

THE WOMAN WHO WANTED MORE

Also by Vicky Zimmerman writing as Stella Newman

Pear Shaped
The Happiness Recipe
The Foodies Guide to Falling in Love
Seven Steps To Happiness

THE WOMAN WHO WANTED MORE

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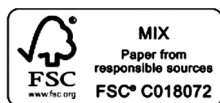
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*In loving memory of Matt Janes,
an exceptional friend*

Prologue

CECILY FINN IS NINETY-SEVEN and a half years old. Her hair is as stiff and bright as a firmly beaten egg white, and her dark eyes hold the look of a permanently unimpressed owl. She claims that all she wants is death, because boredom and institutional fish pie are worse than dying – but Cecily has endured far greater horrors than overcooked haddock.

Over the many weeks Kate Parker has been coming to visit her at Lauderdale House for Exceptional Ladies, Cecily has shared with her a smorgasbord of tales, of love and rebellion, triumphs and travels. Kate used to wonder about embellishments, fabrications, memories warped by time – but not anymore. Cecily’s mind and tongue are sharp as lime juice on an ulcer.

Cecily often tries to pass off Shakespeare quotes as her own. She talks in metaphors that take an age to decode. Nothing’s ever good enough for her: no biscuit crisp enough, no posset set right. She never holds back, and if there’s a choice between bitter and sweet, she’ll take bitter every time. Still, Cecily has taught Kate several valuable lessons – not least the perfect menu for what Kate craves most in the world.

Kate turns forty today. Last night she cooked for friends – the meal was delicious, everyone had fun – and tonight she'll be celebrating with Nick, gentle, handsome Nick. He's taking her to an amazing restaurant, and if there's one thing Cecily and Kate *can* agree on, it's that good food matters. In a few weeks' time Kate and Nick will move in together, it *is* happening, and all the doubts Cecily has scattered in Kate's mind will be brushed away like black pepper spilled on a pristine tablecloth. Just because you're old doesn't mean you're always right about *everything*. There are many ways to find happiness in this world, to beat loneliness, to live well.

So why does Kate feel, as she stands outside Cecily's door, that in spite of all the barbs and bristle that come with the package, Cecily is the one person who can help rid her of this gnawing ache that's lodged itself deep in the pit of her stomach? That if she doesn't speak to Cecily *right now* she might lose herself completely?

Kate takes a deep breath and knocks on the door, waiting for that familiar haughty voice to tell her to come in.

Come in.

PART ONE

Hunger is never delicate

Samuel Johnson

Chapter One

Five months earlier . . .

KATE PARKER IS RAVENOUS. She sits on a deck chair in Nick Sullivan's tiny patch of North London garden, gazing contentedly at his back as he stands by the barbecue. The smell of chargrilled meat is making her stomach audibly rumble but there's no point hurrying him, this man does things in his own sweet time.

Dinner's a prime example – tonight it's taken forty minutes but in real terms it's taken a whole year. Nick embarked on Project Burger last July. Nick's a database engineer (Kate still can't explain fully what that means) and he's applied his intellectual rigour and ceaseless enthusiasm to honing every element of the American classic. Kate's never seen a face light up the way Nick's had the night he mastered The Order of the Seven Layers.

He was a solitary eater before they started dating eighteen months ago, relying on takeaways and the odd home-cooked sausage sandwich. Kate had been saddened by the loneliness this seemed to imply, and the missed culinary opportunities. She'd offered to teach him some favourite recipes, he'd accepted, and over the

last eighteen months he has emerged from his culinary shell – slowly at first but with increasing confidence. Kate isn't the greatest cook but her mother Rita is such a dire one that Kate learned to fend for her stomach from an early age.

Kate loves cooking with Nick, and has watched him flourish with gentle pride. Normally she chooses the recipe, he the music, and whatever they're cooking they both agree: the more butter used the better. They have compatible styles – he's hard-working and patient, and can chop a dozen onions without making the slightest fuss about eyes watering or hands smelling; she's more chaotic but can juggle multiple tasks, and although he's smarter she's always two steps ahead – nothing's ever burnt on her watch.

It's a beautiful summer's evening, and Kate savours a moment of sheer happiness – the warm breeze scented with jasmine, the sky only now fading from blue. She closes her eyes and thinks about tomorrow. It's been a long time since she's been in a relationship where she's felt relaxed enough to think about tomorrow. Tomorrow Nick will wake up early and pop out to buy the ingredients for breakfast burritos. They'll cook together, go for a walk and in the afternoon, if the weather stays fine, they'll sit back out here, Kate devouring a novel, Nick reading one of his incomprehensible coding books. Their life is not lavish but it's full of priceless treats: lemonade poured into glasses he keeps in the freezer for extra coldness; box sets and BLTs on rainy Wednesday nights; elaborately competitive games of cards, with Minstrels used for gambling chips.

When she opens her eyes, Nick has turned to give her the ‘Mustard, now!’ look – one brow raised in mock severity. She springs up with a smile and hands him the French’s Classic like a scalpel to a surgeon, watching intently as he traces parallel lines of acid yellow onto the meat, the finishing touch.

This burger has taken time but it’s worth the wait: six ounces of minced steak, crowned with bacon and a perfect square of melting, tangy Cheddar; delicate concentric bangles of red onion; tomato, lettuce and Magic Sauce – a mixture of Tabasco, mayo and ketchup, to add heat, creaminess and tang. Then the bun: Kate and Nick have spent more time researching this bun than some couples spend choosing a car. Initially, Nick enquired whether the buns they sold at Fletchers, the supermarket chain Kate works for, were any good? She’d laughed a mournful response. Fletchers’ buns were cheap but flavourless and papery, and though they claimed to be brioche, on the back of the pack was the ominous phrase ‘brioche-style’. After much trial and error they’d found perfection at a bakery near Kate’s flat in Kilburn. And the final ingredient – one sour dill pickle, for added crunch.

Kate is not religious, but looking down at her plate makes her want to say grace: thank you, Universe, for this man, who has a lovely flat with a reasonably clean bathroom; who has restored my faith, after several years of late-thirty-something dating starvation, that there are kind, clever, decent men in London. Thank you for a man who puts so much effort into making my dinner; into making me happy.

She picks up her burger – oh, such heft – and holds on for dear life. Once in motion there’s no stopping – hesitate or show fear and it’ll fall apart in every direction. Nick looks at her tenderly. It’s impossible not to love him. Not only does he cook her spaghetti with meatballs if she’s having a bad day, but she can eat them with full abandon and he won’t judge her greedy or unfeminine; he relishes her appetite almost as much as she does.

Sated after their last bites, Kate reaches to wipe a smudge of mustard from the faint stubble on Nick’s jaw. He has such a sweet face, handsome in an unassuming way, a button nose that enhances his boyishness. His brown curly hair is thinning but the short cut suits him well. That old blue Atari T-shirt makes his eyes even greener, and when their eyes meet now he flashes her that smile of his that rarely falters, no matter what’s thrown at him. She’s so impressed with how he’s handled these last three months of unemployment; his optimism is extraordinary.

‘Not long now till France!’ says Kate, moving to clear away the plates.

‘I can’t wait – think of all the baguettes,’ says Nick, his eyes lighting up. ‘Are you positive Kavita doesn’t want any money for letting us use her holiday house?’

‘She had a fit when I even suggested it.’ Kate hasn’t told Nick she’s bought Kavita a case of good wine as a thank-you. He’d offer to pay half even though he’s skint, and the thought of embarrassing him when he’s always so generous is intolerable.

‘That was a perfect dinner,’ says Kate, as they stand contentedly at the sink, washing up. ‘Those were particularly fine burger accoutrements.’

‘Burger Accoutrements . . . one for our list?’ he says. It’s one of their running jokes – ridiculous names for their future children.

‘Burger Accoutrements Parker-Sullivan? Fine, but *you* can pick him up from the school playground when the other kids beat him up.’

‘If we have twins, please can we call the other one Pickleholio?’

‘I’m not sure a pickle addiction is a sound aspiration for our firstborn,’ says Kate, laughing. She gazes at him standing there in his T-shirt and Levi’s, with his forty-four-year-old burger-lover’s slight pot belly and feels a sudden throb of love so intense it makes her heart hurt.

He catches her look and returns it with a smile, suddenly self-conscious. He pauses, then reaches for the spatula she’s washing. ‘You’ve got a wider one of these at home, right?’

‘Yup,’ she says, reaching for it as he moves it slightly out of reach.

‘We need yours here – for the barbecue.’

‘I’ll pick you one up from John Lewis in the week.’

‘Kate,’ he says, putting down the spatula as he turns to face her. ‘I think we need all your utensils here.’

‘*All* of them?’

He nods decisively.

‘Why?’

‘And your clothes. And shoes,’ he says, tenderly tucking a stray strand of hair behind her ear. ‘And your three hundred cookbooks and seven million novels . . .’

‘Two hundred at most,’ she says, struggling to contain the burst of joy blossoming in her chest.

‘Oh, and one other very important thing that John Lewis doesn’t sell.’

‘Which is what?’

‘Which is you, Kate, you,’ he says, his smile as big as the world.

Thank you, Universe, thank you. Finally: a man she loves, who loves her too. He’s been worth the wait.

The following night Kate stretches out in her bed, her normal Sunday-night blues replaced by excitement. She and Nick are off to France in two weeks. She’ll move into Nick’s the weekend they return.

She’d been anxious about breaking the news to her flatmate, but then the thought of never again having to clean Melanie’s fish fat from the splashback had given Kate a surge of courage. Nick has his flaws, but passive-aggressive, slovenly and light-fingered with other people’s special-occasions-only olive oil are not among them.

Melanie had been surprisingly encouraging, and had even suggested Kate start moving her stuff before France. Their conversation had gone far better than Kate had anticipated.

It’s always the things you worry about most that turn out fine.

And vice versa.

Chapter Two

KATE FASTENS HER SEAT belt and turns to Nick, who is already engrossed in the Listener, a cryptic crossword so fiendishly difficult it makes Kate's brain ache. Week in, week out, Nick sits absorbed for hours, chip-chipping away – he's obsessed. If he ever reveals a kinky side, she suspects he'll make her dress up as a complex puzzle.

'Four solved already,' he says, holding it out to her proudly. She glances at the grid and shakes her head: how on earth does *that* word fit *that* clue?

She settles back in her seat and closes her eyes, tired from a 3 a.m. alarm but excited. This will be their first proper holiday together and if she's honest with herself, which sometimes she isn't, she'd have liked to have gone somewhere with Nick before now. There are legitimate reasons why it's taken eighteen months to get Nick on this plane. Until he lost his job in April he was a workaholic, often *choosing* to work weekends (so not Kate's style). Then recently he's had no income. And finally, Nick is s-l-o-w-moving. She's analysed this a lot, and her mother Rita's had her two pennies' worth too: 'children of dysfunctional parents always need to feel in control'. Well, who doesn't?

Nick had entered into their relationship so cautiously, it had triggered Kate's commitment-phobe alarm after one month, and so she'd asked him straight out: what do you want? He'd told her he didn't know how to do relationships; he'd only had one short one in his twenties, and another failed interlude in his thirties. A tiny red flag had waved in Kate's head, so she'd offered him an out before anyone (i.e., Kate) got hurt. He'd looked at her for so long she'd blushed, then he'd held her tight and said, 'I want this. I want you.'

From then on they'd gone for it, albeit at a measured pace – one bite, one meal, one day at a time. In the last few months she's felt him move ever closer. Even so, the moment the offer of cohabitation was on the table, Kate had felt a pressing need to take something significant and heavy round to his flat, as a precautionary measure: a couple of boxes of cookbooks and her hardback copy of *The Goldfinch* had done the trick.

Her best friend Bailey had helped her move them last Saturday when Nick was away hiking. Bailey and Kate have been friends since they were four. Kate sometimes wonders if people are shaped by their hair – if she'd been born with Bailey's perfect blonde locks, would she be perpetually calm and gracious too? Certainly Bailey hasn't had it easy – a cheating ex, Tom, who'd abandoned her and their young daughters claiming his duty was 'to explore his desire' with any woman who was game. Yet on the many wine-infused nights Kate had spent round at Bailey's counselling her through her divorce, it was Kate who'd had to be talked down from wanting to murder Tom. Sometimes friends end up feeling the feelings that are too unpalatable to feel for yourself.

Kate opens her eyes again as Nick turns to her with a radiant smile.

‘Fourteen across, it’s Contiguous!’ he says, holding the paper out to her like a winning lottery ticket.

She smiles and reaches over to ruffle his hair but the plane makes a sudden dramatic lurch and she grabs his hand instead. He gives her fingers a gentle squeeze. She imagines their entwined hands growing into old people’s hands together, their skin getting wrinkled, age-marked. Old age would be more tolerable with Nick by her side.

Last month at a friend’s wedding Nick had drunk a lot and in the cab home had confessed he wanted them to have three children. He’d patted her tummy tenderly, then rested his head in her lap.

‘The only thing you’ll hear in there is wedding cake,’ she’d said, trying not to dwell on the fact that her ovaries were fast approaching their use-by date.

‘I know I’m drunk, Kate Parker, but I utterly love every part of you, I do.’

The feeling is entirely mutual.

By the time Kate and Nick reach San Marcel, a tiny village ten minutes from a slightly larger village, the sun is blazingly hot in a deep blue sky. They stop for provisions, drawn to one store by the sweet, buttery aroma of freshly baking brioche. They linger at a counter sampling ripe cheeses, speckled salamis and glistening inky olives, emerging with bags brim full of jars and bottles, fresh herbs and ripe peaches.

They head to Kavita’s place, a simple two-bed farmhouse with a large terrace and, best of all, an icy-cold

pool. Nick throws on his trunks and jumps into the water while Kate takes her case to the main bedroom to fish out her H&M bikini. She's never invested in expensive swimwear – why bother? No feat of wardrobe engineering, no high-cut leg could hide the fact that Kate has a normal female body: a big bottom, cellulite and a relationship with gravity entirely in keeping with her age. Thank goodness she'll never again have to be naked for the first time in front of a new man.

She checks the mirror again. Insecurity is so boring at her age. Plus there's not much she can do in the next two minutes about being seven pounds overweight. As Rita always says, 'Focus on the positives – if you can find them.' Kate's hair looks good – caramel brown, shoulder-length and slightly wavy. She takes off her sunglasses. Her eyes, somewhat red from the early start, are still her best feature – greeny-grey and almond-shaped, with an inquisitive look she's inherited from her father. She wipes a nudge of sleep away, grabs her sarong and wraps it tightly around her.

Nick is sitting in the shade, crossword in hand. 'Get in the water, babe. It's amazing.' And it is. Though the initial shock is intense, within moments it's bliss. Kate swims a few lengths, climbs out and arranges herself and her new Anne Tyler novel on the lounge beside him, letting her body sink down into the chair as the heat warms her limbs.

As the day ends they eat out on the terrace enjoying the last of the sun – a simple tuna salad with green beans and a handful of ripe tomatoes, a fresh, crusty baguette with magnificent French butter and a bottle of chilled rosé. Nick looks at her with a smile of pure joy. She reaches

out a finger to straighten his unruly right eyebrow. He pulls her close for a kiss, then another.

How lucky is she? Four more days of reading, sunbathing and jumping into an aquamarine pool – four more days of nothing but sheer happiness.

Chapter Three

THEY ARE LYING IN BED on the second night when Nick tells Kate he feels a strong urge to withdraw. Kate is confused.

They've just had sex, and at first she thinks he's making a rather weak joke, but searching again she cannot find a punchline. The sex that night had been good for her, but she'd felt Nick's attention drifting. She refuses to take this personally; Nick's been unemployed far longer than he'd anticipated – it's natural he's preoccupied.

'Um, what do you mean, withdraw?' she says, trying to sound calm.

'I don't know,' he says sadly and his shoulder blades shift with discomfort. 'It's just my gut . . . says retreat.'

'Retreat . . .?'

He shrugs apologetically, his brow furrowing. 'I've been feeling funny about us . . . for a week or so . . .'

A week or so? Has he?

'It's here.' He touches his solar plexus. 'When I think about the future it feels . . . weird.'

Hang on, why is he talking like this? He's not trying to lay the groundwork for a break-up, is he? 'Maybe you're anxious about work?' she says, trying to ignore

the sick feeling rising in her own body. ‘Anyone would be anxious about that.’

‘I’m totally relaxed about work.’

Then why were you up half the night last Friday grinding your teeth so loudly you woke me? she thinks.

She pauses. What is going on? ‘Oh Nick, this must be linked to you asking me to move in.’

‘In what way?’

‘Well, you’ve never even lived with a woman, apart from that moody flatmate you were obsessed with at college . . .’

‘Jo? You think Jo’s moody?’

Jo is dreary verging on morose, but that’s not the point.

‘It’s that thing you do, Nick! Running away. Just like with Tom Brady.’

‘Tom Brady?’

‘OK, listen,’ she says, holding up her finger in an attempt to hold her line of argument. She can pull this back. ‘You adore American football, you’ve repeatedly tried to explain the dumb rules to me—’

‘Wow, first Jo and now American football?’

‘Look: earlier this year when the Patriots were in the Super Bowl final—’

‘The final is the Super Bowl.’

‘That’s what I just said.’

‘No, I meant it’s only the final that’s called the Super Bowl.’

‘Listen to me: when Tom Brady and your guys were losing at half-time—’

‘Please . . .’ he says, looking pained.

‘Exactly! You thought they’d lose, so even though you’ve been loyal all season, rather than stick by them when it counts, you chicken out and go to bed. It’s the Super Bowl final!’

‘It’s the Super Bowl.’

‘Yes, *I know*, Nick, do you get my point?’

‘Not really.’

‘Discomfort is something you *clearly* can’t handle.’ Kate is a master of discomfort; frankly, it’s where she’s most comfortable. ‘Nick, even when you love something, you bolt, you’re not a finisher – seventh season, *Game of Thrones*? And that book thing? Because the Patriots made the greatest comeback ever and you missed it because you were scared,’ she says, more calmly than she feels, but in her stride now. ‘This is a classic man-wobble because we’re progressing to the next stage in our relationship.’

‘Kate,’ he says, and in the half-light of the moonlit bedroom she can see there are tears in his eyes. ‘I think asking you to move in has made me realise that while I love our time together, I’m equally happy watching TV on my own.’

Oof. It hits Kate in her abdomen as fiercely as if he’d done it with his fist.

‘But I’ve never asked you to choose between me and your TV,’ she says, bewildered. ‘It’s not an either/or, is it?’

‘I guess not . . .’

‘Nick, is this your way of telling me you don’t want us to move in together at all?’

He looks at her with confusion. ‘Definitely not – just at the *moment*,’ he says with genuine sadness, and while her instinct is to reach out and comfort him, the anger she feels at his feebleness fixes her rigidly in place.

He reaches for her hand and squeezes it apologetically.

She lies in shock for a few minutes, then realises that nothing Nick has said is in any way acceptable to her. She's about to resume their conversation, but turns to see that Nick has already fallen into a deep, and largely untroubled, sleep.

To be fair, Nick does have a great TV. It's a top-of-the-range Sony HD with a huge clear screen, excellent speakers and Triluminos technology, which sounds like a word marketers have invented to sell women cosmetics. Kate has lain on Nick's sofa countless times, cuddled up with him watching that TV in domestic bliss. Now she lies beside him in bed, her skin blazing from sunburn, her insides churning up. She's hoping he'll leap up, apologise and say he didn't mean a word of it. Kate is prone to hoping for things that statistically could happen but definitely won't.

Realising she's only getting angrier by the minute, she takes herself off to Kavita's daughter's bedroom, places a collection of Peppa Pigs carefully on the bedside table, then crawls into the single bed. She lies in the dark, adrenaline coursing through her. What the actual . . .? He asked her to move in with him two weeks ago! It had meant so much to her. Kate hasn't done anything wrong since, has she? And why had she gone on and on about him not being a finisher? He's just finished with her.

No, that is *not* what just happened. Nick is having a commitment – wobble, pure and simple. It's 2.30 a.m. She's exhausted, confused, stunned, upset. She'll wait till the morning. Things will look brighter then.

Chapter Four

THINGS DON'T LOOK ANY brighter in the light.

Kate wakes from a fitful sleep, reaches for Nick and instead finds a fluffy toy pig wearing a pink velvet dress.

She tiptoes to the main bedroom. There he is, gently snoring, his elegant feet poking out from the bottom of the sheet. His cheeks are a touch sunburnt, but apart from that he looks as peaceful and content as an eight-year-old who's passed out after lots of birthday cake and an epic session on a bouncy castle.

She crawls back to the single bed, doubled over in pain.

It's Thursday, 6.50 a.m. They fly home on Saturday. She googles her options. An earlier flight will be four hundred euros, plus she's not insured on the hire car, and a cab to the airport will be another hundred euros. Five hundred euros to flee, which might be premature and melodramatic anyway?

Should she insist Nick leave? He can't afford that flight either – not that this should be her concern in the circumstances, but still. Nick is not a bad person. He cannot be dumping her. Not on holiday, not the week they move in together, not when it's her friend Pete's insanely

glamorous wedding next month, not when she's turning forty in December. No, no, no – inconceivable that he'd pull this shit right now.

She closes her eyes and tries to calm herself. Nick has never shown any signs of being unreliable. And yet he *did* do that really flaky thing the other day . . . She'd finally persuaded him to read a Kate Atkinson, but he'd abandoned the novel on page 146 because he didn't like one minor character. Ridiculous, to get so far and then ditch it. Kate finds it impossible to abandon books, even bad ones – it feels disloyal; maybe the book will improve, maybe the time invested will ultimately not prove wasted.

Nick's action had bothered her disproportionately at the time. It spoke of a lack of perseverance, an ability to detach too readily. And now, if she looks at his behavioural patterns, his lack of long-term relationships, his refusal to attach to *people*, the whole Tom Brady fiasco – it makes sense, it's all the same thing and it's all his weird parents' fault!

No, no, no, no, no. Abandoning a book is not a crime, even if it is a Kate Atkinson, and it's in no way relevant to her current situation. She's being insane. They are happy, she profoundly believes in their mutual happiness because she has seen and felt it every day. Nick is stable, he is loyal – though perhaps more loyal to his telly than to her . . .

Now the tears are rolling sideways annoyingly into her ears. She mustn't cry, she's overreacting, they're happy, they're solid, this *will* be OK.

Kate's problems are now threefold: she worries that anything she says to Nick to point out his insanity will sound like she's begging. Second, an unfortunate part of

her psychological make-up means that her instinct is to run towards pain, rather than from it; Nick has hurt her, therefore Nick must mend her. And, finally, she knows she should be 'breezy' in order not to freak him out, but when her tears come they come in giant crashing waves.

The strength of her reaction takes them both by surprise. Of course she's devastated by what he said. She loves Nick. He makes her laugh every day, cooks chorizo burritos as midnight feasts, gets on with all her friends.

Something larger has been triggered, though. She's not good with sudden abandonment. She thinks this is due to the trauma of her father's death, though her mother thinks Kate should have reconciled herself to that loss twenty years ago.

But perhaps the reason this pain is so intense is more to do with her future than her past. It's taken thirty-nine years for Kate to find someone she loves this much – if Nick wants out, will she ever find love again?

It's unbearable being trapped here with him in the middle of nowhere. She hasn't smoked for years, she's not planning to start again, but she desperately needs a cigarette to make it through the next forty-eight hours; just one cigarette. She's heading out to the village that afternoon to buy a pack but at the front door Nick rushes over and insists on walking with her. He holds her hand there and back, and even brings up the plans for Pete's wedding. Is Nick pretending last night never happened?

She must tread softly, mustn't frighten him, but his confusion is making her insane. She gently asks whether he's expecting her to move in at some later stage, or whether last night was his cack-handed attempt at a break-up, but the minute she asks he shuts down again.

‘All I know is that for now I want to retreat.’

‘To your TV?’ she says in despair.

He looks at her forlornly.

If he thinks she’s going to try to compete with Triluminos, he can think again.

Anger turns to sadness, turns to pain, then back to shock, as the hours get longer and longer.

How can he just sit there on the next sun lounge doing his crossword, entirely oblivious?

She sits smoking her way through Friday’s second pack of Gauloises, feeling anger rise again. Still another twenty-two and a half hours before they can leave for the airport, and she’s supposed to just sit here pretending nothing’s wrong? The rage mixes with the smoke; she swallows both and chokes. Her cough makes Nick look up with a questioning smile.

‘Nicholas,’ she says, taking another deep drag. She mustn’t show anger – no, no anger, that’s *never* allowed. ‘I know you’re not experienced at relationships, but here’s some advice,’ she says, poking her cigarette at him. ‘You’re not meant to pull this *confused* crap on *holiday* . . .’ Oh no, a wave of sadness is rising in her throat, making her voice wobble; more tears are imminent.

He puts the crossword down, then reaches over and pats her shoulder that way he does that irritates her. It’s how you’d pat a dog if you were really more of a cat person. ‘It’s fine, Kate, please don’t be embarrassed. In fact, it’s great to see this sort of emotion. It’s not something I’ve ever seen before.’

She stares at him in dismay. Perhaps she’s been going out with a lifelike robot this whole entire time.

The day they're due to fly home, Kate wakes at 2 a.m. She is confused and in pain. Tiptoeing once more to Nick's room in the hope of discovering him perhaps standing at the window, mournful, his torment finally kicking in, her heart sinks as she sees him again fast asleep, his face untroubled.

But looking more closely, she sees he is hugging his pillow tightly, crushing it to his chest as though clinging on for dear life.