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## The Man From Seat 17A

by Sho Botham

Dom leaned over the loo to press the flush button in the aircraft toilet when he heard odd, mumbled voices. His hand hovered over the flush button as he strained to listen. The voices sounded as if they were right outside the toilet door. Leaning on the door, he pressed his ear against the moulded shape. He couldn't quite make out what was being said. But he knew what he thought he heard.

He pressed the button and paused as the loud whooshing sound of the pneumatic vacuum waste system worked its magic with the help of the, usual, Skykem blue liquid.

Washing his hands for longer than normal, Dom, reflected on what had just happened. He wasn't the suspicious type, or so, previous girlfriends had told him. Gossip wasn't something that he listened to normally and he didn't get involved in the sort of, he said, she said, type of discussions. And yet, there he was very curious about what was being said on the other side of the toilet door.

Rotating the lock, Dom, carefully pushed the door ajar to check there was no one standing right outside before emerging and heading back to seat 17A.

Settling into his comfy, business class, seat, he poured himself a red wine and began to surf the extensive media options. His eyes kept returning to the front of the aircraft where the toilet and small galley were situated. A small but persistent flow of passengers visited both the toilet and the galley for refills for their depleted personal drinks shelf.

Fascinated, Dom, forgot about watching the latest, new Hollywood blockbusters and relaxed, back, into his seat, making use of the perfectly positioned foot rest.

He drank three small bottles of red wine watching strangers passing him on their way to the front of the plane. Even his phone lay, screen-side down on the small shelf next to him. Cabin crew bustled about in the galley, appearing and disappearing like the assistants in an illusionist's act.

Soon it was Dom's turn to stroll along the aisle to the toilet once again. He deliberately chose a moment when there were three other passengers hanging about waiting patiently for their turn to squeeze themselves into the tiny toilet. He wasn't a man who liked to wait in queues but this was different. He wanted time to stand, to look around, to hear anything of interest. Although, if he'd stopped to think about it, what was he expecting to discover?

Coming to a halt almost exactly two metres from the end of the queue, Dom, demonstrated how unconsciously, well trained in social distancing, he'd become.