

“Obsessed? I’m not Obsessed!”

**By:** Jayden Buitt, Mississippi, USA, Age 14

**Description:** A teen has a conversation with a stranger on a plane.

Yeah, I’m in high school. (pause) What are my interests? Well, my friends say I’m obsessed with celebrities. I just want to say to them, “Look you little two-timing molded fruit cakes, I am NOT obsessed with celebrities!” The truth is, I only in love with ONE! Theo James! I know his age, address, full name, where he lives, and where his entire family lives! I mean we’re basically married. If you ever get to meet his family, you will love

them! I sure will! I plan on paying them a little visit. You know, just to ask them a few questions like where's the nearest hardware store, oh and if Theo has any cameras at his house. That is the basic questions you ask your husband's parents, right? Yeah, I know this flight to England costs a lot of money, but he is worth it, anything for my hubby! I'm sure that he has gotten the hundreds of letters that I sent. He's just too busy to write me back. Oh, I know he will be so excited to see me, well, when he regains consciousness anyway!

What's that? You are calling the flight attendant to call the police? Oh, don't worry! He totally knows I

am coming. I gave him a little call the other day. I guess he thought I was some obsessed teen off the street, but I am SO not obsessed! What? you think I am obsessed too? No ma'am! I am in LOVE! Anyway, here we are! I am so excited!

Wish me luck!

## “I Pledge Allegiance”

**By:** Luis H., Age 14, Illinois, USA

**Description:** A student interrupts the pledge to question what it means.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the...wait a minute. Excuse me Mr. Jacobs. I'm sorry to interrupt, but what does that mean? Pledge allegiance? I've been saying the pledge since I was five years old, but I never really thought about it until this exact moment. I pledge allegiance to the flag. I mean pledge means promise, right? And I think allegiance means loyalty? So, I promise to be loyal to the flag? That's weird. Why would I

promise anything to a flag. The flag's not a person. I mean I get that it's symbolic. The flag represents our country. But, what if our country is not living up to its part of the deal? What if it's not being loyal to me? That doesn't seem fair. Why should I promise my loyalty to a country that isn't loyal to me? Don't get me wrong. I'm happy I live here. I know I was lucky to be born in this country. But if I'm expected to be devoted and faithful to this country that believes in "justice for all," doesn't that mean me too?

“Why Am I Not Enough?”

**By:** Karly Anderson, Age 14, Texas, USA

**Description:** A teen goes through their daily routine to meet the world’s standard of what it means to be enough.

Why am I not enough? 4 am, wake up, work out, and shower. I don’t want to, but I have to in order to be enough. Athletic kids are enough. 6 am, straighten my natural curls like they never existed, and apply the makeup I barely know how to use. Because I have to fit in to be enough. Girls who wear makeup are enough. 6:30 am, no breakfast today I had a big dinner last night and every girl in

school that wants a dying chance of a homecoming date weighs less than 115. So I have to weigh that too. Skinny girls are enough. 7 am, walk to school it'll be healthier anyways. Cardio is how skinny girls look even slimmer. The less meat and more bones you are, means you're enough. 8 am, first bell. I know the answer, but I won't say it. Pretty girls can't be smart. And to be enough you need to be pretty. Smart girls can't be enough until they're pretty. 11 am, lunch. Best I just keep chewing on my gum. Every popular girl always has gum. Popularity means your enough. 2 pm, last class. I need to pee but instead, I roam the halls.

Cool girls roam the halls. Cool girls are enough. 3 pm, walk home because you can never have too much cardio. 4 pm, realize I've spent another day trying to live out an unfulfillable, immeasurable standard of "enough."

## “The Ex”

**By:** Melany Morales, Florida, USA, Age 13

**Description:** A dramatic Hispanic girl complains about her ex-boyfriend to her new best friend.

I still can't believe that Esteban did that. He left with Brittney' to America y me dejo! Well, I don't want to focus on him right now. He wasn't even that nice-looking, anyway. I don't know what I ever found in that guy. Oh, who am I kidding? He's gorgeous, he's adorable, he's...he's...I can't keep doing this to myself! It's been two weeks. I should be over that “Prince Royce-wanna-be” by now. Pero, I just can't get over him – he's all I think

about! (Pause.) Is that– oh... my... oh... my...

TAMALES! No puedo... it's...it's a pimple! And it's

HUGE! No wonder he left me. That little

Americana – she must have perfect skin. I could

never. And this pelo! Who in their right mind would

EVER find me attractive?! I knew from the moment

he left he was disgusted by my ugliness! (Pause.)

Well...now that I think of it, he did call me dramatic

and loud. He thinks I'm dramatic?! Oh, sweetie,

no, HE'S the dramatic one. And, I'm Hispanic, so I

don't know what quiet is! He's the one missing out

on the future "Miss Universo." (Pause.) Oh...is that

the new neighbor from next door? He can shoot

hoops? Hay, he's guapo! Just look at those muscles! That's it, I'm out. Brittney, you can keep Esteban. I have bigger matters to attend to!

“I Didn’t Do It!”

**By:** Jacob Kenyon, Age 13, Arizona, USA

**Description:** A kid denies breaking a window

You can’t ground me! I didn’t do it! Just because I’m wearing a baseball glove does not mean that I broke the window. Sure, I have a history of this kind of thing, but I’m telling you the truth, Dad! This time it wasn’t me. I was out here minding my own business. Just tossing the ball up in the air and then Mom came out and asked if I wanted to play catch. I said yes because I feel kind of bad for her you know? I mean she’s not very good at

baseball, but she seems to like to play with me. So we started tossing the ball. Like I said, she's not very good. She threw the ball way over there and it broke the window. So you see, it wasn't me. It was your wife. I guess you'll have to ground her. Or at least teach her how to throw.

“Why Can’t I Fly?”

**By:** Kallie Gatrell, Age 14, North Carolina, USA

**Description:** A penguin wonders why they are the only bird in the zoo not able to fly.

Hey, Randy, can I talk to you about something?

Wait, Randy, you actually might want to sit down for this. Okay, well, I feel like I’m a worthless bird. I mean out of all ten thousand bird species, why am I one of the 60 that can’t fly? That’s 0.6%. It’s not fair. Why can’t I just soar like the mighty eagle? Why can’t I see this earth from a bird’s eye view? Honestly, I would even take the amount of flight a chicken has. Which isn’t a lot. I’m just an

embarrassment to the zoo because all the other birds can fly, but I can't. Have you ever seen how all the little humans point and laugh at me? That's a real blow to my confidence. I even heard that Eric in the owl exhibit was making fun of me just because I can't fly while he's over there asleep all the time, getting waited on wing and foot. I'm done with all the ridicule I get just because I can't fly. I mean, compared to them, I have some pretty great skills. I mean, are they able to slide on their stomachs? No. Can they swim underwater to catch fish? No. So why do they always say, "Hey, Chilly, how's the weather down there?" If they

came down and just waddled in my flippers for a day, they might realize how hard it is to be me. I mean, at least I don't have to worry about getting a sunburn... right? You know what, I'm done with the jokes, and I won't take them anymore. I'm proud of who I am, even if I'm not the same as everyone else. I'm going to show everyone that I'm just as capable as they are, even if I can't fly.

## “Shrimp Fried Rice”

**By:** Jeremiah Reid, Age 16, North Carolina, USA

**Description:** A person who takes things a little too literally gets quite upset when their date orders shrimp fried rice.

**Genre:** Comedic

Woah, woah, woah! Hold on just a minute here waiter. I wasn't gonna say anything before, because I'm no marine biologist, but if she (*gestures across*) is gonna order that, I'm gonna have to speak up. Now, when I saw it on the menu I did some research, and I am fairly certain there is no way that is possible. I mean, shrimp? Frying

rice? The very concept is preposterous! There are a million issues I can think of! There is no way shrimp could get their tiny little hands on the frying pan, and I don't think they have the brain capacity to know when rice is done cooking. On top of that, there has to be a health code violation here! I mean, it says on the menu: "warning: consumption of raw meat or poultry may cause food poisoning," but it doesn't say anything about consumption of food prepared by meat or poultry! (*Turns across*)

Look, I'm gonna be honest. I was fully prepared to propose to you tonight. I have the ring and everything! But if you are seriously going to give in

to the delusions of this restaurant and order “shrimp fried rice,” I don’t think I can anymore. In fact, I think we should see other people.

This is false advertisement, and I will not, no, CAN not stand for it! Can you imagine walking into the kitchen to see an army of little crustaceans manning the grill? It’s insane! It’s delusional! The only explanation I can think of is a sort of ratatouille situation, where there’s a shrimp controlling the human cooking the food, but if that’s the case the shrimp certainly shouldn’t be mentioned in the name of the dish! I mean what’s next, “manta ray steamed vegetables?” Oh OK,

now I'm "causing a scene?" You know what's causing a scene? THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE SHRIMP PREPARING FOOD! I can't take this tomfoolery anymore; I'm taking my business elsewhere! Good day to you sir, but a terrible day to whoever decided to claim shrimp could cook!

*(Storms offstage)*

## “Pizza Problems”

**By:** Artemide Rota, Age 12, Bergamo, Italy

**Description:** A person calls to complain about their pizza delivery.

**Genre:** Comedic

Hello? *(pause)* Yes, I called because I want a complete refund on my pizza order. *(pause)* Ok, so the problem is that I ordered a pepperoni pizza with extra cheese and extra pepperoni, but there are no toppings on the pizza. Just plain! I paid 6€ for this, and all I get is white and mushy, circle-shaped pizza dough? *(pause)* What? I have

to flip the pizza? Why on earth would I have to do that?! *(pause)* So you're telling me that if I flip it I will have all the toppings I asked for? Is this some kind of joke? The toppings won't appear magically as soon as I flip the pizza! *(pause)* Ok, ok, I'll try it, even if this makes no sense. *(flips pizza and all the toppings are there)* Oh, would you look at that, it actually worked! But this is still your fault because it was delivered to me flipped. Can you at least tell me who delivered this pizza because they should be fired instantly for giving it to me all lopsided? *(pause)* "NO"? Oh, alright then, I see

how it is here. You just lost a customer, and that's  
on you!

## “Struck by Lightning”

**By:** Kennedy L., Columbus, OH, USA, Age 17

**Genre:** Dramatic

**Description:** A teen recounts his/her experience of being hit by lightning.

No, it's not a tattoo, it's a scar. It's lightning....yes, I'm serious.... well, it's hard to describe, but I'll do my best. It was summer. Not like tonight. It was one of those summer nights when rage-filled clouds obscured the sky and the night birds and the cicadas were silent. I had gone outside to bring my bicycle in before it rained. In the

distance, I could hear the familiar hush of the ocean. Shhhhhh. And everything else was quiet. I grabbed the handlebars of my bike, and then came the roar. A clap of thunder so loud it shook the very ground beneath my feet. What happened next felt instant and slow motion all at once. I had barely moved my bike, when the BOOM came. A white-hot flash far away and everywhere, and my body in the air and then nothing. And then lying on the grass, my body like lead, my head splitting with pain, and the sweet, overpowering fragrance of grass. My mother was screaming over me, but she sounded far away. In the hospital, they told me

that I had been struck by lightning. My mother had seen it from the kitchen window. Lightning broke the sky outside and traveled along the ground and through my bicycle. I was lucky. They call it 'fractal.' A few more feet and I would have died. I still have headaches, and I cannot hear in my left ear. And this scar? At first it was blisters. A white-hot searing that bled and pussed and crusted over. And now it's this. This beautiful pattern like a willow branch. Forever trying to reach the ground, and not quite making it. It will never go away. And to be honest, I don't want it to. My eyes are open now...to the richness...and also

the impermanence of life. I am here. With you. On this warm summer evening. The night birds are singing and the cicadas are humming along.

(Looks down at arm.) It's a wonderful scar, don't you think?

# “Santa Life”

**By:** Ava I., Age 15, Arizona, USA

**Description:** What is Santa’s life like during the other 364 days of the year?

**Genre:** Comedic

Everyone knows what Santa does on that one special day of the year. But have you ever wondered what his life is like the other 364 days? Well, let me enlighten you. Santa’s got a bit of a weight issue. I mean, the guy spends his entire night squeezing down chimneys, carrying a giant sack of presents. I bet his exercise routine is like,

“Do 50 squats, eat 50 cookies, repeat.” And let’s talk about his fashion sense. Red and white? Really? It’s like he’s the ultimate brand ambassador for Coca-Cola. But let’s not forget the list of naughty and nice kids. I can just picture Santa sitting there, scratching his head, trying to remember if little Tommy was the one who stuck gum in his sister’s hair or if it was Jimmy. And what happens if he mixes up the lists? Imagine waking up to a lump of coal because Santa had a temporary lapse in memory. Awkward! And what about those flying reindeer? It’s like Santa found the world’s most talented animals and said, “You

know what? Let's form a supergroup." And Rudolph, the star of the show, gets all the attention with his shiny nose. I bet the other reindeer are jealous and plotting some sort of reindeer revenge. So, next time you're sitting by the fireplace, eagerly waiting for Santa's arrival, take a moment to appreciate his bizarre life. After all, behind that big, jolly belly and white beard, there's a man who's got the world's most ridiculous job. And if he can bring joy to millions while managing an army of flying reindeer, well, he deserves a round of applause and maybe a cookie or two.