

Introduction

I used to say there are those in the closet, and there are those in the closet under mounds of old sweaters and dirty laundry. But sometimes, there are those in the closet, who want to come out, but just can't find the door. A door can be a very scary thing to open alone.

I used to hide in the closet when I was small. My family had a linen closet at the top of the stairs next to the bathroom. I could squeeze myself up on the third shelf, if there weren't too many towels. Nobody ever found me there. It was the best spot to hide. I used to hide there a lot when my parents were fighting, or when I just wanted to be left alone. I could shut the door, curl up with the towels, and disappear.

There are a few downsides to closets though. No one can find you, but no one can hear you cry either. Sooner or later you have to turn on the light, open the door and come out. This is my closet door opening and I'm coming out screaming.

Squinted her Eyes Open

The plane began to take off. Nice empty flight. Everyone had a row to themselves. Shaking back and forth, and up and down it seemed like it would never get off the ground. She closed her eyes for a moment and crossed her fingers. As she felt her body pressed into her seat, she squinted her eyes open to see the plane was already well above the ground. She loved the small propeller driven commuter planes. Once in the air her eyes were glued to the window watching the constant change of shapes and sizes on the ground. She wondered what the story was in each house. Town after town passed under her. There were many little houses all getting smaller and smaller. Again she questioned, what is their story? Who is the town hero? What is the town scandal? But as the towns got smaller and the houses turned into merely little spots of ink against the graying white canvas, the whisper of stories and scandals all seemed to fade and disappear

The plane's wing dipped towards the ground superimposing a darkness on her side of the plane. Light began to shine through the windows across the aisle. The plane was turning.

The stewardess came around with drinks and snacks. She moved her attention to the other passengers on the plane. Could any of them be running away from a scandal in one of the little towns near the airport she just passed over? Did some also feel the pain and frustration begin to fade and disappear with the distance? As she looked about the cabin, there in the back was a girl scribbling on a note pad. She had green-blue hair. Now there was a story.

Florida's Finest

"Coffee please." The stewardess smiled. "Would you like some juice too, this flight is pretty empty and we have extra drinks." "Sure."

She pulled out her notebook and began a character sketch. Now what did her book say? She thumbed to the page marked with a sticky note.

"A character sketch is a word outline" blah blah. "Take your writer's notebook to a public place and use the categories from the chart on the next page" blah blah. "Height, weight, sex, hair, dress, body, shoes, face, mouth, poses, build, age," what a long list.

Ok, basically make an outline of physical characteristics, note their possessions, and then make up shit about motive and a background. She wrote down on one side of the page the list from the book. Hair green. She couldn't see her too well, but she did notice she had a notebook too. However the green haired girl's was a smaller flip kind. After wrestling with her full sized notebook on the little tray table with two drinks for the next few minutes she thought maybe the green haired girl had a good idea. A little flip-book would have been easier.

She turned back around again trying to notice as much as she could with short glances. Only the top of her head and part of the tray table was visible. Good thing the green one was in an aisle seat. She has greenish blue hair with dark roots, fairly curly, and short. Height, ugh , no idea, she was sitting down. Ok, relax and concentrate. She sat higher in the seat than the person in front of her. She guessed she was probably fairly tall jotting down 5'7."

"Damn-it! Damn-it! Damn-it!" The man sitting directly in front of her, yelled. He was jerking around violently. She thought he was going to shake her tray table spilling her coffee, all over her notebook. "DAMN-ITDAMN-ITDAMN-IT!" He burst out again as if it was one long word. The stewardess came back and started to assist him. He yelled at her for opening his can of Orange Juice. Apparently he thought it was still closed and started shaking it, spilling OJ all over his suit. Again, "Damn-it, Damn-it, Damn-it! Followed by more violent squirming in his seat.

She quickly moved her coffee and juice over to the other tray table. Just as she placed the drinks down, he wrestled himself out of the seat, making her tray table pop up. Phew! Her drinks could be in her lap right now.

The man waddled his way up to the front of the little plane. He was an older man, with graying hair, to match his graying suit. He wore a pair of distressed wing tips, a power tie, and thick rimmed glasses, all decorated with drops of Florida's finest.

Just like to Pretend

Mr. Power-tie and wingtips stood at the front of the plane and ordered the stewardess to give him a Canada Dry Seltzer. Every spot on his suit and shirt was addressed.

He asked the stewardess if he could move to a different seat. She of course agreed.

He gathered up his newspaper, and headed toward the back of the plane, stopping in front of the green-haired girl. He carefully set his things down and looked over the seat at her grumbling, "Since when do they open the cans for you?"

She didn't seem to hear him. He of course repeated himself, not wishing to be ignored. The girl calmly lifted her head from her notebook. In a surprisingly deep voice she replied "On every flight I've ever been on." You could hear muffled laughter rise up from the other seats. He hesitated then added, "How often, do you, fly anyway?" Just as calm as before she again lifted her head from her writing, "About three times a year. I fly into Boston to meet my publisher." He gasped with contempt. "You? You're a writer?"

"No, I just like to pretend I'm one whenever I fly." Her deep voice sounded calming with just a hint of sarcasm. The green one looked back down at her notebook and continued writing.

After this exchange between the calm green one and the grumpy businessman she flipped through her own notebook. Was the green one really a writer? She's not going to be if she doesn't at least finish a character study. This constant looking back was not working. Ok, time to move on to motive, and background details. Motive? Motive for what? Dying her hair green?

She had to get more of the chart filled out first before motive. Green hair and 5'7" wasn't much to base a character on. Pretending to be getting something from under the seat, she looked back. The green one had a backpack under the seat in front of her with the initials J.I.M. She wore chunky black shoes stained with salt. Her socks didn't match; one red, one blue.

She sat up in the chair and made her notes. What could be the motive for wearing two different color socks? Maybe she got dressed in a hurry this morning to catch the plane or maybe she's colorblind?

Ok, a few more glances back. Her pants were dark gray, cargo style. She wore a T-shirt with the Ani DiFranco Righteous Babe Records' logo and underneath a black long john shirt.

Second glance revealed the green one was handed, and as she ran her right hand through her green mop her ring finger, and a thumb had silver bands. The green one never looked up from her notebook, only paused occasionally to sip her coffee.

This was getting too interesting and she wanted to see more. She could only see about a third of her face and nothing of the empty seat her? Most people on the plane had a paper or magazine on the extra seat. It's time for a walk to the back of the plane, just to stretch her legs.

You're the Writer

As she stood up she noticed the green one had coffee and juice just like her on the table next to her. As she moved closer she could see a copy of the travel section of the newspaper, half a pack of gum, a few pages ripped from the notebook neatly folded in half, an extra bag of peanuts and 3 cheap plastic mechanical pencils on the seat next to her. She must have paused too long because the green one looked up.

She had green eyes, fair skin, and looked smaller in the seat than she expected. They held stares for just a moment and the plane began to shake tossing her into the green one's lap.

"Oh, sorry! Oh-my-god! Oh shit!" The green one's low voice boomed out, "Damn-it, damn-it, damn-it!" Laughter filled the cabin again. As she steadied herself and stood up, the green one smiled and said, "If you're trying to write a character sketch, it might be easier if you sat across the aisle from me."

She turned red, and blurted, “thank you, my name is Carrie.” The green one ripped out a few pages from her notebook and grabbed a pencil. She turned to Carrie, “Here you’ll need these.”

Carrie nervously looked up accepting the paper and pencil. “Excuse me; I didn’t catch your name?”

“You’re the writer. You tell me.”

Carrie sat down and picked up her pencil. She leaned forward and began to write.

Deep

I was always called Jim, not sure how it started but it stuck. I was the typical tomboy. Everyone criticized me about the way I dressed, walked, and my mannerisms. My personal favorite, “What’s up with that voice?”