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Bride Flight

By Marieke van der Pol

Here in London
we eagerly await the moment...
when the Duke of Gloucester
will start the air race...
from London to
Christchurch, New Zealand.
A distance
of more than 20,000 kilometres.
Journalists from all over the world
are here...
to report on this major event.
Who are the select few allowed
on board this race as passengers?
Who applied for emigration at the
same time KLM needed to fill its plane?
Most are young women
joining their fiancs,
who went on ahead of them
to start a new life in this unknown land.
Fleeing job and housing problems,
some having lost all
in the February flood disaster,
these people are now looking forward
to a much better life ahead.
Our Liftmaster
is racing down the runway.
And he's off. We have lift-off.
The race has begun.
Ladies and gentlemen,
we are flying at cruising speed.
We are two minutes
ahead of schedule already.
Do you have a light?
Did you see me at the airport?
- No.
I posed for the cover of Revue.
Dad's going to send me a copy.
Esther.
Frank.
Marjorie.
Look, you have to change
your name over there. Frank.
Ada van Holland.
- Ada van Holland?

Beautiful.

His name is Hans. Hans Doorman.

Isn't he handsome?

He has beautiful hands.

And you?

- I'm a fashion designer.

I've never been away from home before.

- Really?

Never.

All my family lives nearby.

I might never work.

We want to get married and have children
as soon as possible.

Have they been ordered?

What do you want?

- An estate. A large farm.

Are you from farming stock?

- No, my father was a doctor in Java.

Can I offer you this on behalf of KLM?

- Thank you.

Have you been to university?

- Agricultural college.

I wanted to go to Indonesia.

But that's no longer possible.

And Holland is too cold

so I thought I'd emigrate...

and start my own farm abroad.

What about you?

- I am.

I mean I'm from farming stock.

Have you seen this?

Isn't it gorgeous?

I think it's real silver.

Mrs Doorman speaking.

Esther? Yes.

This is the weather forecast for our
journey between Baghdad and Karachi.

There is a depression over Persia,
with storm clouds...

occasionally reaching 25,000 feet.

What's he saying?

What does it mean?

A plane like this is strong enough.

Don't say you want to leave.

- No, of course not.
You know Gran.
Cast or no cast,
she'll want to go to the funeral.
No, I agree.
Which is why I'll be going with her.
I thought you might like
to see your dad again,
and Gran and New Zealand of course.
Sydney's not all that far away.
You'll have to bring me some liquorice.
Lots of it.
Mum knows which ones I like.
Bob? Bob?
Bob?
For Hannah.
- Just imagine.
Come on.
You're really pretty.
Can't you sleep?
- If I had a figure like yours...
Dior. And lavish amounts of material.
Can I design a wedding dress for you?
Are you getting married?
Hang on.
Would you like to try on my dress?
I'll make you one if you like.
- I don't know whether Derk...
If you've got it, flaunt it. Why not?
Wait a minute. A petticoat.
Esther said...
May I?
Leave it.
Leave it.
Ada van Holland.
Yes?
What are you up to?
Back! Go back!
Ladies and gentlemen,
welcome in Karachi.
The captain hopes
you weren't too frightened.
That would be a pity.
Madam, you can't leave the plane.

This is costing us valuable minutes.

Sorry.

I quit.

- Would you rather live in Pakistan?

Ouch. Hot.

I'm not letting you go.

Stay with me?

- Rut me down.

You can think it over,

just say yes first.

I am married.

What?

I was married by proxy.

He has the rings over there.

For the wedding ceremony.

And a different dress.

- By proxy?

Why?

- He's in New Zealand already. Derk.

Do you love him?

What did the kiss mean?

- I don't know him very well.

Couldn't you have waited?

You couldn't wait?

You're pregnant.

He comes from Oude Tonge.

He has no one else. They all drowned.

I saw him at our church...

and one time he showed me

where his house was,

and then he started to cry.

It scared me to death.

I didn't know what to do.

What was I supposed to do?

Comfort him.

It just happened.

It shouldn't have, but it did.

Behind the mill.

I know I'll be punished for it.

Or my children will because of me.

What makes you think that?

What I did is a sin. A terrible sin.

It's not. It's lovely.

Really sweet.

You've been cheating all night.
For me, for me.
Hey. How about lending a hand?
We have now started our descent.
We expect
to be able to see New Zealand...
once we are through the clouds.
Clouds? I thought it was
supposed to be sunny all the time.
Magnificent, can you see?
Here it is.
Ada van Holland.
Make sure you're happy.
We're here. We have broken
the 1946 flying record...
by ten hours. We have won the race.
Holland has won.
Is that them? I've heard of them.
I never expected them to look like that.
No, no, no. Here.
Stop. That's it there.
Look, Druivebloed.
Do you remember what it looked like?
- Not really.
Druivebloed.
How would they pronounce that here?
Come on. Are you okay?
- Yes.
Bag.
- Thank you.
Bye.
Will you be back in time?
- If Hannah's plane has no delay.
Esther?
Marjorie.
- Yes.
Hey. Yes, that's broken.
Men never bring flowers here.
So they instantly knew I was Dutch.
I've given three interviews already.
I had forgotten... Were you...
Have you grown?
Oh, sorry.
Minister, this is Ada.

Ada, Minister Houtsma.

- Yes.

Good.

Welcome to our small parish.

We've got our own parish.

We didn't like the Presbyterian one.

They're uninspired and sing in English.

Did you have a good flight?

- Yes.

Aren't we going to...

Aren't we going to wait...

I got us a truck.

An absolute bargain it was.

Down here they take an old car,

saw the back off

and build a loading platform.

People here improvise.

Ada?

The Minister can't drive.

And I could hardly let him sit here, so...

Everything okay?

Yes.

It can get cold in the Arthur's Pass.

How long's the drive?

- Five hours or so, maybe six.

Well, this is pleasant.

It's a Sunday morning.

Dad's got to send money

so I can go back.

I've made arrangements.

Did you bring anything else?

Something less...

I'm not sure they...

- Who?

Mr and Mrs Jottkowitz.

From the boarding house.

Jottkowitz?

- The Rabbi's family.

I'll see.

It would be good if you could change,

because I don't know...

We can walk if you want.

It isn't far.

I'm going to go to the hotel.

I'm too tired. I need some sleep.
I can't be on my best
Jewish behaviour now. I'm exhausted.
When shall we meet?
- Tomorrow. Plenty of time.
What time? Where?
We go round the back.
Only snobs use the front door here.
Margo?
And?
- Did you see what that man's wearing?
They're relaxed about everything here.
Laid back is the term they use.
They're just very nice.
They don't laugh if you make a mistake.
What's happened to your hands?
So rough. And coarse.
I'll pick you up in the morning.
Ada?
Ada?
I'm coming.
If it does not please you
to serve the Lord,
decide today whom you will serve...
Look.
And...
A bunker.
- They feared a Japanese invasion.
The city owns the land,
but the bunker is ours.
This is the kitchen. It is nearly ready.
The fireplace will go here.
But I don't know...
I have to work as well.
This is a good mattress,
got it at a bargain price.
Derk, that... Well done.
Derk?
Can you undo my buttons?
If you want me to leave...
Would you like to lie in bed?
You must suppress these forces.
You are carrying a child.
I don't know, Derk. I don't know.

I'm sorry.
Do you ever sleep?
- Not very well.
It's fairly easy, you know.
So teach me, then.
That's the first step.
Now close your eyes.
- Show me.
Anyone can do it.
Except you and me.
Were you still in Indonesia
when the Japs came?
Did everyone get out okay?
No.
It'll be a nice day tomorrow.
Yes.
Hans.
Hello.
I wake up and hear birds.
I see a clear blue sky and the sun is out.
The people are so friendly. So nice.
I've never slept so well in my life.
Isn't it beautiful?
Did you see that?
They have prams on the tram here.
I hope everything works out well for you.
- You too.
Shall I come with you?
Esther.
What a fantastic day.
They were expecting you yesterday.
Go round the back.
Only snobs use the front door.
I'd climb over the roof, as long as
I don't have to see the Jottkowitzes.
I didn't come here for that.
Voil.
Nice, different. Not my taste,
but nice for the time being.
I'm not missing them yet.
It may sound blunt but that's how I feel.
And you?
- I've been missing them for ten years.
Perhaps we're making a mistake.

- We just need time. That's all.
What if it turns out that we're not suited?
- So what? We belong together.
There is no one else.
We don't have anyone else.
Will we be happy?
There have been so many deaths,
Esther. Your whole family and mine too.
I can become supervisor in Auckland.
My two years are up.
It's far better paid. We'll get a house.
Congratulations.
Listen.
You are a daughter of Israel.
- How delightfully solemn.
I want you to cook kosher meals.
Our kids should learn traditional values.
We'll celebrate Sabbath,
Purim and Sukkot.
That's how we can pass on our lives.
You have so much energy.
Devote it to a higher cause.
Which is?
- You know.
The resurrection of the people of Israel.
I give you children, and they
grow up as happy and free Jews.
I make the Sabbath meal, you pray.
Our children dressed up smart.
We become a warm,
cosy Yiddish family.
We light the candles
and sing traditional songs...
for all the skeletons on the dresser.
They eat with us
One bite for Grandma, one for Grandpa.
A bite for Sal. Six million mouthfuls.
Oh, I can hardly wait.
They're not eating my cake.
They won't eat it if it's not homemade.
Ridiculous.
Where's Leon? And Hans?
Have you seen Hans?
Hans? Hans?

I will call her Emma.
Or Danny.
And I want a...
Look at that child.
Come look.
This is what it will look like.
- Nice.
Are there enough children's rooms?
- Just say how many.
Show-off.
Marjorie?
Hey.
Are you okay?
Yes, it's all part of being pregnant.
I don't understand.
I want to go home.
It went well.
You just had surgery.
- Shouldn't you be off to work?
Let me do that.
- Why? It can't do any harm now, can it?
Just add it to the list.
- No matter, darling.
I am not a cripple. I am not an invalid.
You're going to be late.
Don't stay here for me.
Bye, Hans.
Hi, how are you?
- Fine. Tea?
How are you doing?
Writing home?
Yes.
That must be tough.
I'd already written Mum and Dad a letter.
I was so happy. And now I have to...
But how?
- Perhaps you should wait a while.
It's gone by boat.
It's not even there yet.
And now I have to...
What should I write?
Just leave it a bit.
I'm fertile. All of us at home are.
- Marjorie?

One look is enough.
My big sister has four.
Our Greet is expecting her third baby.
Don't be alarmed.
I'm almost seven months gone.
So all that time...
- I don't want it.
I've lost my customers.
I've been thrown out of my room.
Mrs Young felt awkward, but an unmarried
mother would damage her reputation.
But I can deal with that.
I don't want to have a Jewish child.
Why not?
And Leon?
- It's not Leon's.
Whose is it then?
You don't know?
Why didn't you get rid of it?
You must know places.
- I won't have an abortion.
Virtually nil isn't nil.
- But it remains virtually nil.
So should I just throw myself
into the ocean?
That's not what I mean.
It could be our eldest
if we are lucky to have more.
And if we don't?
- Then at least we have one child.
Yes, otherwise you'd never have
any children and you'd hate me.
Okay, we won't do it then.
Hans, don't cry.
Sorry.
No one will ever find out. Never.
Not even the child.
- That's the one condition.
Promise.
- Promise.
It's our child. My own child.
It will have a good and safe life.
Is... Is it okay?
She's perfectly healthy.

A gorgeous daughter.

Julie.

Julie.

Perhaps God's forgiven us.

- Perhaps.

I'll put it here.

June 1954.

Dear Mum and Dad,

thank you for sending me the magazine.

It's a shame there was only one copy.

Everything is fine.

My belly is really starting to swell,
but I'm feeling fine.

I'm really busy preparing
for the arrival of our little one.

It's adorable.

July 1954.

We've got snow. Isn't that funny?

Everything is back to front here.

My blood pressure is a little high.

So I can't have salt anymore.

No more salt...

- Awful.

Other than that, all is going perfectly.

I feel great.

Pressure on my bladder,
painful thighs, can't lie down anymore...

Apart from the usual complaints
that you get when you're pregnant.

I think about you a lot, Mum.

Yes. Me too.

About my mother.

Not yet. Hang on.

- Okay.

The next one, or the one after that.

- Wait. I can't.

The baby won't wait.

Bloody hell...

Rush as hard as you can.

And don't swear.

Well done. Now go ahead.

Rush, push.

Well done. Keep going.

Rush, push, push, push.

A little more. Yes, yes.
There's salt in it again now.
There.
Here you are.
It's a recipe from the Margriet.
Mum still sends it.
How is...
- Don't. We wouldn't talk about it.
Dear Mum and Dad.
Our baby is making us wait, which
is good because we are busy moving.
The weather is better
on the North Island, so I said to Hans,
'Let's go,
we get enough snow in Holland.'
Keep it a secret.
- Yes.
A safe life.
- Yes.
Promised?
Yes.
Everything's going well.
Life is wonderful.
I've got a feeling, don't laugh at me, but
I've got a feeling it's going to be a boy.
My son and my granddaughter.
Should I have?
Nanna.
- Darling, you look amazing.
Look, from the reins.
- Look at that.
She was backpacking in Australia,
but stayed on on a horse farm.
And not just because of the horses.
How many children have you got?
- Three. All girls.
Then there's my wife. I'm lucky.
Bobby, darling.
Are you coming?
Who is Frank?
You're early.
Explain it to the Minister tonight.
Stop or he'll get too big for his boots.
What brings you here?

- We live here.
Yes, in Khandallah Village.
Esther?
Esther.
Frank lives near here.
You haven't changed a bit.
- We met him at rugby a few years ago.
Now I'm training this little fella.
- My son, Bobby.
Bobby.
Hi Bobby. I'm Esther.
Do you like rugby?
- He doesn't speak any Dutch.
Esther?
We're leaving now, okay?
How long are you planning on staying?
Christchurch was getting too small.
Wow.
- We have a three bedroom house.
Hans built it himself.
It's gorgeous.
- You should drop by some time.
Look at us.
You're busy. Let's go.
Lovely to see you again.
Such a surprise. Good luck.
Do you remember Ada?
Ada van Holland?
We write to each other.
Call me.
Bobby, darling.
Esther.
What's the story with the drive?
I've saved up. I have the money,
but the council won't sell the land.
And I won't build a road for the council.
How long has this been going on?
- I got a letter.
From Marjorie, two years ago, I think.
She bumped into him in Wellington
and they became friends.
Then, out of the blue,
I got a letter from him.
It's perfectly normal.

The things he writes
to a married woman. Is that normal?
He was very friendly back then.
On that air race.
He helped me.
And you wrote back.
Was that normal too?
We don't mean anything by it.
'When I close my eyes, I can still see
your shoulders shining in the Karachi sun.
Your feet dancing on the hot asphalt.
I remember how you
tossed back your ash blond hair...
like a Greek goddess.'
Empty, bombast words,
meant to seduce you.
A true friend would have written
his letters to both of you.
You have lost your way, daughter.
You have failed in your duty as a wife.
You should never, ever desire another.
Ask the Lord for forgiveness
and mend your ways.
Do you have anything to say?
The tea's getting cold.
Your husband can only become an elder
if his house remains beyond reproach.
I might not be the best...
- I'm sorry.
So, here you are.
I was in the area.
An aunt in Wellington. She's not well.
She asked... Derk's aunt, she asked...
So I thought...
It's not as bad as I thought.
I'll need to go back soon. But...
I thought...
As you were in the area.
Yes.
That's nice.
- I'll have to go soon.
Time for a cup of tea then?
Yes.
You haven't changed.

Yes I have.

How?

- My hair.

Oh, that.

Suits you.

- It's modern.

Ada van Holland.

Who's that?

A Maori?

- That's Mozie.

Why don't you stay?

What's wrong with her?

I happen to have the same thing.

Get undressed.

Go on, get undressed.

It's warmer here than where we live.

- Keep going.

We have the Barber Cloud.

The Barber Cloud.

It always appears

when I'm hanging the washing.

Don't.

I want to see you.

- I've got three children.

Let me see then.

It comes down the river,

with cold air from the mountains.

Sometimes it rains for days on end.

It's cold, dark and wet.

But it's beautiful too.

Sometimes I go up

into the mountains with the children.

There are

some magnificent birds of prey.

And I love the ocean.

Derk doesn't,

because the sand flies drive him mad.

They bite.

Sometimes I walk all the way to Hokitika.

And then...

I feel kind of happy.

I'm quite happy then.

That's me. That's the farmer.

And that is Mozie.

Yes, me again.

Rugby.

They...

They are all sick aunts.

All these girls?

Yes. But not the right one. Not yet.

It's lovely.

He will wash his garments in wine,
his robes in the blood of grapes.

Genesis 49, verse 11 .

Druivebloed.

Druivebloed. Call it that.

You will have to answer to God
for what you have done.

Running away

from your family is a terrible sin.

I've come to get you for the children.

There can be no forgiveness for you.

The sin remains, in the eyes of God.

- That's criminal.

I'm willing to take you back.

What kind of God doesn't forgive?

- Satan.

If you stay,

you'll never see the children again.

It will be my duty to God

to keep you away from the children.

Ada.

Ada.

You.

You.

I'll stay with you.

Coffee.

Ada?

Is that Ada?

- She was in the area.

Do you know Derk's aunt? She lives
somewhere around here. She's poorly.

What's she called again?

Druivebloed?.

How did you come up with that name?

It's from the Bible.

- Since when do you read the Bible?

Someone suggested it.

I liked the sound of it.
No doubt one of your girlfriends.
One who knows the scriptures.
Such a nice man. He ought to
get married and have a family.
He was in a Japanese camp as a boy.
- How do you know that?
He saw his father die
and his sister died too.
His mother couldn't handle it
and hanged herself later in Holland.
He never tells me anything.
Giving it all she's got, isn't she?
What nonsense.
Where's Bobby?
Bobby?
- Keep calm.
Hello?
Bobby?
Bobby?
Bobby?
Bobby?
Bobby?
Forgive us.
Here he is.
Here he is.
Forgive us. Lord, have mercy.
Ada.
Here.
Bobby?
Was he supposed to die? Was that it?
I need some fresh air.
Okay.
You don't know, you've got no idea...
You don't know...
He has three bruised ribs,
second-degree burns on his torso...
and a third-degree burn just here
that will leave a scar.
Are they keeping him in?
- A few days.
To rule out internal injuries
or an infection.
He's feverish. And he's in pain.
So much pain.

What about you?

- I can sleep here tonight.

Can I do anything for you?

- No.

We'll come back tomorrow.

We'll camp here.

Just go home.

Hans will come and pick us up.

Okay.

Can we look in on him quickly?

No, he can't have

any strangers around his bed.

But I'm not a stranger.

- Just his mother and father.

Come on.

Ada.

Ada.

Ada.

Ada.

Thank you.

- Enjoy your Sunday.

I hope you have a nice Sunday.

- Thank you.

Esther?

How is he?

- Fine. Kids take no time to recover.

Can I see him?

Just for a second.

- He's upstairs.

Have a bit of faith.

They were always looking

for people like us.

And one day it was simply our turn.

We had to wait in a large building,

and suddenly my father told me

to follow some man,

and he walked out the door

with me and all the children.

I only realised later

that Sal had not come with us.

I couldn't work out why.

I still don't get it.

Didn't he want to come?

Or did Mum want him to stay with her?

Then why not me?
They were all murdered.
But why wasn't I with them?
Frank.
I thought we were friends,
for God's sake.
I was supposed to train Bobby.
I didn't even get to say goodbye.
Where's this headed?
- To the harbour.
It's going overseas.
- Overseas?
Back to Holland.
They're going by plane, via Auckland.
They've just left.
Why do people
always let each other down?
Marjorie, you coward.
Marjorie?
Frank.
Damn it, Hans.
What do you think you're doing?
And you?
- You don't want to go.
Leave it.
- Do Hans and Bobby want to go?
Stay out of it.
- This is a present for your son.
What is it you want?
- This is a family heirloom.
What else can we expect?
Nothing. You're making a great mistake.
Don't be so incredibly stupid.
Stay. You're doing so well.
You'll regret it for the rest of your life.
I'm going.
- The rest of your life.
All the best.
Do you want to know who his father is?
Hans. I am his mother
and Hans is his father.
Have children of your own.
Ada.
- Mozie.

So much for all my trouble.
I have Jewish descendants.
I might just as well have kept my child.
I could hardly forbid him
to marry a Jewish girl.
Esther?
Esther...
Do you think we did the right thing?
Go on.
I don't know. Ever since Hans died...
He suddenly started to say things...
Do you think we should tell him?
If it makes you feel better...
- Not for my sake. For his.
Would he be better off knowing?
You know him. You're his mother.
What would we be saddling him with?
With deceit. Oh and a dead family too,
thrown in for free.
Perhaps we didn't do the right thing.
Why should he pay the price?
That's for us to deal with.
Shall we leave things as they are?
Yes, let's do that.