

Lost and Found

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Setting: Two men and a woman are seated on pillows around an elusive campfire made of LEDs. Disparate and confusing icons and idols are scattered about the periphery. Appropriate music at the discretion of the director.

Sally:

I can't remember much. The anesthesia was wearing off, but I was groggy. They were rolling me out of recovery through two double doors. The next thing I knew I was on a camel in a desert. It was unbearably hot. I was wearing hot pants.

Sam:

A camel in the desert? You mean you were dreaming-- or delusional?

Sally:

Yeah, I thought I was dreaming, like a bad acid trip. But I was so thirsty. My throat was so parched.

Sam:

And then you woke up?

Sally:

No, then I fell asleep. I dreamed that I had my tonsils removed and wrapped in a flag; that it was a national religious ritual as part of a national holiday. I knew it was a dream because I had had a tonsillectomy when I was young. That helped me get out--clear on myth and reality. Then I awoke.

Sam:

So?

Sally:

Unfortunately, I awoke riding on a camel, dehydrated and somewhat delusional. Fortunately I wasn't alone. Was it Jake or Joaquin or Ali, I don't remember. One of them was leading and he was able to get us out of the heat into a city.

Earl:

How does one get out of the desert into a city? That sounds like a big physical environment makeover, with no phase transition?

Sally:

Jake or Joaquin or Ali, whoever it was, they knew their way around. This was a city in the desert. It had air conditioning.

Sam:

The desert had air conditioning?

Sally:

Don't be ridiculous. The city had air conditioning? I just mean they had electricity in the buildings and air conditioners.

Sam:

Well, me, I came in the back door. I got caught of course, but they gave me asylum.

Earl:

You were really lucky.

Sam:

No it wasn't luck. I had a beard, anonymity, a lot of cash and I'm circumcised. I swore that my mother was a Jewess.

Sally:

That's particularly weird. I swore that my paternal grandfather was an Ayatollah and that the terrorists had stolen my clothes. They said that was good enough.

Earl:

They asked me about religion too. I said I was fleeing from the wrath of God. They said I fit the fourth category; they put me in quarantine and changed my name from Smith to Frankenstein. Later they let me in after they removed my personal quirks.

Sally:

So now that we're all settled here, has anyone had a letter from home?

Sam:

There aren't post offices there anymore, Sal. Only the interfaces and interstices. I got an interface but it went blank because I'd lost my prior identity.

Earl:

I thought that once you had relations with one of the Loracians they gave you an identity card.

Sam:

Yes, I used it but it was of no use as an interface and the machine ate it.

Sally:

But we're being integrated aren't we? I mean they'll let us work and live here.

Sam:

In a sense. I mean that there is no sense. The sense is nonsense. They want us gone. That was the point in admitting us in the first place. Their rule for diasporans is called the rule of "disintegration." They'll send us on forward.

Sally:

Sounds bad. Does anyone know how I can find my camel?