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Pre-AP English 8

17 Dec. 2018

### Waiting, Waiting, Waiting

The roar of the engine fills my ears, a sense of weightlessness making me certain we are off the ground. I check the time impatiently, resting my head against the cool window and watching the ground fade away, the plane station becoming a mere speck of dust on the glass. Thirteen whole hours of nothing. For now, all I have to do is wait in the small plastic chair that seems even more constricting every minute. Grey and blue fabric surrounds me. Flickering yellow lights tell me I can take off my seatbelt.

The food lady, a woman with frizzy brown hair and a green dress, comes along with her cart, offering the basics: apple juice, peanuts, pretzels, Cola, Sprite. Smiling weakly, I reply, “Just peanuts for me, please,” and she gently tosses a packet onto my pull-out table before moving on to the next row. I check the time again, and the answer is just as tiring as the first time. Twelve hours, thirty minutes.

My ears start to hurt as I reach into my pocket and pull out my phone and a packet of gum. I put a strip of sweet watermelon gum quickly between my lips, starting to chew as I turn on my phone, tugging on the popsocket and propping up the little screen. After tapping the screen a few times, it pulls up thirty episodes of my favorite anime that I’d downloaded the month before. The theme blasts into my headphones, making me wince as I frantically push the volume buttons to turn it down. I watch for what feels like hours, but it barely cuts into the flight time. 10 hours, 12 minutes.

My phone beeps, alerting me the battery is almost dead. Surprised, I scramble to dig through my backpack for a charger. I find one and shove the black cord into my phone, watching the screen brighten. Ten percent remaining. Soon the intercom turns on, telling us the food cart will come around again shortly, but with actual food. It does eventually, the lady handing me a small disposable tray with a sandwich and a pastry on it. It doesn't look the best, but it's what I got, so I take a few bites. Bland as usual, although I don't think it can be helped. Not without some serious science.

With nine hours left, I pull a blanket from my bag and wrap it around my torso, bundling it up in the back to make a small pillow-ish thing. Maybe I can sleep the hours away ...

Waking up again, I check once more—five hours left. I sigh as I pull out a sketchbook and pencil, doodling random little things like dragons and robots in three-inch heeled boots. I try to put more detail into them, taking up more time with each drawing. Shading, blending, erasing, frustrating anatomy. Fingers black with graphite, I reach for my phone.

“Hello! This is your pilot speaking, and you'll be glad to hear that we will be landing at Frankfurt, Germany in approximately 15 minutes!”

Glancing out the window, I watch the specks turn to rough shapes, then microscopic buildings. A falling sensation fills my head, making me feel heavy, yet still light as a feather. I hear a low roar and a thump as the plane gracefully lands, finally obeying gravity, and slows to a stop. Finally, I'm here.

The trip to Europe was a long one, but it stuck in my head all these years, and I feel it deserves some recognition. I think most people remember the destination rather than the trip, even if the journey is long and tiring. It's definitely not the best part, I grant you, but it's

something often overlooked, and I wanted to shed light on it. So, next time you go somewhere, look out the window and stay patient. Remember that moment.