

Standing room only
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No one wants to sit next to me. Whether it's on the bus, in class, or even on my bed. I get that people have their personal space (I certainly have mine), but when the only available space on the bus is the seat next to mine and people start standing, I start to think that the problem is me.

Starting with the bus—a large, rectangular, moving germ-trap that takes students all around campus—in a trip lasting 15 minutes from my apartment to the main dining center, the bus goes from 2-3 people to an automobile stuffed so tightly that a clown car would be jealous (and maybe cry tears made of seltzer water). Yet, despite this overcrowding, where people are bursting out of the windows and those emergency ceiling doors, and every square inch of the volume of the bus is taken—with the exception of a seat next to me—it will remain empty.

For these trips around the school grounds, I have my iPod on, so I can't hear what people are saying, but I'm guessing it's something like this:

SARDINE STUDENT 1: Help us out, bro. Take the seat so we're not all crushed.

SARDINE STUDENT 2: You can't be serious.

SARDINE STUDENT 1: I don't want to be smushed anymore.

SARDINE STUDENT 2: Then you take the seat.

SARDINE STUDENT 1: Are you insane?!

For my next bus ride, I plan to string the adjacent seat with Christmas lights, douse the fabric with vanilla lavender, and prop up a sign that says "VIP seating. VIP = you!" Maybe I can promise them candy, too.

Seating in class is different, and I get that; sometimes there are assigned seats, or people strike up friendships with their first-day desk-buddies. But when there is an open seat next to me and you come to class late, why do you sit at the front of the room? That's like a perpetual hand-raise for the rest of class. You would rather paint a bullseye on your forehead rather than pop a squat next to me? Are you insane?!

One time, a girl did sit next to me in class. One time. It was a horrible day for her to do so. I was tired, I was hungry, and I was in the back of the class, so I had my

glasses on and was trying to see the board around five rows of heads, swaying and squinting like an idiot. Being tired, I was slouching a haggard-looking (unlike my usual perky and adorable self). Being hungry, my stomach was loudly making noises usually reserved for volcanic eruptions or sucking remnants to soda out of a 21 oz. cup. I was basically Gollum, from The Lord of the Rings. It probably didn't help that I introduced myself, saying, "I'm single, my precioussss..."

Am I honestly that repulsive? I will admit that I frequently yawn, and when I yawn, my chin disappears into my neck, turning me into Jabba the Hutt, and then I get teary-eyed. I understand that; no one wants to sit next to a crying Jabba the Hutt.

Perhaps it's my body odor. Is it that horrendous of a smell that people can tell from three feet away when they see the open seat, glance at me, and move on? Maybe I should start wearing Axe bodyspray, and then start popping my collar (not as a joke), and paint myself orange. Because I hear chicks these days go for citrus-like jerks with popped collars. They also go for guys who are aware of their own B.O. and know how to manage it.

I guess this could all just be an elaborate practical joke. Maybe Ashton Kutcher ran out of A-list celebrities to Punk and had to resort to making fools out of unknown Facebook-columnist/students. Trust me, I've seen The Truman Show enough times to know that a hoax this big is possible. Just so you all know, I'm onto you...

Maybe it's just the opposite; maybe I'm just so desirable and attractive that people are nervous to sit next to me. I mean, if Ryan Reynolds was in my class, I would definitely not sit next to him, but sit across the classroom and admire from afar. It's just common courtesy.

But that's probably not it.

Sigh... maybe I'll never know exactly why there always needs to be an empty seat next to me. I mean, it's not like I'm going to put a whoopee-cushion there or anything (I won't make THAT mistake again). I guess I just don't look friendly enough.

And for those of you who are suggesting "Why don't YOU go sit next to somebody?" I have only one response: Are you insane?! Do you know how awkward that is?!