

PROJECT DAWN by Karen Hartman

<https://www.concordtheatricals.com/p/64336/project-dawn>

In Project Dawn, women with three or more prostitution convictions--and no other criminal convictions--are given a final chance to rehabilitate themselves through the imperfect but stalwart Project Dawn Court's intensive program. At the end of the play, Lola, who has struggled to express herself, addresses the court.

LOLA

Yes I will, Your Honor.

(Lights soften, focus on Lola)

I tied my coat to my suitcase by the arms and didn't put it on one time in nine days.

It's not hot like summer, that's how I thought it was in California, summer in the winter.

It isn't summer. It's bright and, I guess you'd call it mild. It's mild.

The plane lands right by the water, it lands like through palm trees like the plane on Fantasy Island, if you're old like me you remember, Da Plane, Da Plane, but I was on the plane. That was cool.

My moms got old but she's smiley. Her boyfriend's nice. They drink beers in the garden.

The complex has a lemon tree. It's like a little bit of heaven landing there.

Her boyfriend Manuel picked me up. She was waiting in the car. That confused me because I came to see her not him, but she waited.

She's always afraid.

Mom she was always afraid of everything. She's a good person but I mean, you that scared how good can you be? How good can you do?

Also she was watching the car at the curb so they didn't have to pay no parking fees.

Everyone speaking Spanish in San Diego, everybody, more even than Philly, but Mexican, they sound all beaner.

When I got on the plane, a white baby was in my seat. I saw from three rows away and my heart was pounding because Nia printed out my ticket and I know my seat number by heart so I'm thinking holy lord what if I can't fly after all? I get to my row and I just stand; the man and lady have these vests not exactly matching but like they went the same store, him and her? And he's wearing this ugly fabric pouch.

So he looks at her like, you say it, and she's like, Oh our seats are over in that row but we want to be together in this row where there's room for the baby so could you do 22C instead of 18A, it's an Aisle. And my mom bought my window seat two months ago so I could see where I'm going.

My stomach starts chopping up and I'm sweating in my coat, and she's looking at me like I'm, not dirt more like a rock in the middle of a road she's walking, oh what is this obstacle? And she's like, "Do you have kids?" and I'm like, "Yes ma'am I do." And she's like "You know how it is."

And I feel good that she can't tell what I am, but also I want to say, Actually this is my first plane ride and my son's in jail and my other son's in the Army and I'm proud of him but also scared for him and I'm fighting for my daughter, and I gave up three more, I gave up three more, and none of those kids ever went on a plane with me so I don't know the particular problem you're describing.

Her baby is screaming and the husband looks pretty useless with the pouch. She shows me on her phone screen, the 22C, she didn't even put it on paper, and I start to head down. I'm shuffling past 18 to 19, 20, they do cram the people in there, it's like a long line but you're not sure for what? And it smells like a bathroom, a clean bathroom but those solvents?

And I think the word: "no."

And I stop.

And I turn around, which is not easy because the aisle is built for little stick people, and I say to the person behind me excuse me I need to go back. I'm carrying this big bag because it costs thirty dollars for them to take my bag, and all the storage is gone because, I'm not sure maybe people put the bags over other seats that aren't theirs?

But I get back to 18a and I say, "I would like to sit in my own seat."

And they go sure, sure, but she's side eyeing me. And I just look straight ahead pleasant, like I don't need to throw shade I got the seat. I have my paper.

And I wait patiently while he packs the baby back into the pouch and she gathers the damn cut up fruit into little boxes and he unlocks the baby seat and she folds the ipads and they just take you know a very long time shuffling back to the two not three seats they paid for, in the row where they belong.

And I removed my coat, and leaned on that window, and passed six hours in bliss.

And by the time I met my mom she could disappoint me again. Because I did not disappoint me.

I forgave everyone, even the ones that didn't ask.

Thank you, Your Honor, for the opportunity.

I had a true vacation.

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You are welcome to perform this monologue for free! It would mean a lot to me if you would [buy this play](#), and it's a good idea for your performance too.

You may CUT but you may not CHANGE the words. Please introduce the monologue with title of play and author's name (this is a monologue from Leah's Train by Karen Hartman).

Feel free to send a video link to yourself performing the monologue through the Contact page, and let me know if I may share! Thanks and be well, KH

www.karenhartman.org