

Americans living in Singapore are subjected to adventures. They have opted for the pathway of adventure rather than security. Like goats, they traverse steep, rocky trails of changes, vocational, religious, and sexual, and their lives will have been forever changed.

The Goats from the Sheep

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4608.html?s=pdf>

The GOATS from the SHEEP



Novel

David L Danielson

David L. Danielson

Copyright © 2010 David L Danielson

ISBN 978-1-60910-139-8

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Printed in the United States of America.

The characters and events in this book are either fictitious or, if they do exist, are portrayed in entirely fictional circumstances and situations. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, except as noted above, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2010

1 – Sheep and Goats

There are many behavior differences between sheep and goats. Goats are naturally curious and independent, while sheep tend to become more distant and aloof. Sheep have a stronger flocking instinct and become very agitated if they are separated from the rest of the flock. Goats are natural browsers. Very agile, they will stand on their hind legs to reach vegetation.

- Sheep 101.info

Don Johnson approached the security screening queue at the Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX. Passengers in front of him and behind him were beginning to fidget even as they pretended to appear at ease and casual. Sphincter muscles would spasm in being selected out and being told, “Sir, would you step into this booth, please? Mam, would you please follow that agent into a screening room?” Even innocents were queasy about being poked, prodded, or ordered to strip. Even those with nothing significant to hide, worried. Everyone had something to hide. Some even worried that a bomb would be found in one of their shoes or in their underpants, although there hadn’t been any when they got dressed. This wasn’t rational, but travel in the early decade of the twenty-first century was no longer rational.

Don flashed a card encased in a leather folder from the inside of his jacket. The TSA (Transportation Security Administration) agent glanced at the photo identification and compared it with Donald’s face. He took his time but then noticeably changed. He morphed from looking authoritative to looking intimidated. The printed text: ‘Central Intelligence Agency’ made the TSA agent as nervous as discovering a suspected terrorist. He quickly motioned for Donald to pass. He also alerted the other agents to turn off the metal scanner so that if this passenger happened to have a Walther P99 in an underarm holster no lights would flash or buzzers be set off. It was as though the agent wanted to have as little to do with Johnson as possible. There were few persons the TSA agents didn’t order about. This passenger was one of those.

Don seated himself in the waiting room and absently picked up a discarded agricultural journal which another passenger had abandoned. He read there the quotation printed above which had to do with the differences between sheep and goats. Sheep had fifty-four chromosomes, but goats had sixty, six more. This was unexpected but set him to thinking. He was thus brooding about the physiological, psychological, philosophical, and even theological implications of goats, rams, the ramifications, as it were, of goats as symbols for the human specie, as he waited for his flight, SQ-11, a Singapore Airlines flight to Singapore via Hong Kong. He had oft been told that he was not wont to lie down in green pastures like sheep. The still waters had little appeal to Agent Donald Johnson. Maybe, as Mitzi often warned him, he had been on his hind legs for far too long climbing, pawing at the higher branches, butting heads. Maybe he had a few too many chromosomes.

“Are you a farmer then?” the man in the departure lounge who plopped down next to Don inquired.

“I’ve had a little experience on The Farm.” Donald would not reveal that ‘The Farm’ referred to the facility where C. I. A. agents were trained.

“Ah, you grew up on your folks’ farm, did you?” asked the occupant of the seat next to Donald.

“No, sir, it was at my Uncle’s place.” Donald was being coyly clever. He liked playing word games. He certainly would no more reveal his identity than would any other agent of The Firm, another euphemism for CIA headquarters.

“Would that be around in the Midwest then? That’s where I’m from.”

“No, Uncle’s farm is way out east, but I’d guess that farming is farming wherever it is.”

“You got that right. You see, I knew right away you were interested in agriculture from that magazine you were reading. I do a lot of business with farmers. I’m the John Deere Dealer in Kearney. That’s in Nebraska, you know. Ever been there? Biggest little town in Nebraska. Always in the red column.”

“Lots of Commies there then?”

The Goats From The Sheep

A look of horror marred the stranger's otherwise placid look. "Red like in red state, not blue, like the TV returns do on election night." He leaned forward turning his head to stare into Donald's face. "Oh, you're funnin' with me?" He laughed as he slapped Donald on the back. "Oh yeah, us Eggvists been Grand Old Party for at least three generations now. I'm a Kearney J.C. booster too. Look me up at Deere under the green and yellow sign. I'll show you our new 9030 series up to 530 horse power, 18 speed power shift, air cushion ride. Better than a Caddie. I can cut you a terrific deal. Get you a cap absolutely free of charge too."

"I drove through there once; passed under that archway. . ."

"The Great Platte River Road Archway. You shoulda pulled in. Best damn museum west of Omaha. Say, could I ask you a question? Are the streets dangerous over there? I mean, if me and the missus take a stroll a block or two away from our hotel? We're at the Orchard Hotel. Are there muggers, purse snatchers, people like that?"

"You'll find it dangerous." Don was being a trifle naughty. He did things like this occasionally to relieve the boredom of frequent travel. Although he could plead he was merely telling the truth exaggerated a bit. As a State Department officer of the United States government, he was doing his duty, helping to insure the safety of fellow citizens traveling abroad. "You could easily step off a curb and be run down by a Jaguar. I'm referring to a British auto not the jungle animal. A good many tourists are. You'll automatically look to your left for approaching traffic. That's the way you've done it all your life. It's instinct with you, but do that in Singapore, you'll be hit for sure by a car as you step from the curb, a car bearing down on you next to the curb on your right. The traffic there travels on the left side of the road. The tourists best at recollecting this are those pondering this difference from a hospital bed, their legs in pulleys. As for purse snatchers, sure, but they're more likely to be monkeys, not the human ones we're used to in the States."

The tourist turned toward him again, surprise written on his face. "You live there then? You know, I can't figure out people like you, people willing, even eager, to leave the good old U S of A to live with foreigners. It's like my son. We raised him with good homespun

values, but he got this crazy notion at the university in Lincoln to go into banking. Now he's learning the ropes at the Singapore office of Bank of America. That's where we're going, to see him. We'd stay with them, but the missus and I prefer separate beds nowadays. She's put on a few pounds, you know. He's raising our grandson with foreigners. He says his family are 'expats.' Expats! It's like a dirty word. It's like they were patriots once but aren't any longer." The tourist leaned close to Johnson breathing in his ear as though confiding a closely guarded secret. "Are you one of those too, one of those expats, learning to eat with chopsticks or something?"

Johnson was a remarkably curious man, learning all there was to learn about those with whom he came in contact. It was his field, actually. He was paid to be curious, but in this instance his curiosity was waning. He picked up the agricultural journal again, but this failed to divert the tourist from divulging even more about himself.

"Now take my eldest son. Chip off the old block. He'll be taking over my John Deere franchise one of these years. I'm teaching him the ropes. There's plenty of money in farm equipment, believe you me. Like my papa used to say, 'He's like a fruit that didn't fall far from the tree.' There would have been plenty of room for Albert too. He's the expat, dontcha know, but, no, he had to strike out on his own. Do it his way.

"It's like a disability or something. Like maybe being born with only one leg or an extra arm or something. He sure doesn't take after me, I can tell you that. Maybe the missus' side of the family. She had an uncle who was kind of odd. Never married, you know? Like that, maybe. A disability.

"My old granny had an explanation for it, told a story about fairies sneaking into a nursery and swapping an odd child for the original baby placed there by its parents. It was easier to believe that something like that had happened than to believe that one's child was kind of peculiar. I wouldn't say for sure that happened with us, but Albert sure doesn't take after me at all. So, like I say, maybe Granny's explanation made about as much sense as to say that he went off to the University in Lincoln and came back so different and all. I think I remember how that story goes. You want to hear it?"

The Goats From The Sheep

Don shifted in his seat, looked at his watch. “Well, maybe some other . . .”

“What did your uncle raise on his farm, corn, soy, wheat, what?”

“Oh. A little of this, and a little of that. He was into animals mostly, sheep, goats, some cows for milking. That’s what I was reading in this journal, a story about sheep and goats. It got me thinking. Some people are more like sheep. Others are more like goats. Take your son who wants to live overseas. It seems he likes to roam more. So that makes him more like a goat. Did you ever think of that?”

“No, I can’t say that I ever did.” His head tilted sidewise as he looked at Donald out of the corner of his eyes.

“Take you for example, which would you rather be, a sheep or a goat?”

That was a question never before put to him. Actually, he couldn’t see himself as either a goat or a sheep. “I’m a tractor salesman. John Deere. Made in Moline, Illinois.”

“I think you said so before. But if you had to choose one or the other, which would it be? Would you rather be a sheep or a goat?”

The tourist thought about this for awhile. It was not a question he had been asked every day. Finally, he looked up into the lofty interior of the terminal as though seeking an answer in the overhead steel girders and nodded his head knowingly. “Well, sure, I’d go with the sheep. You remember what the Lord says?”

“Not always.”

“He says when your time comes he’ll separate the sheep from the goats. The sheep go at his right hand, the goats to his left. Then when it’s all over and done with, the sheep get saved and the goats are tossed into the fiery pit. They’re the ones who’re apt to be odd, like my Albert who’s trying to eat with chopsticks even though he always spills on his shirt.”

“You’ve managed to hold on to your given values, would you say?”

“You can count on it. Our family goes back three generations at First Lutheran. I’ve been Financial Secretary there now for twenty-three years. I know what each and every person at church gives. I keep the records and remind folks of their pledges. The pastor says my

David L. Danielson

knowing what each and every business man in town puts in the plate encourages generous giving. Say, I hope you don't mind my asking, but are you on good terms with the Lord?"

"Ah, I think I'll go to the washroom before we board." Don didn't really have to go, but thought as long as he was up he might as well give it a try. His previous thoughts therefore settled upon him as he stood at the urinal. So, maybe goats like us are the ones who can't quite adjust to the way things are in our families and communities? We'd like to be free to either choose our environments or alter them to our liking. We're not like the sheep content to remain in the flock into which it was assigned. Those of us going abroad with only a passport but no return ticket are like goats pawing and butting and rutting about.

Don senses a man standing behind him. The man seems in a hurry as indeed all persons not at the front of the line at urinals tend to be. The man shouts at the back of Don's head. "Hey, that's to be used not abused." Don thinks of the Walther tucked under his arm but of course doesn't pull it from its holster. Just thinking about it is comfort enough.

3 – The Amiable Teachers

Monica and Trisha

If you would attain to what you are not yet, you must always be displeased by what you are. For where you are pleased with yourself there you have remained. Keep adding, keep walking, keep advancing.
- Saint Augustine

Monica Hoover watched Trisha with some trepidation but more mirth. She was fun; you could say that about her, and most everyone did. Still, she hoped that her friend would not follow in the ways of her mother, really a pathetic figure. Still, Trisha was young. She had a lot of growing up to do, but that could wait. They were going to Singapore to have fun. Monica giggled. Her friend was not unlike a returning pinball bouncing and careening off bumpers making her way back to her seat.

Monica and Trish had come from the same town, Forest City, Iowa, and had graduated a few years previously from the small Lutheran College in that town, Waldorf. Other than that their backgrounds could not have been more dissimilar.

They were part of a contingent of four teachers recently spirited away from the Pasadena school system by Singapore American School's mildly raffish superintendent, Freddy Fox. The other two were even more dissimilar and were an unlikely couple, Jasper Steponovitch and Liselot Lohuis, pronounced 'Lowhouse' the way the Dutch in Grand Forks, North Dakota, pronounced it. Those two were huddled under a skimpy blanket in seats 67 A and B directly ahead of Trisha and Monica. Although Monica strained to hear them she couldn't make out their conversation, hearing only the oft repeated phrase, "Not here, Jasper. Wait until we get to Singapore. Oh! Now behave yourself!" She giggled again. What times they'd have.

A gentle grandmotherly type in 67 C next to the snuggling couple tried to ignore the neckers with little success. She now had difficulty

The Goats From The Sheep

returning her eyeballs straight ahead. The lady feared she may have strained an olfactory muscle.

Monica's thoughts returned to Trisha progressing erratically down the aisle. Monica's mother had been particularly critical of her friend. "Cheap, that's what she is, cheap!" She had said this repeatedly about her back in Forest City. "She's no better than her trashy mother. By the time Trisha is her age her reputation will be just as bad. If you continue hanging out with her, yours will be tarnished too."

Monica agreed that Trish occasionally appeared cheap, but she saw a genuine person beneath the glitter, honest and generous. Besides, she had become a necessity for Monica. She was her supplier. Student life at Waldorf Lutheran College could be dry as a desert without a source. Monica had relied upon her friend to obtain an occasional bottle of vodka for her. Trisha was able to purchase the occasional bottle at Uptown Liquors, but Monica could not, because she was a 'townie' or at least close enough to town to be identified at the liquor store. She could not even use her fake ID in Forest City. Therefore a bottle was stashed in Trisha's dorm room behind her thesaurus, Trisha's own bottle.

Monica lived off campus on a farm near the small town, Forest City. She had graduated from Forest City High School, played field hockey, and was a cheer leader. The town lay safely west of I-35 which linked the bright lights and temptations of Minneapolis to Des Moines. It was nearly obscured when the corn tasseled, but some said it had lures of its own. Monica matured even more slowly growing up north and west of town on Halvorson Road amidst a hundred and twenty-two acres of corn and soy beans, but she tried to make up for lost time by hanging out in Trisha's room on Waldorf's campus in town, occasionally lifting the thesaurus from its place on the shelf.

Monica had been insatiably curious about Trisha's history, likely because it had contrasted so sharply from her own. She was even slightly envious. "What was that again your mother was called, Trish?"

"Her professional name, the one that appeared on marquees, was 'Adora Belle'. She claimed to be a dancer, but her moves were pretty elementary as she shucked off her clothes."

“And your father?”

“I’m not really sure who he was. Mama claims he was a prosperous professional man from Mason City by the name of Eddie Watts. I saw his name emblazoned on the side of a panel truck one time. ‘**Bug-Off with Eddie**’ ‘**Eddie Watts, exterminator.**’ In smaller letters: ‘ants, ticks, fleas, spiders, and cockroaches.’

“But you go by the name of Hunter?” asked Monica.

“From my grandparents in Iowa City. He’s on the faculty at the university. Very respectable. Mama went by that name as long as she could, but then she began shedding names as easily as her clothing. To hide from credit card collectors I suppose. She never figured out which ones still had manageable balances. Gramps encouraged me to go to college. I was enrolled in a beautician’s course in Mason City, but he said I was college material. I probably would have gone to U of I, but Mama still did some gigs around Cedar Rapids near enough to Iowa City. People say we look alike, and I didn’t want any of the college guys to make the connection.”

Monica loved Trisha’s looks, lean, long legged, with straight blond hair shoulder length. She didn’t look cheap, and if she could have afforded better clothes no one would say that about her. “I wish I could have gone to college where I wasn’t known,” said Monica.

“But your folks are so respectable.”

“Sure they are. ‘I’m a Halvorson, you know,’ says my mother to anyone who’ll listen as though marrying a Hoover was scraping the barrel. “She is a charter member of the Forest City Women’s Christian Temperance Union. They are opposed to the use of alcohol in any amount for any reason. She tried to get wine substituted for grape juice at Holy Communion at Pilot Knob Lutheran Church. It divided the teetotalers from the Biblical literalists for many months. The literalists won. Mom says they’re probably closet boozers.”

“Pilot Knob?” asked Trisha, “what a strange name for a church.”

“We never thought it strange,” replied Monica. “It was named for a hill near by. Some said it was the second highest point in Iowa. Legend has it that settlers heading west were able to maintain their bearings by looking back toward it.”

The Goats From The Sheep

“How about you, Monica, do you maintain your bearings by looking back at it?”

“If I looked back at all it would likely be hidden by the fields of corn, Trisha.”

Monica was dark haired and dark complected, considerably shorter than her friend, and she had to watch her carbohydrate intake carefully, especially that brewed from barley and hops. Her mother said she took after the Hoover side of her family, not a compliment.

“And your father?”

“He’s merely a Hoover from around West Branch, Iowa. There were a whole lot of Hoovers over that way. Maybe you heard of his grand uncle, the miner, name of Herbert who dug around for gold but gave up and went into politics where he struck a few veins. Maybe you heard of him.”

Trisha slid into her seat alongside Monica in 68 A and attempted to explain her recent performance up to the lavatory and return. “Well, yes, I was detoured. We hit an air pocket or something, and I was thrown unto the man in an aisle seat up there, the very nicest man anyone could know. Tad Plankinton is his name and he does something with oil. One of his kids is at S. A. S., and I thought as a teacher we should be friendly with parents. I mean I couldn’t just land on him and bounce off like he was a trampoline or something.”

Trisha’s attention was drawn to the erratic and changing bulges in the blanket in the seats ahead of them. “What’s going on up there?”

+++

Jasper and Liselot

*We would rather be ruined than changed
We would rather die in our dread
Than climb the cross of the moment
And let our illusions die.*

W.H. Auden

The answer to Trisha's question was totally dependent on the prurient imagination of any observer, although if Jasper had heard the question he might likely have stopped whatever he was doing to answer it. He was easily distracted.

Before burying himself and Liselot under the blanket, he had stood before his fellow travelers lecturing them on the meaning of the term, 'expat.' "It's short for expatriate, you know."

Monica and Trisha looked at each other and rolled their eyes. Liselot sighed and said, "Oh, Jasper, not another lecture."

He would not be dissuaded that easily. "It's the word for patriots living abroad, citizens living outside the borders of the country they came from. That's us, 'expats.' They go abroad in order to change, to become the kind of persons they always wanted to be. Like Ernest Hemmingway for instance. He was sure different after living on the French Riviera from when he lived in Illinois. Same thing for F. Scott Fitzgerald. He left his Minnesota ways behind and became more Parisian when he learned to get loose there. He'd never have met Zelda in St. Paul. Then there's Gertrude Stein. I doubt if she would ever have discovered her lesbian tendencies if she'd remained in Pennsylvania. They needed to become expats to do those things they were inclined to do."

Now Liselot's eyes were fully opened, her mouth as well. Jasper researched the purple – blue depths of Lisa's eyes, before lowering his gaze to the wet fullness of her lips and the shiny smoothness of her tongue. "You think I'll become a lesbian because we're moving to Singapore?"

"Only if you're so inclined, but I really doubt if you are." Jasper appeared to be contemplating this thought. "All I'm saying is that expats change. They become very different from what they were. I wonder how we're going to change?" That sudden fright caused his stomach to cramp. He decided to make a dash for the rear lavatory. The sign above the door still read 'occupied.'

Fortunately, the wait was not long. His stomach stopped churning during the wait, so when his turn came, Jasper no longer had to go. However, after standing in line he thought it would look strange if he returned to his seat without using the facility, so he went inside, closed

The Goats From The Sheep

the door, and began examining himself in the mirror. There was a zit alongside his nose that he painstakingly mined.

Vanity was not one of his faults. He had very little about which to be vain. Others considered him nondescript. More seriously, he agreed with their assessment. He was so average as to become mediocre. His driver's license established his hair color as brown, but there had been no "mousy" box to check off on the application form. Fortunately, he showed signs in his adolescent years of losing his messy mousy hair prematurely.

There were about one hundred thirty-seven pounds of Jasper distributed a bit carelessly over his five feet seven inch frame settling like goose down into the bottom half like in a comforter. His gym instructor tried to redistribute some of this stuffing with little success. If he was seen walking more than other Pocatello teenagers it was because he lacked wheels. It was this which encroached on his relationship with the opposite sex. He considered this a greater handicap than getting from point A to point B. Working-out did not become Jasper's priority when he became an adult. He noticeably sagged.

A few gays misinterpreted Jasper's apparent celibacy and made overtures, but he found no common bond among them. He remained a loner and focused on academics. This enabled him to be near the top on grade point charts. This startled faculty members who remained convinced the boy was below average. He just seemed not quite average. He didn't work for grades but got them because he lacked distractions.

Jasper Steponovitch didn't like his name any more than any of his other attributes. It was bestowed by his mother, Rosetta, who sought some legitimacy for her pregnancy following a wilder than usual night at a Super 8 Motel in Jasper, Wyoming with Willy Steponovitch who agreed upon being confronted with the motel receipt for that night in Jasper to marry her.

Jasper's passport revealed his last name as 'Steponovitch'. This would have surprised his former acquaintances, because he had been a Blatnik at Pocatello High School. It was easier for him to give that name and avoid further questions. He lived with his grandparents,

Eskil and Roseann Blatnik. His parents, Willy and Rosetta Steponovitch, were killed after their car slid out of control after leaving a roadhouse north of Pocatello to crash into a ravine of the Portneuf River. Their bodies remained undiscovered for three weeks.

The missing bodies brewed speculation that Rosetta Steponovitch had found a way to escape creditors and Willy had found a way to avoid a trial date. He had been indicted for assault after contributing to another bar patron's concussion. Locating their bodies downstream ended the gossip and brought Jasper some closure.

Effort was expended by the high school yearbook staff to write something pertinent beneath Jasper's name. That was a challenge. Few knew him or what he had done. He was not on any team, musical organization, or academic club. Jasper had considered trying out for the chess team, but chess required concentration. Besides, he didn't know the others on the team. He had studied chess moves in old magazines but never tried them in actual competition. No one on the yearbook staff knew who Jasper's date was to the annual prom or even if he had attended. The caption '*Silence is golden*' was finally attached to Jasper's photo.

Jasper had seen no persuasive reason to admit being a Steponovitch in high school, but when he enrolled at Idaho State he crossed out 'Blatnik' and wrote 'Steponovitch' to agree with his Social Security Card. Other than that, little else changed for Jasper. He continued to walk to class, a couple of blocks further than his walk to Pocatello High. His passport was now consistent with his Bachelor of Arts certificate from the university. He missed graduating with honors by only a few points. Unfortunately, explained Jasper, this near miss was not recorded on his certificate.

Jasper's unmarried uncle, Emil Blatnik, lived in a three room house on the alley a few doors from the Blatniks. Emil's attention to his nephew was thought suspicious by Roseann but Eskil assured her that brother Emil would never do anything with the boy like what she was thinking. Jasper became interested in his uncle's cache of *National Geographics* and soon talked about visiting places his grandparents hadn't known existed. They were grateful to Emil for

The Goats From The Sheep

expanding Jasper's horizons. "He actually sounds like he's been to some of them there places," said Eskil.

Following graduation from Idaho State Jasper applied and was accepted as a mathematics instructor at Jerome High School a short distance west of Pocatello. Upon receiving an application for the mathematics position, Jasper scanned the Jerome Yearbook to assess the faculty. He was startled, overjoyed, to discover Miss Winifred Pennyfluger's photo among the staff. He applied for the position immediately. His application was so enthusiastic it was promptly accepted. He became a valued member of the staff, an advisor to the Chess Club, and volunteered to be an assistant coach of the senior class play.

Jasper had followed Miss Pennyfluger's stage career with avid interest. He attended every one of her performances at Idaho State, sometimes twice a day if the first performance was a matinee. Winnie became vaguely aware of Jasper's near stalking attention, but since he never tried to make personal contact with her, she tolerated his specter-like presence. Miss Winifred's credentials included stage experience at the drama club at Idaho State and two roles, one major, at the Mystique Dinner Theater in Chubbuck just north Pocatello. The residents of Jerome were proud to have a professional actor on their high school staff.

Winnie was grateful for the substantial assistance afforded her by the new mathematics teacher. He spent hours painting sets, locating period costumes, and securing needed props. Jasper was also diligent in maintaining cast discipline. He kept an eagle eye out for cast members sneaking off into corridors and storage rooms to puff some weed or to indulge in erotic extracurricular adventures. These encounters did however make an impact on Jasper, gave him thoughts and fantasies he might not otherwise have entertained.

Thus stimulated, Jasper followed Winifred into one of the storage facilities across the hall from the auditorium and grasped a few prominent parts of her anatomy hitherto explored only visually, at least by him. Winnie did not scream which was to her credit but would likely have promptly discouraged Jasper. As it was, the pair were observed at some length by a cast member and a few of his friends.

Winifred thought it advisable to report the incident to the principal who thereupon urged Jasper to seek employment at some other school.

Jasper recalled seeing beach scenes in some of Emil's *National Geographics*. The young women were nearly nude not like at the Pocatello pool. He promptly applied for a teaching job at Pasadena High School. California was a great distance from Pocatello, culturally as well as geographically. Living there would require an adjustment. Jasper adapted poorly to change and began having stomach cramps and chronic diarrhea. A young woman, another faculty member, asked Jasper if he was all right. Her name was Liselot Lohuis. He seldom left her side thereafter.

Now Jasper's reveries before the mirror in the airliner's toilet were shattered by a pounding and a rattling of the lavatory door. "What the hell are you doing in there? Do we have to call an attendant?"

"No, no, I'll be right out," and with that, Jasper exited the lavatory. Four persons standing in line in the aisle applauded. As he returned to his seat next to Liselot he wondered if major personality changes required traveling a long way from where one grew up. Maybe. Or maybe it was having the need to change which caused people to move away to far off places like he was going to now. "Lisa, I'm back."

"I would never have known," she said. A shiver of excitement coursed through Liselot Lohuis' nerve endings as she vowed to change. This caused small eruptions, goose pimples, to mar her otherwise velvet complexion. It was a good feeling, a bubbling up of her emotions evidenced on her skin. It happened when she experienced a new sensation, a new thrill. It coursed over her now as she reflected on what Jasper had just told her. She was an expat. She had come away from the mundane crowd to explore new places with anticipated new experiences. I doubt if I'll be transformed into a lesbian as Jasper suggests, she giggled. That would have been the most unlikely change she could imagine. She wanted to look sexy but not to attract the attention of another female. She was pretty certain of that.

She would, however, change. Of that she was equally certain, because she embraced change. She made change happen because she

rejected the identity she had been given. She had been baptized Liselot Lohuis, pronounced 'Lowhouse' as unmistakably Dutch as the stark interior of the Grand Forks, North Dakota, Reformed Church in which her father, Daan, ministered. As she began college she shed those components she considered unbecoming, like the last letters of her name. Liselot became simply 'Lisa,' and she demolished the 'house' in 'Lohuis' to become 'Lowe.' She liked the sound of 'Lisa Lowe'. It was a name that would look good on a theater marquee. It also was close enough to her baptized name to not be thought disloyal.

Loyalty was a sterling quality in father Daan's hierarchy of character traits. It was required by God Himself. The Bible said so. *Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee.* It had to do with obedience and discipline, and there were many rules, far more rules for a Dutch Reformed person than for any other religion she knew. Her father was meticulous in keeping rules. His name 'Daan' meant 'God is my judge,' and he labored mightily to be judged worthy. Papa's voice rose to a higher pitch on 'thy father,' and faded slightly on 'thy mother,' as though this was likely God's afterthought.

There were many aspects to honoring a Dutch Reformed preacher father, particularly for a teenage girl. It involved shunning make-up, particularly lip gloss. It was forbidden. There were certain styles of clothes, especially for young ladies that were prohibited. She was not to wear shorts unless they were to the knee and sufficiently baggy so as not to reveal a young woman's secrets. Her dresses were to be in subdued colors, of sturdy fabrics, neither cut too low or raised too high. They were always to be large enough so she could grow into them even when she stopped growing. Liselot asked her father for further explanations about some of these matters, and he told her that certain deacons would be sure to bring the matter up at the Board if certain standards were not adhered to by the minister's family. "If the preacher cannot control his own household, how can he be a Christian influence to his flock?"

It seemed to Liselot that she had more problems with this than did her sister, Hildur, who was never accused of calling attention to herself. Hildur was solid, appeared unadorned as nature made her,

substantial, built for production not attraction. Lisa doubted if anyone looked at Hildur twice, although a young man in the flock, Christiaan Coons, must have done so, because Hildur and Christiaan wed at an early age and went into immediate production.

Liselot liked music and bought records which were summarily banned from listening in her home. “Those are dance tunes,” said Papa. Dancing was a sin for Dutch Reformeds because of what it might lead to. She wasn’t exactly sure to what it might lead, but she began to suspect. She never asked. Why this was more of a problem for the Reformeds than it was for Catholics she could never figure out.

The Reverend Daan Lohuis’ sermons on Sunday morning concentrated heavily on sin, punishment, hell, and the devil. He discovered that attention waned when he departed from that subject. It was therefore not possible to sit in his church each week and not become concerned about going to hell. Liselot wondered why the people kept coming back. She didn’t have that choice, of course, but she felt if she was not the minister’s daughter, there were many places she’d rather be than in the cold sticky pew thinking about going to hell. The flock did return Sunday after Sunday though, because they had been warned that the only antidote to sure and certain punishment was being dipped in the blood of Jesus the Redeemer. Rev. Lohuis seldom ended a sermon without offering that hope, and the people clung to this as they would a life preserver tossed into a stormy but fiery sea.

Liselot would have been willing to attend the University of North Dakota right in Grand Forks if she could have lived on campus, but that would have been a forbidden frivolity, so she consented to go to Hope College in Holland, Michigan, a respectable Dutch Reformed School where the fires of hell and eternal punishment were kept stoked. The Lohuises deposited Liselot and her belongings at Dykstra Hall, a female dormitory that was seen to be relatively free of immoral influences by Papa Lohuis. They left her to the grace of God bolstered by stern warnings.

Three weeks later Liselot was in downtown Holland purchasing lipstick and other items she had found essential to a coed even at Hope. She stopped for a cup of coffee and sandwich at a popular

The Goats From The Sheep

restaurant. With coffee and sandwich platter in hand she searched for an empty table. "You can share with me," said a young man at a small table. It looked safe enough to Liselot, so she thanked him and sat down across from him. "My name is Phil Stower. I don't digest well eating with strangers, so let's not be strangers any more." He extended his hand. She intended to shake it, but he held on. It gave her a thrill.

He seemed nice enough. She eventually retrieved her hand and said, "My name is Liselot." He looked puzzled as though he had not heard. She said, "Call me Lisa."

"Lisa what?"

"Lisa Lowe is good enough," she said.

"It sure is for me," he said. "Are you a student here?"

"Uh-huh, how about you?" she asked.

"No, I submit to occasional parental inquisitions here on weekends. It's a small enough cost for getting my laundry done and my checkbook replenished. My real home more and more is the Pi Kappa Phi house at MSU. I'm required to be enrolled at the U to maintain my residency at the frat house."

"I've often wondered what it would be like to go to a school like that."

"You mean big?"

"Not just big, but I guess I mean broad." He looked puzzled so she went on, "Where there are so many different kinds of students from all over the world and faculty members with such diverse opinions and philosophies. I mean, isn't it awfully confusing?"

"I guess it can be if you pay that much attention to it. I don't. I'm there to party. Too soon it'll all be over, and then we'll have to get serious for the rest of our lives. How about you, Lisa Lowe, are you serious about everything you hear at Hope College?"

Without waiting for an answer, he continued, "I know; you should come over for a visit. It's little more than an hour away. I'd love to show you about. Then you could see for yourself what it's like." He handed her a card, a Pi Kappa Phi card with his printed address and phone number. "I'm but a phone call away. I can take you away from all this." He waved his arm in a circle. "How about next weekend?"

Lisa signed out of the dormitory for the weekend, because she wasn't sure if she could be back by dorm hours. She said she'd be visiting an aunt. It was a lie, not her first, and they became easier.

"This is yours?" She referred to the auto, a canary yellow Volkswagon Beetle convertible. He merely nodded.

"What are we going to do?" she asked.

"We'll see the Union, tour the campus, and end up at the House. There's a drop-in there starting in the afternoon that will spill over into the evening hours. There'll be some dancing, a few drinks, some carbohydrates, and protein if we're quick enough. You'll meet many people. You'll get an idea what MSU is like. Maybe you'll even decide to transfer?"

Her father had been right about the music Liselot had brought home. It was dance music. "I don't dance," she implored.

"Oh, you will. Trust me," Phil said, and he was right.

Lisa sipped then gulped a sweet fruity beverage she suspected was mixed with alcohol. It did wonders for her dancing. "What is that girl doing over there?" she asked Phil.

"It's called a 'lap dance.' Some of the sororities are teaching it these days. Would you like to learn?"

"It looks easier than what we're doing on our feet," she said.

"Are you getting tired?" he asked solicitously.

"I am. It's been a long day. Maybe I'd better get back to Hope College?"

"What you need is to grab a few winks. Let me show you a place." He led Lisa to his room. "My roommate is gone for the weekend. She sat down and almost immediately her head hit the pillow. Let me get you a blanket." Phil was wonderful to her. He gently stroked her back, ran his fingers from her neck all the way down her spine. It was a wonderful feeling, this snuggling as he called it. She pondered whether her dancing was now leading to something more. She suspected the Dutch Reformeds might have been quite right about that. It no longer seemed terribly important though, and that's how she would vaguely recall it, not such a big deal at all.

The Goats From The Sheep

That was the first of many trips Lisa made to the MSU campus. She would have liked to have transferred, but she knew that was out of the question. Still, Hope was now survivable as long as she had the opportunity for weekend escapes with Phil and later with other young men, Pi Kappa Phi's and a few other Greeks. She decided though that upon graduation she would seek a teaching job in some place other than Grand Forks. She applied to Pasadena in California. If this meant that she would marry outside the Dutch Reformed faith, she now felt she could adjust.

Lisa overheard Monica and Trisha talking in the seats behind her. The whine of the jet engines suddenly had been reduced to a whisper. She felt popping in her ears.

If she placed her left ear over the space between the two seats she could just barely make out what they were saying. They were talking about how they grew up. Sometimes they were talking about her. "Hey, everyone, we're skimming across the water. We just flew over an island."

"It's Singapore's largest outlying island," said Jasper. "Singapore itself is an island, barely two hundred and fifty-three square miles but packed with three point eighty-seven million people. Many languages can be heard, Mandarin or Cantonese among the Chinese, Hindi and Tamil among the Indians, Malay spoken by Singapore's natives, and English from the Brits who developed it into the major seaport in Asia and built a huge navy base to protect it all. Now English is the language of business and is taught in school. Did you know that Changi Airport is one of the world's finest serving seventy some carriers from all over the world?"

"No, but I'm afraid you just told us," said Monica.

6 – Faculty Meeting

There is a certain relief in change, even though it is from bad to worse! As I have often found in traveling in a stagecoach, it is often a comfort to shift one's position, and be bruised in a new place.

– Washington Irving

Trisha stopped, set down her luggage, turned, and waved goodbye to Mr. Johnson. She was anxious to see her new quarters in Singapore but reluctant to bid farewell to a man she found interesting. When she turned again to reclaim her bags they were no longer on the landing. Each of them was held by a different person. One was a swarthy broad shouldered individual whose trousers, vaguely a brown plaid, failed to match his coat, sky blue but soiled. Their sudden appearance might have elicited Trisha's scream had it not been for Johnson's continued presence at the curb waiting to see that she got in safely. The other man was less formidable, short of stature, great of girth, and shiny in black serge like a partially employed undertaker.

The rotund little man spoke first. "If you will allow us, Miss, we would like to offer some assistance. My name is Professor Fyodor Novikov, but friends call me Fedya. I wonder if we know that man you rode here with? Is Donald Johnson, no?"

Trisha hesitated to identify her new acquaintance but considered little harm would be done by admitting who he was. She nodded her head.

"A hah," said the taller swarthy man. "Is like I say."

"He's a friend of yours as well?" Trisha asked. "What is your name?"

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am Professor Ivan Goncharov but I go by Vanya. This Donald Johnson you speak of, I presume you are an associate of his in his work?"

"No, he's someone I bumped into on our flight from the United States. He was kind enough to give me a lift."

"A hah! This 'lift' you speak of is some kind of illegal substance, no?" asked Vanya.

“It’s a ride. He gave me a ride to my apartment, because I didn’t know the way.” Trisha was becoming annoyed by this impromptu interrogation.

“Is very friendly this ‘lift’ you admit taking. Not so much allowed in Russia, I think. So, if you not work with Mr. Johnson like you say, what is you do? What is your business in Singapore?”

Now she was definitely annoyed. “I could very well ask you the same thing,” she answered. “You introduce yourself as ‘Professor.’ Just what do you profess and to whom?”

Vanya looked at Fedya who shrugged his shoulders, a signal of mutual disgust. The American girl deserved a smack across the mouth for such impertinence, but the men knew such behavior would get them in trouble in Singapore. If a man was fined for tossing a cigarette butt, slapping a woman might be worse. “Fedya and I teach language at the Novgorod Institute, but we study Mandarin in Singapore at Nanyang University. Me and Fedya students. Which apartment you live?”

Monica had now come down the stairs with a key to Trisha’s apartment. “You’re across the hall from me, Trish. I’m in 5-B. You’re in 5-E. I believe these gentlemen are your next door neighbors in 5-F. Leave your luggage in your room and come have a drink with us in Lisa’s lovely apartment below. Don’t mind our neighbors. We suspect they’re really quite harmless. Let them take your baggage to your apartment, then come down and join us in Lisa’s place. We have a few things to ask you.”

The interrogation of Trisha continued unabated but with better humor by her teacher friends. “We turn our heads for a second, and suddenly you’re off helping that missionary family with the smelly kids,” said Lisa.

“We thought we’d wait for you at the curb while we found a cab to get us to the apartment,” said Jasper.

“But then we realized that it was all we could do to fit the three of us and our luggage into that small car,” added Monica. “Besides, the last we saw of you, you appeared to have. . . “ She hesitated not sure how to interpret Trisha’s relationship with the man she had tumbled upon on the plane. . . “bonded . . . with that handsome stranger. It

appeared that you already had your situation well in hand. Now we see you sitting out there in that pretty green sports-car with him, I mean just sitting there like neither one of you could bear to part. I think you owe us an explanation.”

“He’s a wonderful man, thoughtful, considerate. He treated me like a real person, I mean not like a girl at all.” Trisha wanted to leave the Don Johnson subject before she said something totally irrational, something even she hadn’t yet figured out for herself. The only thing of which she was certain was that she wanted to see him again. She knew her friends would never accept her explanation anyway, so she changed the subject. “Well, now that we’re all here, what happens next?”

“Tomorrow night is the first faculty meeting, a sort of get acquainted night at the superintendent’s house,” said Jasper. “Show Trisha the invitation we each received.” The invitation to an evening of Singaporean cuisine and beverages was embossed in gold on heavy ivory stock. Jasper read from the invitation, “Each faculty member is expected to make a short presentation describing some new ‘find’ in Singapore or insight he or she has made from the previous year’s work. New faculty will describe their particular passion and how they expect this passion to be fulfilled in Singapore. Attire will be Singaporean informal. It’s signed ‘Freddy Fox, superintendent.’” A cartoon logo beneath his signature was of a long tailed fox dressed in formal tails. “He looks like he could be fun,” said Lisa.

“‘Singaporean informal,’ what does that mean?” asked Trisha.

“That depends how one wants to go,” answered Jasper. “If you want to go as a sexy Malay you might wear a sarong kabaya like the cabin attendants on Singapore Airlines. If you want to look both aristocratic and exotic, you’ll wear the Chinese chi pao, with tight high neck and a skirt slitted to the stratosphere. However, if you want to really emphasize your feminine charms you’ll wear an Indian saree, especially a Bollywood saree, a melding of chiffon and glitter wound about the female form tightly or loosely as the situation suggests.”

“Jasper, how is it that you are informed on women’s apparel in Asia? More relevant is why would you want to know something like that?” Lisa spoke with a measure of undisguised disgust.

“I sure don’t want to show up tomorrow night in something looking like it had been abandoned on Redondo Beach,” said Monica. “We’ll have to go shopping first thing tomorrow.”

“How about you, Jasper?” asked Monica. “I don’t think your plaid jacket would look chic here. Do the men also wear unique clothing for Singapore?”

“I recall some recent photos from *National Geographic* which show men in restaurants wearing loose fitting embroidered cotton tunics. They’re worn over the trousers. I’m going to find one or two of those.”

The next morning Monica and Trisha walked down a flight to Lisa’s larger apartment facing Lornie Road and joined Lisa and Jasper for breakfast. Jasper lived in a much smaller room down the hall from Lisa, further removed from her than he wanted. Despite Jasper’s impassioned reasoning that sharing her larger quarters made good economic sense, Lisa was adamant that they not double up. It was one boundary she would not yet cross, although other boundaries separating them had been discarded over the past few months. It was simply something unmarried couples did not do according to her bringing up. At her core she was still a Lohuis with Dutch Reformed instincts.

“What will you do, Jasper. when we girls are shopping?” asked Monica.

“I thought I’d sort of tag along. It’s something I seldom get a chance to do. Lisa never lets me go along when she tries on clothing, but you three won’t mind, will you? I might even render an occasional opinion on what you choose, whether it flatters you or not.” The girls exchanged glances and shrugged their shoulders. Jasper was simply being Jasper, a trifle unusual, but they didn’t really mind.

The quartet exited their taxi on Orchard Road at Scotts Road in front of C K Tangs, the department store which is to Singapore what Blommingdales is to New York. “I was told that Tangs is great for everyday things, teacher clothes, and the like, but we don’t want to appear dowdy. This is to be our first appearance with everyone’s first impression of us. We want to toot our horns a bit,” said Lisa.

The Goats From The Sheep

“Let’s explore some of the boutiques we saw along Orchard Road on the way here,” said Monica. Many were showing the latest Paris and New York fashions, but the women wanted native-inspired dress. Monica was attracted by the Oriental look and chose the chi pao; Lisa had become more liberated from her orientation at MSU’s Pi Kappa Phi fraternity house and picked out an especially gauzy saree. Trisha was already opting for a less flamboyant appearance. She chose a batik print sarong kabaya.

They lingered at the last shop’s window display admiring the jewelry. “Where’s Jasper?” asked Lisa. “Hasn’t he stayed with us?”

“The last I saw of the boy he was lingering in one of the last shops holding up a silky red garment as if he contemplated buying it,” said Trisha. “Maybe he’s buying you a present, Lisa?”

“Lisa! Where are you going?”

Lisa had run out unto the sidewalk. “Hey! Come back, you little thief. You stole my purse!” Lisa began running after the purse snatcher, but the sidewalk was crowded. He was a better broken field runner than she was. All they could see of him was a fleeing figure weaving through the crowd disappearing even as they looked.

“You’ll never catch him. He’s gone,” said Jasper. He spoke with some relief. He really had little inclination to pursue the thief, particularly if there was the slightest chance the crook might be caught. Jasper had been beaten up more than a few times in Pocatello, enough to detest brawling. He would have felt extremely awkward being observed by Lisa in that situation.

Singapore’s four newcomers stood on the street wondering what to do next. They didn’t immediately notice the large Holden Statesman sedan pull to the curb opposite them. A man emerged from the rear seat, a very tall man. How tall was difficult to judge, because a turban crowned his head. He bowed before the group. “Your purse, madam?”

“Why, yes, it is. How did you . . .??”

“I was driving by and saw the whole thing. I had my driver catch up to him and let me out. The juvenile was fleet of foot, but it took two of his strides to match one of mine. It wasn’t much of a contest. I was about to collar him, and then the rascal made me choose. He threw the purse over his shoulder into an alleyway. I could either grab him to

return to you, or go after the purse. I chose the purse hoping that you had more use for it than you did for the young thief. I hope I chose wisely?"

"Of course you did," said Lisa. "How can I ever thank you enough, sir? Is it all right to call you 'sir?' The benefactor was a most impressive figure, regal in bearing. "Maybe you're a rajah or something?"

"Just a 'something' I'm afraid." He extracted a card from a case and proffered it to Lisa. This identifies me, madam."

She glanced at it, but didn't think it was polite to scrutinize it, so she put it in her purse. There was some kind of title attached to the man's name, 'Ranjit Chandhari'. She'd look at it later. She extended her hand to shake his. "You can't know how grateful I am. It has my passport, my credit cards, everything in it."

"Singapore is one of the safest cities in the world. We have many laws, laws against spitting on the sidewalk, laws prohibiting people from having a container in their back yards in which mosquito larvae are evident, laws against wearing hair too long, unless you're female or a Sikh as I am, but our laws have not managed to wipe out thievery." He bowed low again, got back in his black Statesman, and was gone.

* * *

The superintendent, Freddy Fox, had acquired the property vacated by The British Navy's commandant after they had left the island. The two story house of arts and crafts design perches atop a hill and is approached via a long winding driveway this night lined by flaming torches. It was with awe the four new teachers made their first appearance at the faculty gathering climbing the hill to the residence gleaming with every light ablaze. It was meant to look prestigious maybe even intimidating and succeeded.

Platters of satay, strips of beef and lamb roasted on hibachis were offered the guests together with bottles of Tiger beer with roasted prawns on the side followed by slices of mango and pineapple. Lisa held a few skewers of satay in her hand not sure what to do with them.

The Goats From The Sheep

“Here, let me show you,” said a man in a black and gold batik shirt. “I’m Ralph. Here’s what you do, you spear a bit of cucumber and onion on the skewer and dip it all in this hot peanut sauce. After that you can do with it as you choose, but putting it in your mouth is by far the tidiest. Let me warn you though, one will only lead to another. That’s what we do at night; eat satay, sip Tiger, and talk. What would you like to talk about? You’re new; where are you from, California, I bet.”

“She’s here with me,” said Jasper, but he was in a far corner feeling overlooked and being overlooked.

“Freddy likes his teachers hot off the beaches of California, the hotter the better. Watch out for him though. He can be tricky. He’s trying to call us to order now. Here, sit with me on this settee.” There wasn’t room for Jasper who found a folding chair across the room. “He’s trying to get our attention now.”

The level of conversation in the room gradually decreased to a low murmur punctuated by only an occasional chortle or high pierced giggle. Fox welcomed the returning members and the new additions. “We’re all here to work, I’m sure, but you could have stayed stateside if working was your only pursuit. Singapore is for playtime, and I doubt if our young charges will be seriously disadvantaged if you return to the classroom Monday morning with your cups of pleasure spilling over. We’ll call on Ralph who’s made Singapore his home. He may be awarded tenure based on his Epicurean studies.”

Ralph, aware that Jasper was actively coveting his position on the settee, stood effectively blocking his vacated seat. “You all will find your favorite watering holes, your fonts of inspiration. Here are a few of mine. Check out the Cathay Hotel roof garden on Saturday night for dancing to some cool jazz.” He told them of favorite satay stalls, of a club in the jungle across the causeway near Johore Bahru featuring Australian strippers who dance to their own drummers. “It’s a place where no one will know your name. Then for a unique treat you’ll want to grab a table on blocked off Bugis Street. You pronounce that ‘Bugee’ not the way it’s spelled. From there you can watch the most gorgeous creatures of the world on parade, and they will parade, believe you me. Then if you’re lucky, I mean real lucky, and manage

to snag unto one for the night, be prepared to be surprised. I won't tell you what that is and spoil your fun."

Jasper whispered to a man seated at his left, another mathematics teacher. "What's he talking about? What kind of gorgeous creature?"

"They're 'transwomen', men dressed in exotic costumes, extreme hairstyles, and extraordinary cosmetics. Transvestites from all over the world are attracted to Bugis Street, but most are Eurasians. They in turn attract tourists. Bugis Street is a real tourist Mecca."

"Are they homosexuals?" asked Jasper.

"Maybe yes, maybe no. Every man, or woman, I suppose, needs to find that out for himself or herself."

"But this strict government which outlaws long hair, how can they allow something like this?"

"It's good for business."

Jasper put it on his list of priorities. He wanted to see Bugis Street for himself, maybe without Lisa. It might be fun to dress the part. He recalled that red slinky dress he'd seen that morning.

"The chorus is here!" shouted someone. Everyone rushed to the wide balconies surrounding three sides of the second floor. Down below a choir, an enthusiastic but amateur choir of about forty voices, was singing favorite American tunes from *West Side Story*, *My Fair Lady*, and *Cabaret*. It was the choir from the American School doing their bit to help Freddy Fox sustain his well crafted image.

Lisa managed to lose Ralph in the rush to the balcony. She found and grabbed Jasper's hand. "Ralph invited all four of us to a toga party." Jasper had never been to one at Idaho State; Trisha and Monica had no experience with them at Waldorf College in Iowa, but Lisa had experienced one at the Pi Kappa Phi house at M.S.U. She liked Toga parties and could not say enough about them, especially to a motivated audience.

Americans living in Singapore are subjected to adventures. They have opted for the pathway of adventure rather than security. Like goats, they traverse steep, rocky trails of changes, vocational, religious, and sexual, and their lives will have been forever changed.

The Goats from the Sheep

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4608.html?s=pdf>