

MISTAKE

First thing you feel is the humid air. Then there are people soliciting for taxi and limousine to the city. The hotel is situated at the beach; it is a nice place. The people are walking around, in the corridor in a relaxed way. The reception at the hotel was great. The front desk clerk assigned right-a-way a nice room in the south wing overlooking the botanical garden at the bay. I went up but saw that the room was already occupied: a pair of high shoes on the left hand side near the wall and few other female dresses here and there and on the bed. I was tired and all I wanted to have a shower and have a rest. Now that. I went to the phone on the night table near the window and called the front desk. I told him that the room was already taken. He said he would look at the matter right a way and call me back. His name was Mario. I waited quite a while to make a second call. A woman answered; Mario wasn't there. She listened to my long story made short and promised to solve the problem and send somebody to take care of me. I decided to wait outside, just in case. It was damp and I was on my feet for almost ten hours now. I wanted to take a shower, shave and have some rest. The people were passing by and wondering at me waiting there with my suitcase on the floor. I was really tired and couldn't wait any longer. So I went in, put my suitcase near the entrance door, locked the door from inside, and sat in the chair near the window and put my feet on the table. At least I was getting cooler and dryer. A soft music was coming from the radio. I was really tired and wanted to get a shower and then a nap. When I had finished shaving and dressing up, I heard a knock at the door. I hesitated first, and then thinking that it might be the concierge, I went to open it. A beautiful diminutive girl was at the door. She was all smiling; she came right in without any invitation. She wasn't a bit surprised to see me open the door and she was talking to me in Spanish as if she knew me for many years. She had a long colorful dress, almost transparent. Her dark hair was long coming down all-round covering her shoulders and her breast. I explained to her about the mix-up at the front desk, how hot and damp the outside was and how tired I was and apologized for my intrusion. She didn't seem to

understand me and didn't care much. She continued to murmur in Spanish. Although I couldn't decipher clearly, I did understand at the end she was saying O.K. She put away her bag and went to the bathroom. I was undecided whether I should leave or stay. The room was dim and cool. I wouldn't really wait outside in the bright and damp corridor. I heard she was taking a shower; my heart started to beat like a drum. I felt I was sweating.

I remembered the small encounter when I was in Ouagadougou. It was a summer night; it was very humid and the hotel didn't have any air-conditioning. Everything was in the open. The front desk, the bar and huge swimming pool in the middle. The sleeping quarter was set at the far end of the pool. They were rooms with a huge shower with an open skylight. Each suite had a sort of back yard, full of weeds and many creeping tropical animals. It was scary and I had to double check each time I was at the door to the back yard, the one to the shower and the entrance door. I was reading near the window looking to that back yard when I heard a knock at the door. I went and opened it just enough to see who it was. Then I saw a beautiful black woman, dressed mini casually showing all her breast and her buttock. I asked what she wanted. She said, "The man at the front desk told me you were alone." It didn't take for me too long to realize that she was a professional woman. All at once my heart was pounding like a drum and all the blood I had, rushed to my head. I hesitated a bit, but not longer than a millisecond. It was tempting, at the same time scary. I could only murmur a silly "no merci." She looked disappointed curling her lips and left. I went in and double checked every door and inspected the open skylight. I wasn't sure if a person could creep in from that hole in the ceiling. That night it was a nightmare. I couldn't sleep and I couldn't settle with myself. The next day, the morning was cool as usual. I took a shower looking time to time at the skylight; I shaved, dressed and went to breakfast at the pool area. I noticed right away the woman who was at my door yesterday night. She was all smiling and breakfasting with an Arab businessman. I was glad she wasn't lonely that night after the terrible disappointment with me.

Now I was standing in this dim room and couldn't decide what to do. The bathroom was now very quiet. All I could hear was the soft music from the radio and steady humming sound of the air conditioner. I knew she would show up all naked in a second. My heart was beating to pump all the blood into my head. It was the hypertension and I had terrible ringing in my ears. It was ringing, ringing, ringing. I woke with a slight jump. It was the phone. I looked at my watch and noticed that I dozed only about a quarter of an hour. It was Mario. Before I asked him anything, he said the concierge was on his way to take my suitcase and invited me to come down to the front desk. I left the room immediately and went out into the humid hot air and I felt nice and warm. At the front desk Mario apologized several times for the mistake and was very friendly. To remedy his mistake, he assigned to me an oceanfront no smoking executive suite at the 9th floor of the new wing. I thanked him for clearing the mix-up so quickly.