

Plane Guy

I board my flight right when group 8 is called and make my way to my seat, B28. As I shuffle down the aisle, I realize that my bright-pink-LL-Bean-embroidered-initials bag is too big for the upper head stowaways, and I probably shouldn't have made it through security. So I decide, against any type of classiness left in my will, to attempt to shove it under the seat next to B28. Because what are the chances someone is actually going to sit there, this flight is barely half full. Plus, the row next to me is open, so if someone wants to sit where I shoved my luggage they can just sit in the row across from me— it's totally fine.

After finally shoving my pink bag into a kind of secure spot below the seat next to B28, I throw my Free People Movement puffy black bag— also overstuffed— in the seat next to me. I sink into my seat, close my eyes, and think about how finally, I've made it. I'm going to a new city, have a great new job, and am being like the 20s-person I used to think about becoming when I was 12. Period. I feel like this is the chapter when—

“Wow you really saved my seat for me well, I was worried someone would take it,” I open my eyes to see a tall, semi-muscular, tan man with brown twinkly eyes and curly dark brown chestnut hair looking down on me with a smirk. His hair is slightly overgrown and tucked under a Boston baseball cap. Ugh I hate men. I'm going to have to choose between sitting next to a gorgeous human and somehow un-wedging my LL Bean bag from under the seat next to me and squeezing it into the stowaway above.

It's at this point when I realize I've just been thinking all of this to myself and am making a bit of a growly face at him, because he takes a step back and says, “All jokes” as if he thinks I am offended. I realize that I should probably answer with something witty, but I'm way too tired with all of the moving drama I've been having to come up with anything remotely comical, so

instead I just ignore his comments all together and say, “you could sit over in that row since my luggage is already here, and then that way you’d get the row all to yourself.”

He looks a bit offended, but doesn’t say anything, half rolls his eyes, and sits down in the row across from me. Phew— out of that one. Thank goodness I don’t have to be entertaining and funny for the next 2 hours. Now I can just refer to him as Plane Guy and don’t have to learn his name and yada yada whatnot. I want nothing more than to have my row with my luggage and eat my snacks I got at the airport concession store right before boarding. Extra Cheddar Cheez-its incoming.

Just as I begin to get back into my groove in B28, the flight attendant comes and taps my shoulder and plane guy’s shoulder simultaneously. “Excuse me,” she says like a Karen, “you guys are supposed to be seated in A & B28. You’re seated in B28 & D28. Rearrange yourselves. We have a mother and child running late who are supposed to be in this exact row you’re taking up.”

“Yes ma’am,” Plane Guy says as he gets up and makes his way out of the row across from me toward my row. UGH. Now I’m going to have to figure out where to put my huge-ass overstuffed LL Bean bag. And I’m going to sit next to someone I’ve almost unintentionally growled at for the next 2 hours.

As Plane Guy is standing up, I reluctantly get up to yank my bag out from under my seat. I bend down to yank my bag out, and just as it’s coming undone and I get it loose, I accidentally tip back and fall into Plane Guy, whipping my bag up onto the plane ceiling and hitting some alarm button. My energy I was using to bring my bag out also brings Plane Guy to the floor, with me toppling and falling right on top of him.

Immediately I move to stand up and say nothing, because this is the most embarrassing experience I've had on a plane to date. As my mind is spiraling, his hands steady my hips as I stand up, and for a moment I lose any train of thought. Whoa. But then I remember my spiral conclusion— this is embarrassing. Avoid talking to him for the remainder of the flight.

I walk down the aisle and lug my LL Bean bag back to the non-Karen flight attendant and she sets it in the back since there is no space on the plane. When I walk back to my seat, Plane Guy is all situated in the window seat, looking out at the sunset that is honestly kind of blinding and not super visible. I sit down, immediately put in my AirPods, and fall asleep for the entire flight. When I wake up once we've landed, I find my left leg pressed against Plane Guy's right leg, OOPS. I immediately move it over and pretend not to notice.

Once he notices I'm awake, he reaches out a hand as if to introduce himself, but I simply have embarrassed myself too much to even know his name, along with the fact that he is difficult. I pretend not to notice, avoid eye contact, get up & get my luggage, then book it out of the airport. Thank goodness I don't have to see him ever again.

Monday Morning

I step out of my 2018 white Ford Escape in a head to toe new Abercrombie outfit for my new job and enter the building. It's just as antique and unique as I had read about online. The corporate office is in a huge, 1950s built and renovated home that feels every bit historic Boston homage as it does Southern charm. It's perfect for me. I ask the receptionist where I should go, and she walks me to the conference room.

“Dean Miller, your new boss, is already sitting in the conference room with the other new analyst,” the receptionist tells me as she opens the door for me to enter. As I walk in, Dean greets me with a big smile and gets up to shake my hand. I shake his hand, focusing on giving a firm

handshake without suffocating the air out of his finger tips. He turns his gaze to my right and introduces me to the other new analyst, Will Correo. I turn my gaze to introduce myself, and as I make eye contact, my heart drops.

This is Plane Guy.