

VACANT

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The sign on the bathroom door reads: VACANT

INT. GATE - AIRPORT - DAY

FLORENCE (25), bags under her eyes, her hair in a messy bun, no makeup, lines up at the gate. She carries only a backpack. With a shower and some sleep, she'd be turning heads.

She glances at the gate information screen, which now reads: 6:13 AM. Boarding flight 997 from ABQ to JFK.

Florence hands her boarding pass to a gate agent, and as she crosses the gate, PARIS (29), as if straight from a cocktail party, the booze keeping her awake, her makeup smudged, runs hectically towards them, dragging multiple pieces of designer luggage.

PARIS
(shouting)
Wait, please!

Paris reaches the gate, panting, and rummages through her purse, backpack and carry on for her ticket.

INT. TUNNEL - AIRPORT - DAY

Florence reaches the end of the cue to board the plane. Paris lines up behind her.

PARIS
(exhales)
I swear to God I would've killed
myself if I had to stay another day
in this shit-hole.

Florence smiles awkwardly and looks away.

Paris eyes her, measuring her up.

INT. COACH - AIRPLANE - DAY

The line clears and Florence takes a seat between TWO LARGE MEN at the front row of Economy Plus. She rests her backpack on her lap.

Paris struggles with her luggage. The male STERN FLIGHT ATTENDANT (28) assists her. She laughs and apologizes flirtatiously as she takes her First Class seat, a couple of rows in front of Florence's Economy Plus.

Their eyes meet. Paris smiles and grimaces knowingly. Florence laughs under her breath.

Paris signals her to take the empty seat beside her. Florence shakes her head, but Paris insists frantically.

Florence eyes the flight attendant; he is busy closing the door. She glances at the now snoring man beside her, and unbuckles her seatbelt.

INT. FIRST CLASS - AIRPLANE - DAY

She hurriedly joins Paris, laughing nervously, as the flight attendant passes by, does a double take at them, but moves along when Paris winks at him.

FLORENCE
(gaping)
How?

PARIS
Oh, honey, and I'm still fully
dressed.

Florence, amused, takes in the comfort of First Class. Paris observes her, moved by her innocence. Florence notices she is being watched.

FLORENCE
(softly)
Thank you.

PARIS
Are you kidding? You could've died.

Florence processes the thought.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Paris.

FLORENCE
Oh, no; New York for me.

PARIS
That's my name, honey.

Florence sees Paris has her hand extended; she takes it.

FLORENCE
Oh, God, sorry. Florence.

Paris widens her eyes, thrilled.

PARIS
Florence! Like the city!

Florence shrugs.

PARIS (CONT'D)
This is exciting! We're both flight destinations!

INT. FIRST CLASS - AIRPLANE - DAY

Florence jerks awake with a gasp. Paris laughs.

PARIS
Morning, babe. Breakfast!

She opens small bottle of vodka and pours it in both their orange juice. Paris hands her one, and Florence, unaware, takes a sip, which she almost spits out.

Paris shushes her and tilts Florence's cup to her mouth. Florence shudders and Paris finishes hers in one sip.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Ain't that a beauty?

Paris sees Florence is still in shock.

PARIS (CONT'D)
It's five o' clock somewhere, babe.

She pours them both another glass.

PARIS (CONT'D)
What brings you to the Big Apple?

FLORENCE
Uh -- I live there.

PARIS
Thank God. Could you imagine living in there? I dunno how my dad does it. I wish he'd move literally anywhere, but he loves it. He rarely comes up to see me in the city; it's always me flying down.
(drinks)
(MORE)

PARIS (CONT'D)
What about you? Were you visiting
your parents as well?

FLORENCE
Yeah, me too.

PARIS
Then here's to our awesome parents
and their baby-naming skills.

Paris raises her glass and clinks it with Florence's. They
drink, Florence grimacing at the harsh taste.

PARIS (CONT'D)
You're cute. Boyfriend?

Florence shakes her head.

PARIS (CONT'D)
(raising an eyebrow)
Girlfriend?

FLORENCE
No, no!

PARIS
Well, you never know.
(pause)
Sometimes I wish I liked women.

Florence laughs nervously. She extends her glass. Paris,
surprised, grins and serves her another.

PILOT (V.O.)
(filtered through intercom)
Attention passengers, this is your
captain speaking. I am afraid
there's has been a minor incident
regarding a small aircraft on the
landing strip at JFK. We are being
redirected to land at Lehigh Valley
in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania until we
are cleared to land at our
destination. We apologies for this
delay...

PARIS
FUCK ME!

People stare at her. Florence looks around, and sinks into
her seat.

INT. TERMINAL - PENN. AIRPORT - DAY

Paris and Florence are sitting on the floor in a corner by themselves with their bags beside them. The alcohol has kicked in. At least for Florence, anyway.

FLORENCE
I never had a sister.

PARIS
Oh, babe, now you have me.

Florence hugs her. Paris, suddenly uncomfortable, awkwardly pats her on the back. They break apart.

FLORENCE
You are so hot.

PARIS
I know, baby, I know.

Florence reaches in to hug her again, but Paris stops her.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Oh my God, Florence. Do you even know what deodorant is?

She reaches into her purse and fumbles around. She picks a bottle of PERFUME and sprays some on Florence.

FLORENCE
(dreamy)
Smells so nice --

Paris sprays some into Florence's mouth as well, who coughs.

PARIS
There, there.

They lay back on the wall, and sit in silence for a moment. Paris takes a new bottle and opens it. She drinks more vodka, straight from the bottle. Florence stares into the abyss, pensive.

PARIS (CONT'D)
So, Florence: only child, nerd, too good for both men and women. What am I missing?

FLORENCE
Someone who gives a shit.

Florence becomes stern. Paris looks at her, intrigued.

PARIS
About what, you?

Florence shrugs. Paris squints.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Tell me about your family.

Florence shifts uncomfortably.

FLORENCE
(coldly)
I'd rather not.

Paris is taken aback. They sit in silence awkwardly.

PARIS
I don't mean to pry --

FLORENCE
Some of us don't have a daddy to
buy us first class flights, okay?

The flight attendant interrupts from the gate desk.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(filtered over intercom)
Attention, passengers. We may now
commence boarding the plane...

Paris, slightly annoyed, reaches for Florence's glass.

PARIS
I think you've had enough.

Florence tightens her grip, and amidst the struggle chucks the drink in Paris' face, who gasps, her hair dripping with vodka, her makeup ruined, her blouse stained.

Paris stands up and takes her things. Florence starts to calm down, realizing what she has done.

FLORENCE
Shit, Paris, I'm sorry --

Paris raises one hand to silence Florence.

PARIS
Don't, okay? All I've done is be
nice to you. It's no wonder no one
gives a shit about you.

She walks away. Florence stands after a moment and follows, leaving behind her BACKPACK on the floor.

INT. FIRST CLASS - AIRPLANE - DAY

Florence boards the plane last and walks down the aisle. She passes Paris, who doesn't even look at her. She sighs and heads to her original seat.

INT. COACH - AIRPLANE - DAY

Florence sits between the two large men.

She closes her eyes, pulls back tears, and drifts off to sleep...

MATCH CUT TO:

FLORENCE'S EYES

She bolts awake. She looks around, and sees Paris watching a film.

She bites her lip, and gets up from her seat.

INT. FIRST CLASS - AIRPLANE - DAY

Florence approaches Paris hesitantly.

FLORENCE

Paris?

Paris ignores her. Florence waves a hand in her line of sight. Paris looks at her and takes off her headphones.

PARIS

What, Florence?

FLORENCE

I had no right to say that. I'm sorry.

(bites her lip)

I'm an idiot.

PARIS

That you are.

Florence exhales. The flight attendant sees her, and noticing Paris' discomfort, approaches them.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(to Florence)

Ma'am, you can't be here. Please return to your seat.

Florence looks disbelievingly at Paris, who remains silent. She exhales and leaves.

INT. COACH - AIRPLANE - DAY

Florence sits back down. After a moment, she reaches for her bag under her seat. It's not there.

She unbuckles her seatbelt and starts looking around frantically, mumbling.

She opens the overhead compartment and a small bag falls onto the PASSENGER next to her.

FLORENCE
(absentmindedly)
Sorry... Where is it?

PASSENGER
For the love of God!

The flight attendant walks up to her.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Is everything okay, ma'am?

FLORENCE
No, it isn't. WHERE IS IT?

She shoves all the bags down and opens the next compartments.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Ma'am, please. The captain has not turned off the seatbelt sign.

FLORENCE
Shit, shit, shit, SHIT!

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Please, ma'am, calm down. Allow me to help you.

The flight attendant attempts to restrain her.

FLORENCE
Fuck! I left it! It's there, in the other terminal.
(shocked)
Turn back! TURN BACK NOW! We have to go back for him. Please!

By now the entire plane is awake and attentive to the scene. Florence is breaking down.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Silence, please, ma'am! Take your
seat!

PARIS
Fuck off, asshole!

Paris shoves him aside and takes a wrecked Florence into her
arms. She holds her tight.

PARIS (CONT'D)
Come, babe.

She leads Florence to the front of the plane.

INT. BATHROOM - AIRPLANE - DAY

They lock the door. Florence sits on the toilet seat lid.
They are crammed together into the tiny space.

FLORENCE
(devastated)
He was a piece of shit anyway.

Paris nods.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
He never cared. Not about mom, not
about me.

Paris hands her a tissue. Florence ignores it.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Probably for the best. Serves him
right to rot in some godforsaken
dump, alone.

Paris wipes Florence's face with the tissue. Florence grabs
her wrists and looks her in the eyes.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
Paris, I forgot my father.

Paris is dumbfounded.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
His remains, anyway. In my bag. At
the terminal.

It takes a moment for Paris to catch up. Then, shock.

PARIS
You ARE a piece of shit.

FLORENCE

I know.

PARIS

Unbelievable.

They crack up.

PARIS (CONT'D)

You know what, Flo? Whatever he
did, he's just dirt now.

Florence looks up at her. She nods slowly.

Then she shakes her head and looks away.

FLORENCE

Why do I still love him?
(bites her lip)
I'm such an idiot.

Paris looks at her, moved. Florence cleans her nose with her
hand. Paris leans in and kisses her forehead.

PARIS

Biggest idiot.

Florence hiccups. She laughs and cries simultaneously. A
beautiful mess.

Paris laughs with her.

They remain still, close.

Florence's lip trembles, and curls into the hint of a smile.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The sign on the door reads: OCCUPIED

FADE OUT.