

SCENE FROM  
Mr. Perfect  
(1W – 1 M)

**ZOOEY** - A sexy/quirky flight attendant. She is a genius at mathematics.

**JEFFERY** - A handsome actor with a dreamy voice. He suffers from approach/avoidance.

**LOCATION** - A shoebox sized bathroom on a roaring Airbus 32,000 feet over Dayton, Ohio)

(The accordion door opens and JEFFERY enters.)

(Anxious, he quickly checks his appearance in the mirror and his breath by breathing into his hands.)

JEFFERY  
*(Anxiously to himself)*

This is crazy this is crazy this is crazy.

(The accordion door opens and ZOOEY in her flight attendant uniform squeezes in. To complicate things she's brought with her a flight bag. There's absolutely no room, they can barely move.)

Did anyone see you?

JEFFERY

I don't think so.

ZOOEY

(Both are breathing heavily, they want each other but are too nervous to start.)

Are you going to make love to me?

ZOOEY

That's what I was thinking.

JEFFERY

Nervous?

ZOOEY

No.

JEFFERY

Wife?

ZOOEY

JEFFERY  
No. No wife.

ZOOEY  
Erectile dysfunction?

JEFFERY  
No. It's just that I've never had it happen this fast. When I met you three hours ago, and you asked me if I'd like peanuts--.

ZOOEY  
*(Sexy)*  
I like a man who likes non-salted peanuts.

JEFFERY  
I never imagined that three hours later we'd be sneaking into the bathroom.

ZOOEY  
I'm not a slut.

JEFFERY  
No, that's not it.

ZOOEY  
The flight is nearly empty no one will hear us.

JEFFERY  
*(Delaying)*  
Right. We should get started.

(He can't start.)

ZOOEY  
Don't you want to make love to me?

JEFFERY  
Of course. I mean, it's every man's dream to make love to a stewardess--.

ZOOEY  
Flight attendant.

JEFFERY  
That's what I meant.

ZOOEY  
I haven't taken more than a book to bed in over a year.

JEFFERY  
Neither have I--. Not that I'm a loser.

ZOOEY  
(*Rapid fire*)

When I met you, and you asked for *non-salted* peanuts, I couldn't believe it because just hours before I had written a long letter to management suggesting we offer a non-salted option, and then your voice was so soothing, and I felt I'd heard it all my life, and then when you said you were an actor, and that you recorded my favorite romance novel Fifty Shades of the First Lady, which I just finished listening to again on my way to the airport, well, I sorta melted... It seems like we were meant to be doesn't it?

JEFFERY  
(*Having doubts*)

Sure. I guess.

ZOOEY

If you'd like to kiss me, I'd be okay with that. But we have to hurry because there's going to be turbulence over Pennsylvania.

JEFFERY

And you'll have to make an announcement?

ZOOEY

No. I've heard it's better with turbulence.

JEFFERY

Are you sure no one saw you.

ZOOEY

Positive. Kiss me.

(He tentatively kisses her neck.)

ZOOEY

That's nice.

JEFFERY

More?

ZOOEY

Please.

(Passionate kissing. She stops.)

ZOOEY

Hold on one sec. I just need a little help.

(She grabs her flight bag and pulls out an I-phone, plugs it into a pair of large headsets and puts it on.)

JEFFERY

What are you...?

ZOOEY

There. Okay. Much better. You may continue.

...You're going to listen while we...? JEFFERY

ZOOEY  
(With the headset on she speaks louder)  
I don't like the cheap airline ear buds. I need the full effect.

JEFFERY  
You're going to wear headsets while we...

ZOOEY  
When I make love I like to listen to the *1812 Overture*. If that intimidates you, I got *The Minute Waltz*.

JEFFERY  
While we--?

ZOOEY  
If not the *1812 Overture*, then I like to listen to romance novels like *The Thorn Birds*.

JEFFERY  
*The Thorn Birds*?

ZOOEY  
By Colleen McCullough – It's the story of an innocent young woman who has a stormy affair with a priest.

JEFFERY  
A priest--?

ZOOEY  
Named Father Ralph.

JEFFERY  
Ralph?

ZOOEY  
A handsome young priest who has been sent into exile at a remote parish for insulting a bishop. Despite the fact that he's sworn to a life of celibacy, he breaks his vows and consummates his passion with an innocent young woman.

JEFFERY  
But--.

ZOOEY  
(Marilyn Monroe sexy)  
Don't you want to get me going?

JEFFERY  
Of course--.

ZOOEY  
Let me fast forward to the scene where Father Ralph is de-flowered.

(She adjusts the I-Phone.)

JEFFERY

I'm sorry Zooney, but the thought of making love to a woman who's listening to an audiobook--.

ZOOEY

It may seem odd at first - my last boyfriend was really put off by it but after a while he understood.

JEFFERY

Understood--?

ZOOEY

*(Jayne Mansfield sexy)*

That it really gets me going. Okay! I push play and we go. Here goes. *(She hits play)* Go! Kiss!

*(She kisses him. He tries but her headsets are just too distracting.)*

JEFFERY

Wait, I can't.

ZOOEY

*(She can't hear with the headsets)*

Huh?

JEFFERY

I can't do this with you wearing headsets.

ZOOEY

What?

JEFFERY

I said, I can't do this with you wearing--!

ZOOEY

Don't you want to please me?

JEFFERY

Yes. But.

*(He takes off her headsets.)*

JEFFERY

I want to be able to... to...

ZOOEY

What?

JEFFERY

Talk.

ZOOEY

You talk during sex?

JEFFERY

It's not like I'm going to discuss the 9/11 Commission Report. But communication during... sexual relations is important.

ZOOEY

But I can't concentrate without my story.

JEFFERY

Please, it's our first time.

ZOOEY

But--.

JEFFERY

Please.

(He takes the headsets and hangs them on the door hook. Then continues making love to her. She tries but cannot concentrate without her headsets.)

ZOOEY

But... I... I don't want to fail.

JEFFERY

Doesn't this feel good?

ZOOEY  
(*Losing interest*)

Sure.

JEFFERY  
(*Still kissing her*)

See, we're communicating.

ZOOEY

...Jeffery... I... I need my headsets.

JEFFERY  
(*Still kissing her*)

You can't have them. It's nothing but you and me 32,000 feet over Dayton Ohio.

(She still cannot get into it.)

ZOOEY

Would you mind helping me out?

JEFFERY

Any way I can.

ZOOEY

Could you do something for me?

Sure. Anything. JEFFERY

Could you narrate? ZOOEY

...Narrate? JEFFERY

As you ravish me - Narrate. ZOOEY

Ravish? ...How do I...? JEFFERY

Tell our story. ZOOEY

You want me to tell you a story while I ravish you--. JEFFERY

Not just any story. Our story. ZOOEY

But--. JEFFERY

You want me to listen to you. Now you gotta compromise and tell our story. ZOOEY

Like about--. JEFFERY

Us. ZOOEY

How do I do that? JEFFERY

Just narrate what's happening. Make it an epic love story. *(Sexy)* A saga. ZOOEY

But--. JEFFERY

You want to get me going don't you? ZOOEY

...Okay. *(He kisses her neck)*. ...As I took her in my arms and kissed her, I knew that this chance encounter on a flight from Los Angeles to LaGuardia--. JEFFERY

No, do it in the voice! ZOOEY

JEFFERY  
What voice?

ZOOEY  
Your Fifty Shades of the First Lady voice.

JEFFERY  
Oh. *(With a deep romantic voice)* As I took her in my arms and kissed her neck--.

ZOOEY  
Third-person please!

JEFFERY  
Excuse me?

ZOOEY  
I prefer an omniscient narrator that gives a panoramic view as opposed to a personal account.

JEFFERY  
But first person brings greater focus and personal feelings to the story.

ZOOEY  
But first person doesn't allow you to get into my head and tell me what I'm thinking. Everyone knows that if you want more intimacy with *all* the characters third-person gives you a more sweeping canvas and more ways to reveal psychological (*Sexy*) growth.

JEFFERY  
*(Leaning forward and kissing her neck)* Okay. Ah. He  
*leaned* forward and kissed her neck--.

ZOOEY  
Present tense please!

JEFFERY  
But I prefer past tense.

ZOOEY  
But present tense is more immediate.

JEFFERY  
But the very act of telling a story implies that it's in the past.

ZOOEY  
But it's happening now.

JEFFERY  
But a narrator needs a little distance in order to comprehend events.

ZOOEY  
You don't want to be with me here and now?

JEFFERY  
Of course I do.



ZOOEY

How about if we compromise? Past perfect.

JEFFERY

Let me get this straight, you want me to narrate in past perfect tense while I make love to you.

ZOOEY

*(Sexy)*

That would really get me going.

JEFFERY

...Okay. Ah... *(Trying to think while kissing her neck)* The kiss *had* ended...

ZOOEY

What is he thinking?

JEFFERY

He's worried about his performance--. Not that he has ever had any trouble but it's been a while and things had happened so quickly. He isn't interested in a one-night stand but a real relationship.

ZOOEY

*(Oh, she wanted to hear that)*

That's nice.

*(She attacks him, pulls off his shirt.)*

ZOOEY

What about her?

JEFFERY

Her?

ZOOEY

What is she thinking? Third-person omniscient please.

JEFFERY

She was willing and is very much in love.

ZOOEY

Stop!

JEFFERY

What now.

ZOOEY

You're mixing tenses – “She was willing and is very much in love.” That's distracting.

JEFFERY

Sorry. *(Kissing her)* She knows in her heart that this was--.

ZOOEY

*(Correcting him)*

Is.

JEFFERY  
Is... (*Getting frustrated*) She is kissed by him--.

ZOOEY  
Please, no passive voice.

JEFFERY  
Excuse me?

ZOOEY  
When the sentence is written in a passive voice the object receives the action of the verb from the subject. I need you, the subject, to perform the action of the verb (*Sexy*) on me.

JEFFERY  
Zoey, I'm sorry - I can't!

ZOOEY  
I'm making you uncomfortable?

JEFFERY  
Tense! You're making me tense!

ZOOEY  
But not having a story makes me tense.

JEFFERY  
But I'm worried that my narrative won't be good enough.

ZOOEY  
Can't get there without narrative.

JEFFERY  
Well, I can't narrate and kiss you at the same time. I don't have the... the... impulse.

ZOOEY  
The narrative impulse is always there. We need story to get by. Otherwise the tremendous randomness of life overwhelms. (*Sexy, pulling off his belt*) Story is what *penetrates*.

JEFFERY  
But how do you tell the story from the middle? This might be the beginning of a wonderful relationship or a horrible one-night stand that we both live to regret. Before we finish the world may come to an end. Or one of your ex-boy friends might show up wanting you back.

ZOOEY  
You think that's possible? Wow.

JEFFERY  
No. I'm just saying anything could happen. I can't make it up.

ZOOEY  
What type of man can't make up a simple story?

JEFFERY

I'm pretty typical. Besides what type of woman are you? All you're interested in is romance novels. I peeked inside your purse, it's full of audiobooks. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, *The Sheik*. You're serious, *The Sheik*?

ZOOEY

I'm kinda on this iconic-alpha-male-who-kidnaps-heroines-and-wins-their-admiration-through-dominant-actions kick right now.

JEFF

That's all well and good, but that's not me.

ZOOEY

How do you know - How do any of us know who we really are?

JEFF

I'm pretty sure I'm not a Sheik.

ZOOEY

And thus you disappoint.

JEFF

That I'm not a Sheik! How can we have a relationship if you want me to be a Sheik? Why start when we're doomed to failure?

ZOOEY

I believe most people have potentialities that we don't explore.

JEFF

I have potentialities. Tons of potentialities. But Skeik-dom is not one of them. Look, if you want to make love I'd love to make love – I find you attractive and captivating - but you gotta make love to me, not Valentino.

ZOOEY

Then who are you?

JEFFERY

Me?

ZOOEY

Yes, who are you? A little exposition please.

JEFF

Well. I'm... I'm an actor. I have my BFA in acting from UCLA. I've spent my life getting bit parts on soap operas and waiting tables and then about five years ago I got a job recording audiobooks. I record about one a week. And I live in a 425-square foot apartment in Chelsea that faces an alley. You?

ZOOEY

You wanta know who I am?

JEFF

Yes.

Okay. ...I'm a flight attendant.

ZOOEY

Kinda obvious.

JEFF

I spend my life dealing with asshole businessmen, airsick emotional support dogs and people who use the seat back trays as a baby changing station.

ZOOEY

Your life must be really dull.

JEFF

No. No, not at all. In fact it's quite exciting. I have two sisters. And an older half brother. When my father passed away my family's estate was left to him.

ZOOEY

Estate? Wow.

JEFF

My sisters and I went to live with my older half brother but things didn't go well. Then one day I was taking a stroll, it began to rain, as fate would have it, I slipped, sprained my ankle. A dashing young man carried me back to the manor and saved me. He was my first love. But then he announced that he had to leave for several weeks. Then later, this Colonel, a friend of the family, told me that my lover got a girl in trouble and abandoned me. I became ill. But eventually recovered and fell for the Colonel even though the truth is I felt more respect for him than passion.

ZOOEY  
*(Losing herself in the story)*

Wow, that's quite a story.

JEFFERY

Yes, it is.

ZOOEY

Wait. That sounds familiar.

JEFFERY

No it doesn't.

ZOOEY

Yes it does... That's *Sense and Sensibility*.

JEFFERY

Is not.

ZOOEY

I know *Sense and Sensibility* - I recorded the entire Jane Austen collection two years ago--.

JEFFERY

And you did a wonderful job.

ZOOEY

JEFFERY  
You just lied to me. That's not your life that's a plotline.

ZOOEY  
I admit there are similarities.

JEFFERY  
I'm sorry, I can't.

(He tries to pull his shirt back on.)

ZOOEY  
Please don't go.

JEFFERY  
You're just too... odd.

ZOOEY  
You pick up women at 32,000 feet over Kansas and I'm odd?

JEFFERY  
I didn't pick you up I was--.

ZOOEY  
Hitting on me from the moment you boarded the plane. Pick up lines left and right.

JEFFERY  
Not true.

ZOOEY  
Non-salted peanuts.

JEFFERY  
In absolutely no one's playbook is asking for non-salted peanuts a pick up line!

ZOOEY  
The way you said it, it was.

JEFFERY  
Look, thanks but I gotta...

(He tries to leave, she blocks the door.)

ZOOEY  
You can't blame a girl for wanting more.

JEFFERY  
What do you want then? What do you want from this chance encounter over Kansas?

ZOOEY

I want to know that you'll call tomorrow. That we'll date for an appropriate amount of time, maybe three to five chapters. And then at the end of chapter six, you'll take me out to dinner and surprise me with a ring. In chapters seven through fourteen we'll rise above the normal humdrum of existence. We'll also survive that tragic night in chapter nine when your mother dies in that awful train wreck. In chapter ten, our love will rise above my momentary fling with a handsome priest named Father Ralph who has been sent into exile at a remote parish for insulting a bishop. Despite the fact that he's sworn to a life of celibacy, he breaks his vows, consummates our passion, and dies of a broken heart. But you forgive my wandering spirit and together we raise the love-child as our own. Years later, in chapter eighteen, on my deathbed, with our children and love-children gathered around us, the music will crest and I'll know that we've found our purpose and lived a life worthy of a soundtrack.

JEFF

...Wow, you don't ask for much.

ZOOEY

I want fantasy, romanticism and pulp fiction rolled into one. I don't want kitchen sink realism - I want realism where the sink flies. I want, before we begin, to hold a comfortable story in my hands, to hit play and know that there's something or someone in the control booth – someone who thought things through. But most of all I want *climax*. No story is complete without *climax*. (*Sexy*) Know what I mean... *climax*?

JEFFERY

Do you realize what type of pressure this puts on me?

ZOOEY

You don't think you can put that kind of narrative together?

JEFFERY

I don't think I can get it up anymore!

ZOOEY

Plot makes you impotent?

JEFFERY

Look, I'm sorry I started this. If I knew I was entering an Ionesco play I'd never have hit on you.

ZOOEY

You admit it! You hit on me!

JEFFERY

Yes! I'm a dude. I thought you were pretty. And *you* were a willing participant.

ZOOEY

No. I was swept off my feet.

JEFFERY

Do you take any responsibility for anything you do? Life is about taking action. Life is making decisions. You - All you want are the high points. Stories have high points - Life doesn't!

ZOOEY

You don't think this is a high point?

It was--!

JEFFERY

Is!

ZOOEY  
(Correcting him)

No, it *was*. Until erectile dysfunction set in because I'm not a Sheik!

Fine, then just do it.

JEFFERY

Do what?

ZOOEY

Me! I'm willing. I'm able. Slam, bang, you go your way, I go mine.

JEFFERY

What's romantic about that?

ZOOEY

What's romance got to do with it? You must break your priestly vows and fulfill your sexual desire and I have no choice but to submit!

JEFFERY

But I have needs too! I don't just want to have sex. I want to know that if things don't work out we'll part as friends. That if and when we fail I won't owe you anything. That if we meet on a street corner a year from now we can both laugh at our failed attempt to join the mile high club.

ZOOEY

I'm taking action. Isn't that what you want?

JEFFERY

But it's not the right action.

ZOOEY

What is the right action?

JEFFERY

I don't know I'm just a reader!

ZOOEY

I'm just a listener!

CAPTAIN'S VOICE

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Captain Reynolds from the flight deck. In a few minutes we'll begin our descent into LaGuardia. Flight attendants please prepare the cabin.

(They struggle to exit the bathroom. Pulling themselves together, tucking in shirts and adjusting hair.)

(JEFFERY sits in the empty last row of the airliner.  
ZOOEY grabs the flight attendant intercom phone.)

ZOOEY  
*(Professionally into intercom phone)*

Ladies and Gentlemen please discontinue any use of laptops or portable electronics and put your seats in the upright position.

(She hangs up and sits with him. Beat.)

JEFFERY

You know what our problem is? Writers. If you think about it, it's all their fault. Look at Hamlet. Does anyone really think Hamlet would make a good king? He'd be an incompetent, moody little twit who'd take months to make the simplest decision. And Shakespeare makes us feel sorry for him because his decisive, capable uncle takes the throne. Poll the people of Denmark, I'll bet they'd be happier with Claudius.

ZOOEY

You're right.

JEFFERY

And what about King Lear? How did he become king? He's no better than his fool.

ZOOEY

And what about Goldilocks. She breaks into the house of three peace-loving bears, who haven't harmed a soul, steals their porridge, and yet she's our protagonist. The problem *is* writers.

JEFFERY

Truth is destroyed the moment writers start organizing things.

ZOOEY

Years ago, I took a writing class at Columbia. I sucked. Wrote about my ex-boyfriends. My writing professor had been divorced four times so she gave me an "A". But we both knew I sucked.

JEFFERY

I also took a writing class once. Got an "A". But later I found that I had subconsciously plagiarized James Michener.

ZOOEY  
*(Kindly)*

You're so unoriginal.

JEFF  
*(Kindly)*

So are you.

ZOOEY

What should we do?

JEFFERY

Don't know.



We could listen. ZOOEY

What've you got? JEFFERY

Fifty Shades of the First Lady? ZOOEY  
(Firing up her i-phone)

Sure. Why not JEFFERY

(She turns the headsets inside out so they can both have one earpiece.)

On three. One, two... ZOOEY

(She hits play. They listen for a moment.)

They're kissing. ZOOEY  
(Off what she hears)

Yes. JEFFERY  
(Off what he hears)

Deep passionate kisses. ZOOEY

Yes. JEFFERY

ZOOEY  
The type that are so perfect you know they're meant for each other. So perfect that nothing could ever go wrong.

JEFFERY  
They're going into the executive bathroom to make love.

ZOOEY  
Things are going to start happening now.

Yes. JEFFERY

Cool. ZOOEY

Yeah, cool.

JEFFERY

(They listen. The roar of a jet airliner as the lights fade.)