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# GATE 38

by David Megarrity

EXTRACT

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# GATE 38

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*Gate 38* was commissioned by MacGregor State High School's Centre of Artistic Development, and first performed at the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club, Brisbane, in June 2007, with the following cast:

Madison O' Reilly  
Kourtni Currier  
Farron Young  
Nikki Saunders  
Lauren Finlay  
Kate Weigel  
Jenayde Ellis  
Kristen Graham  
Caitlin Flanagan  
Stephanie Doyle  
Sophie Rohweider  
Zach Smith  
Jordyn Kelly  
Jacqueline Hung  
Shovaun Chase  
Allyce Maxwell  
Alex James  
Sarah Smith

*Gate 38* was developed with the assistance of Queensland Theatre Company.

## CHARACTERS

*A cast of at least 13 is required, with a minimum of two males. Many parts are not gender specific. All are aged under 18 apart from SAM.*

SAM	An experienced security guard, laid-back, philosophical.
STEPH	New on the job, keen to get it right. Insecure, verging on paranoia.
FATIMA	A finalist in a televised talent quest. Good at heart, but head in the clouds.
FINN	A sensitive, singer/songwriter type, prone to earnest, philosophical observations.
FRANCESCA	Fatima's supportive friend, the first member of her fan club.
FREYA	Fatima's downbeat friend, likes her, but isn't impressed by all the TV stuff.
MARGOT	A tense shift supervisor of a burger joint, full of rhetoric about teamwork, but unable to be part of one.
MADISON	A new trainee at the burger joint. It's her first day, her first ever job.
MAXINE	An old hand, friendly but unfazed.
MEGAN	The girl out the back in the grill area who barely says anything.
HELEN	A Johnny Depp fan. She has responded to an internet rumour that Johnny will be disembarking at Gate 38. In a long-term relationship with Michael.
MICHAEL	A fan of the Johnny, but his obsession is fading.
SOPHIE	Goes to the same school as Michael and Helen, though a grade below. Secretly in love with Michael.
CUSTOMER	A customer.
JOHNNY DEPP	Could be played by a heavily disguised member of the cast, the audience, or production staff.

AIRPORT STAFF, ANNOUNCER, OTHER PASSENGERS

## SCENE ONE: AIRPORT

*The stage is dark. MUSIC. Something like 'You're a Great Way to Fly' by Corduroy.*

*The awesome sound of a jet taking off is heard. Upstage in a spotlight, a tiny model passenger jet wobbles into flight, then disappears into the darkness.*

*The number '38' appears out of the black. A 'security gate' is illuminated. SAM, a security guard, stands by with a hand-held scanner. Lights up on the rest of the stage.*

*The airport buzzes with sights and sounds; people moving to and fro, checking tickets, checking watches, waving hello and goodbye, hugging and releasing, lifting and putting down baggage, opening and closing newspapers, sipping and swallowing takeaway coffee.*

*Then people begin to appear at the security gate, and pass through.*

*FATIMA struts in, enjoying the attentions of SAM's security scan. She's followed by FRANCESCA, who carries FATIMA's heavy baggage. SAM takes a quick look in there.*

*FINN enters; his guitar's been X-rayed. FREYA stops beside him. They look at FATIMA, smile at each other good-naturedly, roll their eyes, and follow her.*

*MARGOT, manager of a burger chain, enters primly, and scolds SAM for scanning her. He withdraws. MARGOT spies MAXINE, another employee of the burger chain, stops her and straightens her uniform. MEGAN, another employee, trudges through the security gate like a zombie. They all exit stage right.*

*MADISON, holding the cap of her uniform rather than wearing it, comes through the gate, looks lost and exits stage right.*

*HELEN enters, dragging MICHAEL by the hand. They both wear the same shirt. Inside out. SOPHIE comes in not long after them. HELEN and MICHAEL stop and look at her. MICHAEL double-takes at SOPHIE. HELEN and MICHAEL exit stage right, SOPHIE stage left.*

*STEPH enters, and is scanned by SAM until they realise they both have the same uniform on.*

*MUSIC stops. Naturalism returns. The next scene begins.*

## **SCENE TWO: INSECURE**

*Dressed in a stiffly pressed uniform, STEPH'S movements and speech are clipped and businesslike. SAM is much more relaxed.*

SAM           Well, here you are.

STEPH        Here I am.

SAM           You're new.

STEPH        I'm new. *(pause)* What are we up to today?

SAM           What do you mean 'we'?

STEPH        I was told to report to you.

SAM           OK. *(pause)* We protect. we watch. We guard. We. Stand around, mainly, then walk around, then stand around a bit more. Nice shoes.

STEPH        Thanks.

SAM Did you bring your gun?

STEPH Er, no. I don't have a gun.

SAM That's good. You're an unarmed security guard. If you had a gun you'd be out of a job.

STEPH OK.

SAM OK. Here we are. This shift's centred around Gate 38. *(walking and pointing)* Security screening there. Food court. Toilets. You may need them after going to the food court. People. Planes. Any questions?

STEPH Um ... obviously we'll liaise, when necessary, with the federal police, CCTV control, the explosive detection dogs?

SAM I hope they're not too explosive. The dogs. *(pause)* Explosive dogs.

STEPH You're not supposed to make jokes like that.

SAM Yes. You're absolutely right. That was a test. And you passed.

*STEPH really is very keen. He's almost standing to attention. His eyes dart about.*

SAM Are you all right?

STEPH I'm being alert.

SAM Australia needs more 'lerts'.

STEPH Yellow alert. You know.

SAM            You can be whatever colour lert you want to be.

*STEPH doesn't get it. And fair enough, it's a pretty bad joke.*

STEPH        Are you going to joke around like this all day?

SAM            Yes. *(pause)* Look around. Can you prove there's been a security failure?

STEPH        Well, with all this equipment, and all the security staff, of course you could prove there's been a security failure.

SAM            Correct. Can you prove there *hasn't* been a security failure?

STEPH        No.

SAM            *That's* why we're here. I love this place. Look at them. Arrivals. Departures. Hellos. Goodbyes. 'I love you forever.' 'I hope I never see you again.' God I love the human race.

*STEPH is standing stiffly to attention, eyes darting about.*

SAM            Come on now, relax. Getting on a plane's terrifying enough. Our job's to make the punters feel better. Be like a duck.

STEPH        Water off a duck's back?

SAM            No, gliding calmly across the water. Legs churning away below.

STEPH        A duck.

SAM            A duck. A duck walks into a chemist and says, 'I'd like some lipstick please.' The chemist says, 'Will that be cash or eftpos?' What does the duck say?

*STEPH stiffens.*

SAM            'Just put it on the bill.'

*STEPH's vision for his first day has changed.*

### **THREE: A STAR DEPARTS**

*FATIMA, FRANCESCA, FREYA and FINN stand looking a bit lost. Other AIRPORT PEOPLE go about their business. Many have phones.*

FRANCESCA *(erupting)* Thirty-eight, thirty-eight. This is it. This is it.

*FINN turns suddenly and accidentally whacks FREYA with the guitar case.*

FATIMA        Thirty-eight. It's an omen. I was born on the third of the eighth, it's an omen. It's all falling into place, Francesca. This is my day. When does it go? What's the time?

FRANCESCA   Fifteen minutes. Plenty of time.

FATIMA        Everyone has fifteen minutes of fame. Fifteen minutes till my fifteen minutes.

FREYA        It'd be fourteen minutes for you, Fatima, you used up sixty seconds of it already.

FRANCESCA Freya, we talked about this.

FATIMA That sixty seconds does not count.

FRANCESCA Yes, this is her moment. That was just a TV commercial. This is art.

FATIMA It was more a community service. Girls need tampons.

FREYA Sorry.

FINN Pretty well-paid community service. Period. *(he strums a chord)*

FATIMA *(pointing to his guitar)* Why do you take that with you wherever you go?

FINN You never know when inspiration's going to strike.

FREYA Or *if* it will ever strike.

*FINN takes a seat, pulls out his guitar and strikes a chord.*

FINN How can I not be inspired, when my muse is here?

FATIMA That's so sweet. I'm his muse.

*FATIMA's ring tone goes.*

I should turn it off.

FREYA Good ring tone. It's very you.

FATIMA *It is me. (looking at phone)* Message. From Taylor.