Dakar 1989

by J.S. Graustein

Everyone runs to the plane but me. I get the last seat (middle of 5), crush men's bags on my way. I'm white & female. They glare.

I have to pee. Again. I think—Sahara. No use. I climb over knee high carry-on bundles while their owners slap me. Curse me.

Lock myself in & pee. Cry. I lean on the bulkhead, drink in this freedom from my status as tubabu & sleep. Steward kicks me out.

We're given customs forms. I write. They stare. One hands me his with “s'il vous plait?” They stare. I nod & write. They smile.

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