My First International Flight

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People started screaming, but I was concentrating more on his gun. I hadn't heard a really audible report; obviously, he was using a silencer. Clever fellow.

I quickly pulled out my badge, and with my other hand removed my gun from my waistband. “Police!” I yelled.

He turned to me, surprised, and then turned his gun at the bank teller. “I’ll shoot her!” Her face turned cement white.

I just pulled the trigger. It was one of my cleanest shots; right to the head and he was down. No danger to the hostage.

I quickly made my way through the line to the teller, pushing past the people who were slapping me on the back, thanking me. The teller thanked me profusely. I merely smiled casually, and put my deposit slip down on the table. It read, “Give me all your money.”

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Passengers, fasten your seatbelts and prepare for take off!

As I glance out the window, I see that we are slowly beginning to move. Not much time passes before we rapidly gain momentum; off into the sky we go. It will be a nineteen hour race to our final destination. The food is edible; I don’t mind the crying babies or the guy next to me that is talking excessively. Why, might you ask? Because it is what is to come that I can’t wait for: a new land, different people, diverse culture and religion. This will be the experience of a lifetime. The clouds seem to disperse themselves, opening up a gap to reveal that which is unknown to me. It’s like a dream that I never want to wake up from. As I look out onto the beautiful horizon, I see the majesty that I always took for granted, but this time the angle is different and that makes all the difference. The feelings are indescribable, the emotion uncontrollable. I feel a peace and serenity that covers me like a warm blanket on a wintery night. Everything is moving so fast, although according to the clouds it feels like slow motion. The clouds drift along as the sunrise creeps up between it in beautiful hues of purple, pink, red and orange. Every color plays its part perfectly to create something that touches me deep down in my soul. Every little area exposed with nowhere to hide. But this beauty is only attainable at this angle, this angle from 37,000 feet in the air, moving at a speed of 580 miles per hour. As day breaks, this is the first time I am able to see land and water. The stars are beginning to fade and the sun does a little dance as it comes to full view, but the memory is embedded in me forever. Slowly, one by one, as if being directed by an orchestra, each passenger starts to wake up. A stretch here, a yawn there and a wipe of the eyes as everyone takes one last look. A change is occurring and for the first time I am not afraid. I will embrace it and never turn back. Doors are opening and I am walking through them with no hesitation, just faith. I reach into my purse and pull out a single piece of gum. I pop it in my mouth and prepare for descent. It’s
been a long ride but so worth it. My first international flight.

Haunted Past
Donnie Drobny

The Midnight Hotel was a dimly lit bar well off the beaten track of the city. Unlike many hip dive bars, the Midnight Hotel smelled of cheap alcohol mixed with the bitter scent of cigarettes. Jack sat alone at the bar nursing a long necked bottle and staring at the playing card coaster. Absent-mindedly, his left hand reached down and touched the wedding ring he always carried in his pocket, feeling the weight of it through the course denim. He still carried it even though his wife, Susan, had died nearly 5 years ago. The weight in his pocket reminded him of what the weight in his heart would never let him forget.

He found himself thinking about the way that she laughed at all his dumb jokes, the way she softly snored in bed beside him and how she tugged at her earlobe when she was angry. That was the Susan he missed.

"Hey buddy, you in there?" The bartender's voice ripped through the haze of memories and Jack started, looking into the smiling face of the aging man behind the bar.

"Yeah, sorry, I was just- well, somewhere else I guess."

"I know the feeling. Need another!"

He gestured at the empty bottle still in Jack's hand.

"Sure, I'll be here awhile."

The bartender took the bottle, revealing the queen of hearts, a halo of water encircling her head, and walked away. The bar had filled up and a flash of raven black hair, exactly the same shade Susan's had been, at the other end of the bar caught his eye. Jack was sure that she would turn around and he would see that same smile with the lone dimple on one side.

Then she turned to face him and that same smile flickered and faded. That same dimple shrunk then disappeared. Her green eyes locked with his and flashed quickly to the exit.

He was up pushing through people before she had begun to move away from the bar, cutting her off before she could reach the door.