

The Accidental Tourist

Bill Bryson



Warm Up

Often on formal occasions, we admire friends and strangers who appear elegant, who are pleasant to converse with and who conduct themselves gracefully. At times, we also see people who are awkward, nervous and doubtful about their next move.

Recall a few examples of awkward actions that can cause discomfort or disturbance to others like spilling a cup of hot drink on someone nearby.

Now, read this amusing story about the frustrations of a globetrotter and find out how he faces chaos in his everyday life.

Of all the things I am not very good at, living in the real world is perhaps the most outstanding. I am constantly filled with wonder at the number of things that other people do without any evident difficulty that are pretty much beyond me. I cannot tell you the number of times that I have gone looking for the lavatory

in a cinema, for instance, and ended up standing in an **alley** on the wrong side of a self-locking door. My particular specialty now is returning to hotel desks two or three times a day and asking what my room number is. I am, in short, easily confused.



I was thinking about this the last time we went en famille on a big trip. It was at Easter, and we were flying to England for a week. When we arrived at Logan Airport in Boston and were checking in, I suddenly remembered that I had recently joined British Airways' frequent flyer programme. I also remembered that I had put the card in the carry-on bag that was hanging around my neck. And here's where the trouble started.