

**BEFORE WE DEPART**

by

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## BEFORE WE DEPART

SETTING — Three adjacent seats on an airplane.

CHARACTERS — DAD, MOM, and CHILD.

AT RISE — The plane is still on the ground. It has been there a while, and everyone is getting restless. After a moment...

DAD

(finally snaps)

This plane is taking so long to leave that I'm beginning to worry I'm actually dead, and this is purgatory.

MOM

(wry)

Could be. I mean... how would you know?

DAD

It would feel an awful lot like this. That would be one clue.

CHILD

I'm borrrrrred.

DAD

We all are, honey. Ask Mommy to tell you a story.

CHILD

Yeah!!

MOM

Oh, thanks.

(thinking)

Okay, um... Once upon a time, there was this spoiled girl who wasn't yet twenty-one, and when the bouncer refused to accept her fake ID, she shouted "Just give me a wrist band!!"

DAD

Um...?

MOM

What?

DAD

Maybe more castles and ponies, less underage drinking?

MOM

Would you like to tell her a story?

DAD

Nope! You're doing great.

DAD closes eyes and tries to sleep, but reacts to the following.

MOM

Anyway, because she was being such a brat, everyone in line started punching and kicking her. I mean, really just whaling on this poor girl, who deserved it anyway, so let's not feel too bad for her, okay?

CHILD

Okay.

DAD

Jesus!

MOM

What?

DAD

"What"?? What is wrong with you!

CHILD

Some of us are just here for the violence, Daddy.

DAD, thoroughly rattled by this, can only look on in horror as MOM continues.

MOM

Thank you, honey. After a few minutes, she looked like she had been beaten by a bag of wooden nickels.

CHILD

We learned about wooden nickels in school. You're not supposed to take any of those.

MOM

Well she certainly did—she took 'em all, repeatedly. To the face.

CHILD

Yeah!

MOM

That's when they ran out of steam. The bouncer, being so impressed with how well she took her beating, gave her the bracelet she so badly wanted, and a voucher for a free drink of her choice.

CHILD

Yaaaaay!

MOM

So she drank alllllll night and didn't even have a hangover the next day, because young people can do that.

CHILD

Like me?

MOM

Probably! Let's find out when the flight attendant comes by.

CHILD

Great story, Mommy! I like Mommy's stories best!

MOM

(to DAD)

How does Daddy like them?

DAD

(realizing)

I did die, and I am in purgatory.

MOM

Nope.

DAD

I stole a pen from work one time, and—

MOM

Think bigger.

DAD

I'm complicit in a morally corrupt society that favors the privilege of a few over basic human rights for all?

MOM

Bigger.

DAD

I... "manspread" on the subway??

MOM

YOU MANSREAD ON THE SUBWAY. Or, you did.

DAD

What...?

MOM

This isn't purgatory.

CHILD  
(very excited)  
It's hell!

**END OF PLAY.**