a girl's name?

YOFFA  
(Covering, badly) My parents were feminists. Second wave.

ANI knows it's a lie. From now on, every time she says 'Katy' she puts a sarcastic emphasis on it.

ANI  
I see. And where are you from,  
Katy?

YOFFA  
You haven't told me your name.

ANI  
No, I haven't.

YOFFA  
I think perhaps you should.

ANI  
Do you?

YOFFA  
Isn't that how one usually begins?

ANI  
I suppose it is.

YOFFA  
So...?

ANI  
What would you like it to be?

YOFFA  
Excuse me?

ANI  
If you could choose any name for  
me, any name at all, what would it  
be?

YOFFA  
I don't know...

ANI  
Oh yes you do. Come on Katy, don't  
be shy. How did you imagine it.  
You come here, to this bar, and a  
beautiful woman sits down at your  
table. What's her name?

YOFFA  
Is this normal? This doesn't feel  
normal?

ANI  
(Pushing) What's her name?

YOFFA  
(Blurting it out) Lexie.

ANI  
Lexie, eh? What a coincidence.  
That's my name.

YOFFA  
No it isn't.

ANI  
Prove it. Katy.

YOFFA now realises they're playing a game, and he's losing.  
He fights to regain some control.

YOFFA  
So, Lexie. Would you describe  
yourself as pro or anti Britain's  
membership of the European Union?

ANI  
Please tell me you didn't come all  
the way to this petri dish of  
hedonism just to talk politics.

YOFFA  
Aren't you concerned about what is  
happening?

ANI  
No. Not one bit.

YOFFA  
(Deflated) Oh. Well, it was  
delightful to make your  
acquaintance, but I believe the  
gentleman over there is waiting...

ANI  
(Not going anywhere) You're  
different.

YOFFA  
Am I?

ANI  
You know you are.

YOFFA  
(Trying to get rid of her) You're  
mistaken. I'm completely normal.  
Goodbye.

ANI  
Tell me Katy, when are you from?

YOFFA  
What?

ANI  
You heard.

YOFFA  
(Laughing nervously) How terribly  
amusing you are. I'm from right  
now, just like you.

ANI  
Bullshit.

YOFFA  
(Panicking, deciding to leave) I  
really ought to be going...

ANI  
Of all the bars in all of history,  
you walked into mine.

YOFFA tries to leave, ANI follows him.

ANI  
Show me your arm.

YOFFA  
No!

ANI  
Show me!

YOFFA  
It's against the rules.

ANI  
Ha! I knew it.

YOFFA  
(Turning back nervously) Shhhh.

ANI  
(Perfectly at ease) It's fine.  
They'll never know. When are you  
from?

ANI steers him to another table.

YOFFA  
We really shouldn't...

ANI

I know, I know. You're playing it safe. But we're not interfering with the natives. Just between us. Let me guess. 31<sup>st</sup> century. No, early 32<sup>nd</sup>.

YOFFA

Astonishing. How can you tell?

ANI

I get around. First time I've bumped into another traveller though, so don't go thinking it happens all the time. What's your real name?

YOFFA

Yoffa. Yoffa Noak. You?

ANI

Animepolis Grigorianum. Ani. First trip?

YOFFA

Yes. I've been building credit for ages to be able to come this far back.

ANI

Is it worth it?

YOFFA

It most definitely is! So primitive. That wall? I think it's brick. Actual fired-in-an-oven, laid-one-at-a-time brick. Incredible! And the menus are physical. On actual paper. It's barely changed since Egyptian times.

ANI

And the people are very open minded.

YOFFA

Really?

ANI

Well, compared to, you know, afterwards.

YOFFA

Ah, yes. When are you from?

ANI

I was born in 4325.

YOFFA

(Slightly disappointed) Oh. It's reassuring to know that the human race hasn't destroyed itself.

ANI

Came close a couple of times since your day, but, nope, still going.

YOFFA

And male pregnancy? We've just started trialling it in my time.

ANI

Oh no, no one does pregnancy any more. It's all insemination beds and solar wombs.

YOFFA

Are you a fan?

ANI

I do like babies, but I couldn't eat a whole one.

YOFFA

I mean are you a fan of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? I'm simply obsessed. Have been since school. I cannot believe I'm actually here! Did you also come for the election? They don't usually do double bookings.

ANI

Nah, wanted the 1998 Eurovision Song Contest, but it was fully booked. Got a 'Best of Birmingham' deal instead - Black Sabbath's legendary final gig tomorrow night. All long hair, leather and tattoos. I'll do camp and glittery another time.

YOFFA

I do find it a most perplexing though. All these people hurtling towards seismic global revolution and they have no idea.



I wanted to know how it really felt, whether there was anyone who saw it coming.

ANI

And?

YOFFA

Nothing. (Picks up a nearby newspaper) Not a clue. It's all here - Europe, Russia, the USA, but nobody's putting it all together. But I haven't been here long.

He surreptitiously rolls up his sleeve and glances at a digital countdown embedded in his arm.

YOFFA

I still have sixty five hours to research. I thought I should experience some local culture, collect some informal accounts...

ANI

And nail a woman called Lexie.

YOFFA

You made me say that.

ANI

Because of that girl, right?

YOFFA

(Embarrassed) It's just that people stopped using the name after (glancing around) you know what, so...

ANI

You wanted to collect. No judgement here.

YOFFA

(Offended) I'm not a collector.

ANI

Oh you are. Trust me, takes one to know one. So far I've had people from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, 12<sup>th</sup> century, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup>. Oh, and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Does it count if I was too stoned to remember?

YOFFA

Look, Ani...

ANI

(Full seduction mode) Imagine it - my time plus your time plus this time equals a really really good time. (Musing to herself) Would it count as 32<sup>nd</sup> century or 21<sup>st</sup> century? Or both?

YOFFA

Sorry, it's just that...

ANI

You can call me Lexie if you like.

YOFFA

The 44<sup>th</sup> century isn't my area of interest.

ANI

Might be your only chance to taste the future. Think of all those years of extra experience.

YOFFA

I'd really rather focus my countdown on people who are from this era.

ANI

That's discrimination!

YOFFA

It's a preference.

ANI

It's timeism.

YOFFA

I really don't think...

ANI

You're knocking me back just because of the year I was born. That's timeist.

YOFFA

And you came here to score a 21<sup>st</sup> century notch in your bedpost. What's the difference?

ANI  
When I'm recalled I'm reporting  
you.

YOFFA  
Remind me, which one of us broke  
the rules first?

ANI  
Fine. Stick to your boring  
research. I'm going to have some  
fun.

ANI primps herself then slides back over to where DAV is  
standing with his mates.

ANI  
Sorry about that. Now, where were  
we?

Glaring at ANI, YOFFA goes back to his pint. He picks up a  
nearby flyer - strokes it, sniffs it, licks it. Getting a  
funny look from a COUPLE, he raises his drink and smiles to  
initiate contact. They grimace warily and turn their backs.  
YOFFA is disappointed and looks around for someone else to  
strike up conversation with. A WOMAN at the bar shouts  
across the room to her friend, LEXIE.

WOMAN  
Hey, Lexie, did you want it with  
ice?

LEXIE  
Yes please.

YOFFA can't believe his luck. He knocks back his pint,  
primps himself and approaches LEXIE with awkward  
enthusiasm.

YOFFA  
Good evening, my name is Katy, no,  
not Katy, Jack.

LEXIE  
(Amused) Lexie.

YOFFA  
Delighted to meet you Lexie. Do  
you mind if I ask you a few  
questions about the foreboding  
rise of the far right?

LEXIE  
Wow, that is like the worst pick  
up line ever.

YOFFA is crestfallen.

LEXIE  
But at least it's different.

LEXIE smiles and invites YOFFA to sit.

CREDITS ROLL

CUT TO BLACK