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Opening extract from

# Dear Dylan

Written by

**Siobhan Curham**

Published by

**Electric Monkey**

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## Praise for Dear Dylan

‘Tender, quirky and cool. Siobhan Curham is a name to watch’  
*Cathy Cassidy*

‘An absorbing, moving novel . . . I’m still thinking about the characters so much that I want check on them and see how things are going for them now!’ *Luisa Plaja, Chicklish*

‘A funny, moving, thought-provoking story about a very special friendship’ *Tabitha Suzuma*

‘Reminds us of the power of true friendships. A wonderful achievement’ *Booktrust*

‘A great, fast-paced read. All I can say is, “GO, GEORGIE!”’  
*Bookalicious Ramblings*

‘I didn’t want to leave these characters behind. A wonderful read full of laughs, tears and heart’ *Carrie’s YA Bookshelf*

‘Truly a diamond of a novel. Touching, funny and full of heart; I just couldn’t get enough’ *Lauren’s Crammed Bookshelf*

‘A story to lighten the soul. I laughed and cried and wanted more’ *Tales of a Ravenous Reader*

‘Fabulous . . . poignant . . . honest’ *The Sweet Bonjour*

‘Touching and emotional . . . really special’ *So Many Books, So Little Time*

‘Strong and realistic characters that people of all ages will relate to’ *A Life Bound By Books*

‘Keeps the reader captivated from start to finish. Intimate and honest . . . I loved it’ *I Was a Teenage Book Geek*

‘A very beautiful story. You’re going to love it’ *Darlyn and Books*

‘I really couldn’t put it down’ *Sarah’s Book Reviews*

‘A fab story’ *The Overflowing Library*



# Contents

Part One: E-Mates	9
Part Two: Ordinary Fool	57
Part Three: The Boy with the Sorrowful Smile	123
Part Four: Turning the Page	191
Part Five: The Show Goes On	251
Part Six: A New Chapter	299

**Part One**

**E-Mates**

**From: georgie \*harris@hotmail.com**

**To: info@dylancurtland.com**

**Date: Mon, 22 May 16:05**

**Subject: Love**

Dear Dylan,

Oh my God, this feels really weird, writing you an email as if I know you or something! But the thing is, I really feel as if I do know you. And – here goes – I love you. I know we haven't met or anything, but sometimes when I watch you in Jessop Close I feel as if you're talking just to me. I mean, I know you're not really talking just to me. I know there are 7.6 million other viewers you're talking to too. If I thought you were talking just to me, well, I'd be a bit of a weirdo mentalist (as my best friend Jessica R. Bailey would say) and I'm not a weirdo mentalist, honest. It's just that sometimes when you're arguing with your parents, or when you confide in Mark or Kez, the things you say, well, it's as if you're speaking my own private thoughts. Does that make sense? Probably not. But what I'm trying to say is that I understand. I know what it's like to be an outsider. And it's only when I watch you in Jessop Close and you say the things you do that I don't feel so completely alone.

Because at least I know that someone else out there feels the same way as me. I know you're an actor, and my absolute fave actor by the way. The other girls at school all love Jeremy Bridges but I'm sorry, he's just a snoron if you ask me. I think you ought to know that I like to make up new words. A snoron is a moron who is so boring he makes you want to snore. You are way more interesting than Jeremy Bridges and at least you aren't going out with a supermodel who thinks it's smart to get out of cars wearing no knickers when she knows there are going to be loads of photographers around. Just out of interest, are you going out with anyone right now? But anyway, as I was saying, I know you're an actor and the things you say are all part of a script, but it's the way you say them. You couldn't be that convincing if you didn't really understand what it felt like. Could you?

I hope I didn't shock you when I said that I loved you. It's just that I was watching Oprah this morning and she said that we should all tell each other we love each other a whole lot more. She said the world would be a much better place and there wouldn't be wars and terrorism and stuff if we did. We're not supposed to tell everyone of course, there is NO WAY I would tell my scummy stepdad that I loved him because that would be lying and I don't think Oprah would want that. I made a list of everyone I love on the back of my mum's shopping list. It goes like this:

Dylan Curtland aka you!

Michaela Roberts

Angelica Roberts

Jessica R. Bailey

Jeff Harris

Jessica R. Bailey has been my best friend since we met in junior school – we’re now in Year 9. The ‘R’ stands for Rebecca, and Jessica thinks it sounds dead sophisticated when people use their middle initials. My middle name is Olivia, so that makes me Georgie O. Harris, which makes me sound more like an Irish builder than a sophisticated person, but there you go. Michaela Roberts is my four-year-old sister and Angelica Roberts is my mum. She doesn’t like me calling her Angelica because she says it sounds like I’m not her daughter, but I usually call her it in my head. I love the way it sounds like a cross between ‘angel’ and ‘delicate’. It’s the perfect name for her. My dad (Jeff Harris) used to call her Angel, because that’s what she looks like, with snowy white skin and little rosebud cheeks and lips. But she’s really delicate too. And that’s the only thing I don’t love about her, the feeling that one day she might break into a million tiny pieces. You might have noticed that I said my dad ‘used’ to call her Angel. That’s because my dad is . . . well, he’s dead. But I still love him. I wish I had an email address for him like I do for you. That

would be so cool, wouldn't it? If heaven, or wherever we go when we die, had a website and everyone was given Hotmail accounts with instant messenger as soon as they got there. Then at least you could still talk to them after they'd gone. And they could give you advice and stuff and tell you not to worry and that everything was going to be chips. (That's what my dad used to say when he meant everything was going to be great because chips were his favourite thing in the whole world – apart from me and mum of course.)

I'm OK though, because I've still got Oprah and she gives some really frost-free advice. (Frost-free is my latest new word by the way. It means something really cool that comes with no crap, i.e. frost.) Anyway, Oprah is totally frost-free and so are you. I hope this email doesn't embarrass you. I just wanted to let you know:

I LOVE U!!!

And thank you for being so brilliant on Jessop Close. It's the only soap worth watching and that's all thanks to you.

Lots of love,

Georgie Harris – aged 14 (Juliet from 'Romeo and Juliet' was only 13, you know.)



**From: info@dylancurtland.com**  
**To: georgie \* harris@hotmail.com**  
**Date: Mon, 22 May 22:10**  
**Subject: Re: Love**

Hi there,

Many thanks for your email. I'm so glad you like my website. Please check out the 'LATEST' section for all of my latest news. Hope you have a great summer and thanks for your support.

Dylan x

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**From: georgie \* harris@hotmail.com**  
**To: info@dylancurtland.com**  
**Date: Wed, 24 May 16:07**  
**Subject: Thank you!!**

Dear Dylan,

OMG! I can't believe I've got an email from you – and you replied so quickly as well. I thought you would have been

really busy learning lines or rehearsing or filming or something. Thank you sooooo much for getting back to me straight away and I'm sorry for taking two days to get back to you, but I don't have a computer of my own at home. I only get to go online when I go to the library, and my mum wouldn't let me go to the library after school yesterday because I had to look after my kid sister Michaela. (My mum used to be a big George Michael fan by the way – even the fact that she had two girls didn't put her off naming us after him!)

I was interested that you said you were glad I liked your website. I just checked my sent mail and I didn't actually say anything about your website. Although of course I do love it and think it is totally frost-free! Especially the picture of you sitting on that gate looking out to sea, you look so thoughtful. Never mind, I guess you get loads of emails so it must be easy to get them muddled up. I was the one who said I loved you, in case you've forgotten. It's a bit embarrassing thinking about that now. I hope you don't think I'm a weirdo mentalist?! It's just that the day I sent it I was trying really hard to turn over a new leaf. My stepdad Tone (most people think his name's short for Tony but I think it's short for tone deaf – the way he sings he makes a drill sound musical!) had said that I was a spiteful brat because I'd made Michaela cry. (Michaela is my half kid

sister. She isn't half a kid, she's four now so she is a full kid, believe me, but we don't have the same dad so she's only half my sister.) Anyway I didn't make her cry on purpose. I just wanted my scissors back. I'd never be spiteful to Michaela, she's way too cute, but I suppose I could be a bit more loving, especially when I get a black cloud on (as my dad used to say). So when Oprah said . . . well anyway, I'm the person who told you she loved you and your acting and, even though I didn't write it, I love your website too. I've signed up to your mailing list and I will definitely check out your LATEST section for all your latest news.

Can't wait to see you in Jessop Close tonight – as long as Tone-Deaf lets me watch it. I've got a horrible feeling there's a football match on the other side. Thanks again for the email. I still can't believe you replied to me. That the same fingers that tried to strangle Bridget Randall in Monday night's episode – she so deserved it, the lying cow – actually typed an email to me! I will NEVER empty my inbox again!

Lots of love,  
Georgie xxx

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**From: georgie \*harris@hotmail.com**

**To: info@dylancurtland.com**

**Date: Wed, 7 June 15:50**

**Subject: URGENT!!!**

Dear Dylan,

I know you must be really busy but please, PLEASE can you tell me that the rumours aren't true. Please tell me you aren't leaving Jessop Close. I don't know what I'd do if that happened.

Lots of love,  
Georgie xxx

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**From: info@dylancurtland.com**

**To: georgie \*harris@hotmail.com**

**Date: Thur, 15 June 10:22**

**Subject: Leaving Jessop Close**

Hi there,

As you may have read in the press, I have decided to leave Jessop Close. Having spent five extremely enjoyable years

there, I feel the time is right for me to move on. After recent storylines I feel there is nowhere left to take the character of Jimmy, and I now look forward to exploring other characters both on stage and screen. I am hugely grateful to the production team at Jessop Close for the opportunity they have given me; I couldn't have wished for a better start to my acting career. Thank you so much to you too for your support, and please continue to visit my website to find out details of my new acting projects.

Dylan x

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**From: georgie\* harris@hotmail.com**

**To: info@dylancurtland.com**

**Date: Thur, 15 June 16:55**

**Subject: Re: Leaving Jessop Close**

Dear Dylan,

Oh no!!! I can't believe you're leaving the Close. This is going to sound really corny – especially after my previous confessions of love – but I actually cried when I found out! I'm crying now too, which is slightly embarrassing as I'm

using a computer in the library and this gross man with yellow teeth and a greasy anorak sitting at the PC next to me keeps staring and muttering something under his breath that sounds like, ‘Gimmee crumpets, gimmee crumpets’!

I actually knew the terrible news before I got your email – thanks so much for your email by the way – because I saw the story in Tone-Deaf’s paper last night, and as soon as I saw the headline ‘CURTAINS FOR CURTLAND!’ I knew something bad had happened. Are they really going to kill you off? Can’t you get them to just put you in a coma or something? Then at least you could come back. Maybe they could get you to bang your head on one of the machines in the slaughterhouse? Or have a motorbike accident on the corner of the Close – it looks like a really busy junction – and just be in hospital for a while? I know you aren’t really dying, but the thing is, you will be to me because I only get to see you in Jessop Close. Once you leave there you’ll be gone from my life forever.

Tone-Deaf really took the piss when he saw me crying last night. Sorry – I know you said in that interview in Bliss that you don’t like girls who swear, but Tone-Deaf could make a nun swear, trust me! He said I was a baby and Michaela was more grown up than me. Hmm, Michaela, the one who thinks that tooth fairies live up electricity pylons and

babies are delivered by storks. Actually, I wish I still believed that last one – anything would be better than thinking of my mum doing it with him! He just doesn't understand what it's like to be heartbroken. He doesn't understand anything unless it's got odds attached to it. If he's not out driving his cab he's in his second home – the bookies. Well, the odds of me being happy now have been slashed to 1,000,000 – 1. (That means it's so unlikely, there's more chance of the crumpet-muttering creep next to me having a shower!) The worst thing is I'm not even going to be able to watch you tonight because my mum isn't feeling too good, and when my mum gets sick I have to stay in my bedroom. Actually I don't have to stay there but it's a lot easier if I do. Oh well, I'm sure you don't want to hear about that. At least I have your email – another one to save forever in my inbox. And don't worry, I will be checking out the LATEST section on your website every day for details of your new work. Good luck Dylan, and if you ever get the time please do email me again.

Loads of love and support,  
Georgie xxx

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**From: georgie\*harris@hotmail.com**

**To: info@dylancurtland.com**

**Date: Thur, 6 July 16:07**

**Subject: OMG!!**

Dear Dylan,

I cannot believe they electrocuted you!! I mean, of all the ways they could have killed you why did they have to choose that? And on a toaster!! For a start your character NEVER has toast for breakfast – you always grab an apple from the fruit bowl before heading off to the slaughterhouse, don't you? And secondly, would anyone really make toast while holding an open carton of juice over the toaster and standing on a wet floor? I mean, hello? The continuity people on Jessop Close really need to get their act together. I got a book called Television Drama for Dummies out of the library the other day, and I now know all about continuity and the importance of it. I've decided that one day I'd like to be an actor too – as soon as I escape the hellhole that is Ruislip Gardens High School. It must be great being an actor and getting to pretend to be someone completely different. How amazing to be able to slip into another life like you're trying on a new outfit or something. I'd give anything to slip into a different life. The trouble is, I don't think I'd want to come back. Well, maybe I would



eventually because I'd get worried about my mum and Michaela, but to be someone else for a few hours would be great. But maybe not so great if the scriptwriter decided to electrocute you on a toaster! I wish I had the email addresses for the continuity person and the scriptwriter on Jessop Close. There were so many other ways they could have killed you that would have been way more 'consistent with the previous scene's action' (Television Drama for Dummies). Like coming off your motorbike or falling into the canal or even getting electrocuted by a stun gun in the slaughterhouse. Not that I want you to die of course. As I said to you in my previous email – did you get my previous email? – I feel as if you have died in real life now and I don't know what I'm going to do without having you to watch three times a week. I have made a compilation DVD of your last episodes though. Although I don't think I'll be watching the dreaded 'death by toaster' scene ever again! Can't believe they made your hair stand on end like that, and how did they get all that frothy stuff to come out of your mouth?!!

Anyway, I just wanted you to know that I'm already missing you and I hope you get a new part somewhere soon.

Lots of love,  
Your heartbroken fan,  
Georgie xxx

**From: info@dylancurtland.com**  
**To: georgie \* harris@hotmail.com**  
**Date: Mon, 10 July 11:08**  
**Subject: Film Deal**

Hi there,

Well, as some of you may have heard, I have been offered my first role in a Hollywood film, and I'm off to LA at the end of the week. Although it is only a minor role I am so excited to have been given this opportunity, and so soon after leaving Jessop Close. The film is the heart-warming true story of a Californian surfer who almost loses his life following a near-fatal jellyfish sting. I play the guy's younger teammate and companion, Chip Daley. I am really looking forward to getting my teeth into the part, and will try to keep you up to date with developments via my website.

Thanks for your continued support and 'have a nice day!'  
Dylan x

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**From: georgie\*harris@hotmail.com**

**To: info@dylancurtland.com**

**Date: Mon, 10 July 16:11**

**Subject: Re: Film Deal**

Dear Dylan,

Am in the library after school and just got your email. My bf Jessica R. Bailey is here too and when I squealed with delight at seeing your new mail in my inbox she came running over (from the health and diet section where she was busy investigating the Zodiac Diet), so I showed her your mail. I thought she'd be really impressed, but she just started laughing. She reckons you haven't been sending the emails at all – she says they're all sent out automatically from your website. I must admit your last email did seem to be addressed to a group of people, like when you say, 'some of you might have heard . . .' but when I showed Jessica your other emails she said they were all automatic emails too. I can't believe that is true. Surely you replied to my first emails personally – didn't you?

Jessica is back in the health section now. If you could see her you'd think she was insane. She's dead skinny but she's always on some diet or other. She says it's preparation for her future modelling career. Personally I couldn't live

without food. Well, I guess none of us could live without food, could we, but you know what I mean. How can anyone choose to just eat crab sticks for lunch? Jessica is a Cancer, and Edward Van Trussel, the founder of the Zodiac Diet, says we should all eat food linked to our star signs. To be honest, I think it's a load of old bull and that isn't just because I'm a Taurus! I saw from your birth date on your website that you are an Aquarian and Aquarius is a water carrier, so what are you supposed to live off? A big jug of water? Seriously, how can Jessica believe that rubbish? Her brain is probably in the first stages of starvation. It's probably starting to eat itself it's so hungry! I really shouldn't believe a word she says. So I'm going to continue to believe that you did write me those other emails. Maybe you could send me a more personal reply next time though, so I can prove to Jessica that it is really you and you really are writing to me personally?

Anyway, got to go. My mum said I had to be back by 4.30 because she wants me to take Michaela to the park. Good luck with the film! You must be so excited. It feels weird thinking of you all the way over in America. Thank goodness we still have email to keep in touch.

Lots of love,  
Georgie xxx