

The Worst Class Trip Ever

By Dave Berry

I was in a middle seat next to Matt Diaz, who had a window seat on the left side of the plane. On my other side, unfortunately, was Cameron “Gas Attack” Frank. Suzana was two rows behind me with two of her friends. In the row between us were an old lady two guys, probably in their thirties. One of them was short, with really long stringy hair that looked like seaweed, wearing sunglasses and a backpack and purple Crocs, which you don’t usually see on a grown man. He had the window seat behind Matt. The other one was very big and very bald. He was wearing a black T-shirt, and he had huge arms with some kind of snakes tattooed on them. He was carrying a long black duffel bag, which he spent like five minutes trying to stuff in to the overhead luggage space, holding up all the people trying to get to their seats. Finally one of the flight attendants, who was eighty million years old and probably was a flight attendant for the Wright brothers, came back and told the bald guy he would have to check his bag.

“No! he said, like really angry. “It will fit!” He had some kind of accent, but not Spanish. He pushed the bag really hard and got it to go in. The flight attendant gave him a look, but didn’t say anything. He looked like a guy you didn’t want to get any more upset than he already was.

Which is exactly what my friend Matt, who I believe I already mentioned can be an idiot, proceeded to do. He pointed up at the luggage compartment and said—to loud, as usual—“What do you think he has in that bag? A missile?”

The big guy heard this. He looked down at Matt like he was about to pick him up by the neck and stuff him into the overhead space, which this guy was definitely big enough to do. The shorter guy with the sunglasses said something to him, and he sat down.

“Jeez,” said Matt, still too loud. “Maybe it *is* a missile.”

“Will you shut *up*?” I said, but it was too late: We looked back, and the big guy was leaning forward, his head almost in our row, glaring at Matt, for like ten seconds, just leaning over us and *staring*. He was really close, and he looked a little crazy, and I’ll be honest: I was scared. Then the little guy said something again, and the big guy sat back. Matt and I looked at each other, like *whoa*, but even Matt wasn’t stupid enough to say anything else.

When the plane was loaded the same flight attendant came down the aisle checking things, and she told the little guy he couldn’t hold his backpack in his lap.

He said, “I need to hold it.”

“I’m sorry, sir,” she said, not sounding sorry. “You can’t hold it during takeoff or landing.”

“Is very important.”

“You can hold it after we take off. Right now it has to go in the overhead.” She reached for the backpack.

“No!” said the little guy, pulling it away.

“All right,” she said, “then you’ll have to put it under the seat in front of you.”

“I am not comfortable doing that.”

“*Sir,*” said the flight attendant, “you *cannot* have that in your lap. Either you stow it now, or you’ll have to get off the plane.”

This time the big guy said something quietly to the little guy, in what I think was a foreign language. The little guy sighed and stuck the backpack under the seat in front of him, which was the seat that Matt was sitting in. The flight attendant gave the little guy a look and walked away.

Matt leaned over to me. “What do you think’s in the backpack?” he said—whispering, fortunately.

“How would I know?” I said.

“You think it’s a bomb?”

“No!”

“Why not?”

“Because, moron, he had to go through security.”

“Well, then what is it? Why’s he acting so weird? Him and his friend with the missile...”

“It’s not a missile!” I said, too loud—that’s the kind of thing Matt makes you do—and all of a sudden I realized the big guy was leaning forward and glaring at us again, so I shut up. We stayed quiet during the safety lecture where they show you how to fasten your seat belt and tell you that your seat cushion floats, which I’m sure would be really helpful if the plane actually crashed in to the ocean at five hundred miles an hour.