

# A Sudden Crush

## Chapter 1 – Business Trip

### From Connor's POV

“Excuse me,” the woman sitting on the plane next to me tries to start a conversation.

I ignore her.

She tries again. “Um, excuse me?”

If I stare out of the window hard enough, maybe she'll get the message I'm not in the mood for a friendly chat.

No such luck, she's tapping me on the shoulder now. “Um, sir, excuse me...”

“Yes?” I reply, annoyed, turning to her.

She's smiling, what does she have to smile about?

“Hi, sorry to bother you—”

“Then don't,” I say, my head about to explode after a sleepless night.

This flight is the only chance I have to unplug and rest my brain from its constant swirl of worries.

I hope I've been stand-offish enough for the lady to get the message I need some peace

and quiet. Her smile sure disappeared fast enough, but...

She's a stubborn little thing.

"Sorry again," she insists. "It will take only a minute, I promise."

I roll my eyes and give her a full once over. She's pretty, in a too serious way, and definitely a city girl.

Designer shoes, designer bag, manicured nails.

Not for me.

"I got married today," she says smiling like an idiot.

*Right Connor, old pal, instead of the manicure maybe you should've noticed the rock on her finger.*

Not that I care.

She's still blabbing, "and we, I mean my husband and I, were held back at the reception for so long, the goodbyes took forever, and then there was an accident on the highway—"

"You have a point?" I interrupt her; I don't care to listen to a soap opera.

"My point is that we arrived at the airport super late and there were no seats left for us to sit together, so I was wondering if you wouldn't

mind switching places with my husband. He's over there." She points at a tall guy sitting a few rows back.

I take a casual look at him and can't help but snort.

"Was that a yes?" City Girl asks.

"No, miss, it wasn't."

"It's Mrs., actually, and—"

"He's sitting in an aisle seat," I explain. "I want to be in a window one. Anyway, if you ask me, your husband doesn't appear too bothered with his seating accommodation."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"That he seems pretty comfortable chatting with the top model next to him, not worrying too much about his annoying wife not being there to hold his hand."

"That..." Mrs. Annoying recoils slightly. "You're the rudest man I've ever met!" *Oh perfect!* Now she's puffing, her face has gone tomato red and her voice has raised a few octaves reaching a dolphins-only hearing point. "You don't know me, how can you say—"

"I've known you the whole of ten minutes, and already I've had enough," I snap. "I can't help

but imagine the poor guy is happy he's having a break."

I turn around hoping I've heard the last from this honeymoon drama queen—bah, women! I peek at her vague reflection on the window. She's spying on her husband and getting all worked up again and... now she's pushed the request-a-flight-attendant button.

This is not how my trip was supposed to begin. I travel first class exactly to avoid this kind of situations. Shouldn't first-class seats be farther apart than this? I need to rest; tomorrow I'll barely have time to land before I have to travel across thousands of acres of fields on horseback. I need to sleep.

The last thing I need is useless drams. I can see her staring at me, her indignant frown reflected on the plane's window even through the blur. Maybe I should just give up my seat and make her happy. I prefer a window seat, but it's okay... I can make an aisle one work. At this point I'd do anything for a few hours of silence.

I hope at least the chick next to the husband is a sleeper.

"Excuse me, miss, did you call?" A smiling stewardess is towering over us.

Oh, so we have the flight-gestapo involved now. Let's see what she has to say and then I'll announce my grand gesture.

"It's Mrs., actually, and yes, I need some help. You see, I'm on my honeymoon..." Drama Queen is at it again.

"Congratulations!" the stewardess exclaims, including me in her felicitations.

*Females!*

"Don't look at me—I'm not the lucky fella," I say sarcastically.

"So you're not sitting next to your husband?" the flight attendant asks, the smile gone from her lips.

Yeah, because being apart for a few hours is such a catastrophe!

"No. And that's the problem. We were detained at our reception..."

"Here she goes again," I grumble, do I really have to listen to the whole story twice?

"... then the movers had made a mess, and there was the accident on the highway..."

Apparently, yes, I do.

City Girl, now that she has a willing audience, is explaining every tiny detail of her "tragedy". Maybe I should just say I'm willing to

move and be done with it. “So we were late for the check-in, and the only seats left were these two,” Drama Queen concludes.

“You didn’t check-in online?” the flight attendant asks.

“I... should have, but I forgot,” Miss City Girls—sorry Mrs. City Girl—is turning scarlet.

“With all the details from the wedding to organize, it skipped my mind.”

“Madam, I understand completely,” the hostess says sympathetically. “And I’m very sorry for the inconvenience, but the flight is fully booked.”

“I know, but couldn’t we switch places with some other passengers?”

“I’m sorry, madam, but it’s too late for that. We’re about to take off, and the seatbelt sign is already on.”

Oh, I think. So now I’m really stuck with the lady for the whole journey. Go figure.

“Oh,” my neighbor says dismayed, echoing my thoughts. Is she going to cry? Please let her not be a crier. “But this is a six hour flight!” she protests.

“Again, I’m very sorry, can I offer you some complimentary Champagne before we depart?”

*Mmm, Champagne...good idea. I could use a drink right now.*

“Yes, thank you.” City Girl says, all pleased with herself.

“I will take one too,” I chip in.

The ladies don't look happy with me. They're both glowering at me. Did Mrs. Drama really think she was getting a special perk? I guess so. The hostess must be mad I gave her game away. “I will be back in a minute,” she says graciously. She shoots a cold, chastising look at me.

As she leaves, the security instructions begin to play in the background. Good! The sooner we take off the sooner we land, and I'll be a drama-queens-free man again.

*“...this aircraft has ten emergency exits...”*

“Here's your Champagne, madam.” The stewardess is back with two plastic flutes. What happened to real glasses? “Sir,” she adds curtly, a disapproving air written all over her face. And what happened to kind flight attendants? “I hope you have a pleasant flight. Let me know if I can assist you in any other way.”

“Thank you.” Says Drama Queen.

I keep silent. I'm not thanking someone for being rude and judge-y.

*"...personal electronic devices may be used during take-off and landing, providing all transmission functions are switched-off and the device itself is put into airplane mode...."*

I switch off my phone. City Girl is replying to one of those dumb selfie with a stream of unintelligible characters.

The plane finally accelerates on the runway and takes off. I chug my drink in one swig and watch the Chicago skyline disappear beneath us as the plane soars higher and higher in the dark-blue sky.

I need to relax.

Tomorrow I gotta work my ass off—nothing new there. All I need to get a hand on things over there and everything will be fixed. No need to stress, the situation is manageable and, after all, in a few hours I'll never have to see this woman again.

Phew.



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