

Appointment in Togo:
Murder in the Fulbright Program
A Lynne Lewis West Africa Mystery

by

Rosemary Yaco



Published by
Anlex Computer Consulting LLC
<http://www.anlex.com>

Author of:
Murder in the Peace Corps

Dedicated to the heroes and villains who made my thirteen years in West Africa fascinating and the Togolese and Beninese people who with patience and grace endure the presence in their country of Americans sent by their government.

THE STORY IS FICTITIOUS. THE EVENTS DID NOT HAPPEN, THE PEOPLE DID NOT EXIST. BUT THE AMBIENCE, THE ATMOSPHERE, THE DETAILS OF AFRICAN LIFE AS THEY STRIKE THE AMERICAN INTERLOPER ARE BASED ON THE AUTHOR'S THIRTEEN YEARS IN TOGO AND BENIN FROM 1983-1996

About the Author:

Rosemary Yaco spent her early years in Michigan and earned a Ph. D. in American Culture and won a Hopwood award for poetry at the University of Michigan. In 1983 she joined the Peace Corps and served as educational advisor for English teaching in French speaking Togo, West Africa. She stayed in West Africa for a total of 13 years with three years as a Fulbright Professor at the University of Benin in Togo, then as Director of the English Language Program for the United States Information Agency in Benin for seven years. She now lives in St. Petersburg, Florida and is working on the third book of the Lynne Lewis West Africa Murder Mystery Series, Cotonou Means Death: Murder in the American Cultural Center.

Contents

1. Promote International Understanding?
2. An Unusual Library
3. Dangers of Democracy
4. An Omen
5. Speaking in Tongues
6. A Night Visitor
7. A Not Quite Chairman
8. Cross My Heart
9. A left-handed Compliment
10. Celebration
11. Crocodile Tears
12. A Lady Killer
13. Love and Corruption
14. The Night Watchman
15. An African Queen
16. The French System
17. The Class Captain Talks
18. Who Is Sylvia?
19. A Mirror Darkly
20. A Voyage in the Bush
21. At the Fufu Bar
22. A Tall Dark Stranger
23. An Evil Twin?
24. Attack at Atakpamay
25. A Police Spy?
26. One of Our Coupe Coupes Is Missing
27. Lost and Found
28. Secrets in the Black Lagoon
29. Camp Counselors
30. Old Lovers Never Die
31. The Other Twin
32. Joy in the Afternoon
33. Riptide
34. Unusual Suspects
35. Disorder and Loss
36. Togolese Mayor of East Lansing, Michigan
37. Blame the Victim
38. Speak Ill of the Dead
39. North Again
40. Menace at Mango
41. A Togolese Custom
42. Night and a Journey
43. The Clay Feet of the Cat Eaters

44. Not Purely Academic
45. Forever Weekend
46. Politics and Love
47. Palaver
48. Explosive meeting
49. Rumors and Reasoning
50. Face to Face
51. Seeing Everything Twice
52. Reasons of the Heart
53. Usually Reliable Sources
54. The Dance Goes On

Chapter 1: Promote International Understanding?

It was blood. Lynne looked at the door with horror. Red, fresh, bright blood. On her first day as Fulbright Professor at the University of Togo she had expected foul ups. Her three years here in West Africa in the Peace Corps had taught her that. But not this!

She was still worn out from a jet lag. Just last night she had returned from a month back in America. She was still disoriented to be again in a country so different from Michigan. This morning she had found a beat up a taxi with so much rust it was hard to see the required yellow and green paint. Maybe the slogan, written in French near the license plate should have warned her. It said, "Who knows man's destiny?"

"*L'universite*," she said to the taxi driver who wore a *boubou*, a long white robe trimmed with embroidery, and had three horizontal scars on each cheek. He started talking to her in an African language, confidently and wordily. When she explained in her Peace Corps French that she didn't understand, and then repeated it four times, he stopped talking except for short questions in French about the ride itself.

It was only 9:00 but already boiling hot. Only ten degrees from the equator, it was always hot. She felt sticky. The windows were open to get some breeze. Her hair was rumpled from the wind and she knew that already dust had made her brown hair a dull color.

A special little snake of anxiety troubled her. Was she going to be able to be an effective university professor in this strange, unpredictable country?

They drove toward the outskirts of Lome, past the huge dove of peace constructed for the dictator's celebration of his twenty-five years in power and passed huge banners in French saying, "A full and frank dialog among the people makes Togo a vital country." She knew the slogan was an example of The Big Lie. She used to laugh at it, but now she knew people who had been killed because they tried to test it.

She deliberately switched her mind and indulged herself in pleasant anticipation. Maybe she would see Everett tonight. He was a successful junior diplomat, who had recently received a promotion. He was also a nice guy. They had been close for over about two years. He had called her three days ago and said he had something important to tell her and would explain when he saw her. The line to America was bad, but he sounded happy and upbeat. He said he had something to give her. Maybe it was an engagement ring. After her disastrous first marriage she would appreciate the security of being the chosen love of the good looking Economic Officer.

Her fantasy was interrupted by their arrival at the entrance of the university. She saw a sandy stretch of land with a dirt road. In the distance she could see were about ten rundown buildings, mostly sprawling one story cement block with a few two story buildings and one large, especially shabby building that might be a student dormitory. A few stunted palm trees and withering bushes dotted the barren landscape.

"*Tu vas ou?*" asked the driver. Where was she going? She told him the College of Humanities and he drove her to one of the first buildings. She paid her 100 francs and got out, suddenly alarmed. What was wrong?

It was deserted.

The area should be filled with students waiting for the first day of the university year. The doors of the building were closed and so were the windows. She made the rounds, peering in windows, reading signs, knocking on doors. No one at all.

At last she saw a large piece of paper that looked like it had been torn out of a flour sack. It was tacked onto one of the veranda supports. On it a hand-written notice in French proclaimed:

Registration has been cancelled for today. All students and teachers must present themselves at the presidential palace for a demonstration of support for the President of the country, the Founder and Leader of the People's Rally Party, the Upholder of progress and prosperity in Togo.

It was signed by the dean of the College of Humanities.

What a start for her Fulbright year! Lucky she wasn't the usual Fulbright professor. Most of them were complete strangers to the country, taking a year from their scholarly work at a university in the United States to teach at the university, hoping to promote international understanding. Someone that didn't know Africa and had just arrived from the U.S. might have been tempted to take the next plane back. But she was only mildly annoyed. After three years in the Peace Corps in the north of Togo, she considered herself an old Africa hand.

"Well, at least I'll let them know I reported for work like the chairman's letter said I should." She tore off a page from a notebook and wrote, explaining that she had come, seen the announcement, and would be back tomorrow. She decided to find the English office and slip the note under the door.

The building had only one story and a number of doors opening onto on a cement walk. So far she had not seen anything to indicate the English Office, but she continued examining each entrance. She finally found a decaying door that said in peeling and faded letters, *Departement d'anglais*.

She bent down to push the sheet of paper through the large crack under the poorly fitting door. That was when she saw it, that grisly substance oozing out. She used the corner of the note to touch it. It was sticky and bright red. Blood. Blood that recently was part of a living body.

She knew that nothing here in Africa was like it was at home. She had tried hard to prepare herself to accept a university that would be like no university she had ever seen or dealt with. And she was used to the commonplace discomforts and dangers of African life. But this!

She stared again at the door to the English department office. Maybe she was mistaken. Maybe she didn't see what she thought she saw.

She tried the door, but it was firmly locked. She jiggled and pushed. Then she called out, "Are you there? Are you all right, are you in danger, is anyone there?" But there was no sound.

Oh! ... ghastly! Was there a terribly sick or wounded person or a recently killed person behind that door? A dead body? The battered old door had two large keyholes. She looked into the upper one. There wasn't much light. She snatched a pin point flashlight from

her purse. It took some adjusting to get light going through the bottom hole and her eye at the top one. Yes, now she could see. Yes, there it was. Her eye kept traveling down. And, there was something, like an arm, in a long dark sleeve. And there was blood on it, and on the floor around it.

There was no movement. No sound. It was completely still. Deathly still!

Suddenly she had a horrifying realization. Maybe the murderer was still inside. Maybe the killer somehow knew she was snooping around and would come out and kill her too. She panicked and started to run, staggering and stumbling on the cracked and broken sidewalk and then on the uneven and potholed sandy soil. She ran instinctively toward the entrance. She might find some help there.

Chapter 2: A Different Kind Of Library

As she ran, she felt calmer and tried to assess the situation. It was horrible. Unbelievable. Blood oozing out under the door, an inert form inside. She had to do something and right away. She didn't hear anyone chasing her.

So maybe the attacker was still inside, still with the body of the person murdered. But maybe that person lying inside wasn't dead, just terribly wounded and unconscious but could be saved if she could get medical help.

Continuing to run, she looked around for someone, anyone to help her. All that she could see of the University of Togo was still completely deserted. Had absolutely everyone gone to the political meeting? Were she and death alone on the campus?

She looked to the right and the left as well as straight ahead. There was really no human being in sight. A lonely goat wailed. There should be at least a *gardien*, a janitor/watchman. Every Togolese compound had one. She had to contact someone in authority instantly, immediately.

In America she'd know what to do. Find a phone and call 911. Tell the police and let them figure it out. Here in Africa she had to learn an entire new way of living. The horrendous events during her first Peace Corps year had taught her a lot, but this was a different situation in a different place. She didn't know how to find a phone nearby. But, even if she did, she didn't know the police number. And, probably the local police station didn't have a working phone. Even if they had one, they wouldn't have transportation. You had to provide a car or a taxi to take them to check out your problem. And because this was a day of a big demonstration for the president, probably all the police were downtown either marching for him or controlling crowds. And there was also the daunting prospect of trying to communicate these inexplicable events in French. After two years here, her French was improving. But even in English, how could she explain this situation?

She looked all around again. There must be someone here. Now she saw only a few pushup lizards, three scrawny chickens, and the motherless goat.

Lynne ran toward the university entrance. There on the main road into town she would find people and cars. She reached the road, crossed the street and looked for a taxi going in that direction. Luckily one picked her up almost immediately.

"*Tu va ou?*" the driver asked. Where?

She hesitated while she regained her breath. Yes, where? The United States Information Agency administered the Fulbright Program. She had stopped there briefly the first thing this morning, checking on arrangements for housing and mail. She said, "American Cultural Center." and "*Vite! Vite!*" hoping to get there quickly.

It took ten minutes to reach the USIA building across from the American Embassy, near the big market and the ocean. The young Togolese receptionist was grumpy and uncooperative. He had his nose in a French book, giving the impression that he was an intellectual who just happened to be there by mistake. Even though he had seen her earlier this morning, at first he refused to let her in, but, after looking carefully at her passport and her letter of appointment from the Fulbright commission, he let her pass him to enter the narrow stairway that led up to the offices.

She asked the secretary, an attractive golden skinned woman with a sullen expression to let her see the director.

"Oh, please. It's an emergency. A matter of life and death."

She was told in a lilting Jamaican accent that it was impossible for her to speak to the Director, but she could go to the adjoining office of the assistant director. She entered that office. Despite her turmoil over the bloody body, when Lynne saw Gregory Attigan, she was overwhelmed with awe. She had once seen an ebony carving of an Ashanti god, the epitome of male beauty. And now she was seeing one in the flesh. She gasped out, "I saw blood and a body at the University. I must see the Director."

"I'll take you into him," he said promptly and led the way into the Director's office.

"Oh, Mr. Truman, I need help"

Douglas Truman was a tiny little man dressed in a nothing colored suit, neither gray nor beige, but well pressed and neat. Others had told her that he was habitually so calm and objective that he had no personality at all. Lynne speculated that his quiet, reasonable manner might have been related to the fact that he had been one of the American hostages in Iran. Maybe it had helped him to survive that ordeal. Or, perhaps he learned it there.

Even though she felt frantic, she tried hard to describe her problem in a careful, clear manner. But she ended by almost shrieking, "We've got to hurry. He might be dead. Or dying."

Calm and polite, Director Truman immediately swung into action. He asked his Cultural Affairs Assistant, Tom Yaovi, an arrogant young man, nattily dressed in an American striped shirt with wide suspenders, to go along. Lynne had heard about him through the ever active American, Togolese grapevine. Tom was related to one of the old families in Togo. He had long ago adopted a stance of cool superiority to all Togolese he dealt with and to all Americans except his boss, the Director, and the Ambassador. Tom smiled superciliously. He obviously didn't believe her story.

Douglas said they would go to the university and see what was happening. "If someone needs medical help, we'll do what we can. But you know there's no emergency service in Togo."

The three of them jumped into the embassy van that waited in the parking lot with a driver for any transportation need of the director.

When they arrived, they found the campus still looked deserted. They stopped at the English office and found it was still locked. They knocked and called out again, but got no response.

They went deeper into the university to the administration offices. No officials or clerks were there. Probably they were all at the demonstration. They finally found the *gardien* asleep on a broken chair in the corner of a shed. He wore a tasseled ski cap on his white hair. Though obviously old, his blue black skin showed almost no wrinkles. Tom tried several African languages before he found one the *gardien* understood. The old man listened at tentatively, but just said what appeared to be "no," shook his head vehemently, as if absolutely refusing. But Douglas brought out his identification with the big American official seal on it and Tom spoke loudly, firmly, and menacingly in words that meant nothing to Lynne.

At last, the old man pulled out a huge bunch of old skeleton keys and with the slowness and dignity of extreme old age walked with them to the car. Lynne urged them to hurry, again telling them that there was someone mortally sick or wounded in the office, or else a recently dead body.

At the English office, the gardien tried several keys and found one that opened the door. The room was small, about ten by fourteen feet. The wooden shutters were closed and it was dark. Their eyes were blinded from the glare of the bright sun outside. Tom pushed the light switch near the door. Only one feeble bulb, hanging on a cord from the ceiling lit. But as their eyes became accustomed to the gloom, they could see the small room clearly. Lynne had been told that it served as the chairman's office and the regular meeting place for teachers. It also obviously was the library and book storage room. There were cupboards lining the walls, all filled with books. Piles of books, most of them dog eared and tattered, were stacked here and there on the floor. There was a table, holding several tall stacks of books, with several wooden chairs around it. At most there were eight square feet of spare floor space. One thing was sure. There was nobody in the room. There was no human lying on the floor.

Lynne examined the floor carefully. The cement surface was unpainted and dingy. It looked dirty and uncared for and had a layer of sand and dust all over it. But there was no blood on it, fresh or dried. What happened to it? Where did it go? Where was the body?

There were no other rooms leading from that one, no closets or nooks. It was such a tiny room that there was no hiding place for a cat, much less a human, dead or alive.

Douglas said nothing, expressed no surprise, but looked serious and sympathetic.

Tom said in his haughty voice, pleased that his doubts were proved justified, "When people are strangers in this country, they often imagine things, fearful things. Maybe there was a puddle of water that has dried. As you can see, there is no blood here. There is no one wounded or hurt, no one dead. No one at all."

There was no body in the library.

Chapter 3: Dangers Of Democracy

Douglas didn't change his caring, calm expression, but Lynne felt he must be wondering about her. After all, he had only met her the day before. Probably he hadn't heard that Washington had commended her for her coolheadedness in the tragic events of her first year in Togo. For all he knew, she might be a hysterical type who could visualize flowing blood any time she got nervous or upset.

"The police or the Embassy, or someone has to investigate. Something's terribly wrong. I saw blood and a body. It couldn't just disappear." Lynne realized he was her boss, but she still had to insist.

Douglas said that he would make out all the necessary reports to inform the Embassy of the situation, and also deal with the local authorities.

"Leave it to us. We'll find out what happened. Don't worry." He continued, "You must be tired. You just flew in yesterday. We have some good news for you. We learned your housing is ready for you. We've finished all the negotiations and paper work. You can move in right away. We'll drop you off at your Peace Corps friend's apartment. We'll give you some time to pack and then our station wagon will come to move you and your things into your house."

They went through the capital city of Lome, past the straw roofed shacks and tin roofed shanties and streaked and faded cement block buildings that made up most of it, somehow housing 300,000 people, interspersed with often palatial houses of aid officials and foreign dignitaries. The road was uneven and had dips and holes where the last rains had left huge puddles that had dried. Then they turned into the region called Embassy Row. It was near the Peace Corps office on the side away from the market. Most of the houses were large and well kept. But there were shacks and lean-tos with sellers of bread and big pots of street food squatting on tiny scraps of land in front and between the big houses.

The driver dropped her off at a large and pleasant two story house. When she rang the bell, the door was opened by Lita's housekeeper, a slim young man with dark chocolate skin, neatly dressed in a khaki outfit with a Mao jacket known as a *functionaire* or civil servant's suit.

"Welcome, madame. Madame Lita is in the salon."

"Thanks Mensah. Lita, I'm so glad you are here. I expected you to be at your office." Lynne said as she rushed in. Lita was now Assistant Peace Corps Director for Education in Togo even though she was still in her twenties. Lynne knew that she had a Master's degree in Sociology and had done exceptional work as a volunteer in the north of Togo where she taught in classrooms without electricity and few books.

"There's so much fuss about the demonstration, we decided to give the Togolese employees a break and stop trying to work. And you. You're back so soon. Did the same thing happen to you?"

Lita always seemed to be unaware of her exceptional beauty, with her dark curly hair, her perfect even features, her green eyes, her thin, vogueish figure. She never wore make-up and seemed indifferent about her wardrobe.

"Lita, you won't believe what happened to me. It's dreadful, ghastly."

"Sit down. Mensah, will you bring us some cold water? Lynne, stretch out and relax and, tell me all about it. Can you believe it, the two of us in this big, beautiful, cool, clean, room? Really different from the last time you visited me."

Lynne remembered how grateful she had been to spend the night in the crumbling house without running water where Lita had lived in Dapaong as a Peace Corps Volunteer two years ago. It had been a haven when sudden dangerous events left Lynne homeless. And now, the strangeness of what she had seen was even worse than that.

Yes, it was different. And Lita was different too. Her neat tailored dress and her shorter hair made her look more businesslike and older. And her manner was different. Still friendly, but also a little distant. But combined with that, she seemed to have something, was it a glow, about her? Was it new self confidence from the respect she gained from the job? Or was she in love?

The cold water that Mensah brought them tasted good. Clean, safe water was more expensive than beer or soft drinks. Lynne was always thirsty in the equatorial heat that never diminished, night or day, year round.

"Well, come on, tell me. You got there and found everyone was out at the demonstration? Why does that upset you so much? You shouldn't be really surprised."

"No, that's not it. Someone was murdered and then someone stole the body!" And she went on to tell Lita the details of what she had seen.

"It shouldn't be hard to figure out who was responsible. Who had a key to the door? Surely only one or two people. They don't specialize in duplicate keys here."

"True. But they also don't specialize in effective locks. I saw the key the guardien used. It was just an old skeleton thing. If you gave me a handful of different skeleton keys, I'm sure that I could open that door."

The doorbell rang. A moment later Mensah entered their room.

"Madame, USIA is here with the car."

"Oh, I completely forgot. Lita, they say I can move into my house right away. You were kind to let me stay here last night, but now I can go. Mensah, please tell them to wait a few minutes. It won't take me long to pack. I never really unpacked since I arrived on the plane yesterday. Lita, please come to the bedroom while I get my things together. And tell me what you think of what happened to me."

Lita's green eyes looked cloudy. "There's a lot of unrest in town. Politicians are getting killed and people are disappearing. I hope it hasn't spread to the university. Do you think anyone there is involved in democratic activity?"

Just then, Mensah returned. He said, to Lita, "Sorry, madame, but you have a telephone call. It is the Peace Corps Office. An emergency. They want you there immediately."

Lita looked alarmed. "Let's hope it's not more--" She dashed out, saying as she left, "I can't talk now but, don't trust Professor Ekou. Good luck. And watch out. Be careful." She seemed about to say more. But only intoned firmly, "Very careful!"

Chapter 4: An Omen

Democratic activity? Lynne didn't know much about the University. The past three years she had been in the Peace Corps stationed in Dapaong in the far north of Togo. There had been almost no democratic activity up there since the reprisals that followed the rash of protest riots and burnings her first year there. And what did Lita mean about Ekou? Who was he anyway? She threw the clothes and toiletries she had gotten out for her overnight stay into the two bags the airlines had allowed her to bring with her on her journey to Africa.

"What's going on at the University? Someone, dead or alive, had been in that English office, covered with blood." Despite the heat, she shivered. It reminded her of those terrible times in her first Peace Corps year. She remembered then it all started with a death and an omen.

There was another discreet knock on the bedroom door. It was the USIA driver ready to carry her bags to the car. She was pleased to see that it was Kwami. He had been on duty during some of the shocking events that first year. He told her he had been transferred from the Embassy to USIA a year ago.

Douglas had thoughtfully suggested that Kwami take her to buy some food before delivering her to her house. The SGGG store, called the *es-twa-jay*, was like a medium sized American supermarket. When Lynne used to shop there several times a year after long months at her post in the North, it had seemed like an unbelievable consumer paradise. Now, she bought several bags full of groceries. She knew that you can be worried about a terrible danger, murder or death and at the same time, as the old saying goes, life goes on. She certainly had learned this in her three years in the Peace Corps. The country was unstable and the special horrendous events had left volunteers wondering about their safety. Yet they went on doing their duty, like teaching English grammar in the midst of and after violent events. Disappearing bloody body or not, she would be hungry tomorrow, if not tonight.

Kwami turned the car toward their destination. She was curious to see what housing the American Cultural Center had found for her. As a Fulbright professor, she made a real salary, at least four times her pay in Peace Corps. She could live in a comfortable house. They reversed the route they took coming, passing Embassy Row with its pleasant big houses, then going through sections of little rundown houses and shacks and then heading toward the university. At the gates of the university they turned left and entered what looked almost like a pleasant American development of modest ranch type homes. This group of houses was called the *Caisse*, because it was built by the *Caisse Development*, a savings bank. Togolese officials and foreigners were the only people who could afford to play the rent there.

This oasis of modern life, just across the street from the rundown university and that spot where Lynne had flagged down the taxi in urgent fear a few hours ago was another of the contrasts and contradictions of life here that kept providing continual jolts.

Kwami stopped in front of a house with a wrought iron gate and a veranda covered with brightly blooming bougainvillea and hibiscus, profuse with pink, orange, purple and red blossoms. Eager to see her new home, Lynne jumped out of the car. Kwami unlocked the bright green door of the house. The modern key fit into a modern Yale lock. Lynne

walked it, and stopped, pleased at her good fortune. Freshly painted, attractive, clean, with modern glass windows. Quarters like this were hard to find in Togo. The living room was adequately furnished with a couch, a chair, one small table. Nothing looked broken or tattered.

Kwami carried her groceries to the kitchen and she followed him. There was a real refrigerator, a gas stove, connected to huge bottles of gas, and a modern sink. She tried the faucets. She had hot and cold running water!

"Wow. This Fulbright life is a step up."

While Kwami went to the car to get the suitcases, she proceeded with the exploring and entered the main bedroom. At first she was pleased to see the large room with a double bed. But then she shrieked, startled. On the linoleum floor near the closet there was a pile of bones and feathers, roughly in the shape of a bird, but somehow also resembling a distorted monster or human.

Kwami came into the room, bringing the suitcases. When he saw the gruesome display, he held himself rigid and his eyes grew big. He said, in French, "*Voudoun*. Voodoo. Oh Lynne, Lynne, you have an enemy!"

Chapter 5: Speaking In Tongues

Lynne cleaned up the strange mess, wrapping it in a newspaper she had saved from the day before. She took it out to the big wicker trash basket near the street in front of her house. She had been told that it would be picked up daily, a real luxury in this trash littered country.

She scrubbed her hands until they were red. Who had access to the house? But the numbers involved boggled the mind--the staff of the Caisse, the staff at the American Cultural Center-- heaven knew who else. She was uneasy, but also, accepting. As the Africans told her, strange things happen in Africa. She knew that was true. Africans usually meant that magic things happened. Being more concerned about ordinary troublemaking humans, she noticed with reassurance that there was a chain and bolt. At least when she was in the house she could protect herself from the mysterious intruder.

And why should she have an enemy? Who could she have offended? Who did she even know? Most of the people she worked with in her Peace Corp years were stationed in the North. And she hadn't even met the people who would be her colleagues or students this year. And of the people she knew, as she unpacked her things she searched her conscience. Had she hurt anyone? Probably. But not intentionally. And not greatly. She searched her memory. Had anyone said they were angry with her? Probably. But she couldn't remember.

She felt a sudden, intense longing for Everett. She had hoped to hear from him by now. Oh, when she saw him it would be so good to be able to talk over her life with him. And he must feel the same and had realized he wanted her for his wife. She was tired of these struggles all alone in this mysterious dangerous country.

It had been good to see him when they spent short vacations together and met when he had to travel up north or she had to visit Lome on business. She was proud of her independence and her ability to function in the rigors of Peace Corps. But right now, the idea of being an Embassy wife, with some clout in trying to investigate weird happenings like the body at the university and now the creepy pile of bones and feathers in her house seemed good.

It was dusk. In a half hour it would be nightfall. All year around, here, near the equator, darkness came about 6:30. She was considering turning some lights on when she was startled to see an old almost blue black man on her back veranda, knocking on the window grimacing, and making extravagant gestures. Was this the voodoo threatener here in person to menace her? Her heart pounded.

Then she felt like laughing at herself. She realized that he wanted her to turn on the outdoor lights. The switch was inside. He must be the guard that had been hired for her.

She opened the door and greeted him pleasantly in French.

He nodded his head vigorously and said several times, "Henri, Henri, Henri." Then he chattered vigorously in one of the twenty African languages used in Togo. Lynne only knew a few words of Mina and Moba. She didn't recognize any of them in what he was saying. She smiled and nodded. But she didn't feel like smiling. They had hired a guard she couldn't talk to. Her isolation seemed complete.

Chapter 6: A Night Visitor

Oh, Africa! No matter how she tried to school herself to always expect things to be strange, she was sometimes bowled over. She had planned to talk to the guard about the feathers and bones, ask him who had keys, and who had been in the house, and if he had any idea what that unpleasant display meant. Was it really a warning? But, she realized, even if they spoke the same language she probably wouldn't learn much. He himself didn't have a key. People didn't trust their *guardiens* to the extent of giving them keys to the house. And besides, he only worked nights. Many things could happen during the daylight hours when there was no guard.

She started to think about making herself some supper, but didn't feel hungry. The strange guard, in his ragged, dirty clothes was too visible in the curtainless windows. He shuffled around the large yard, bending from the waist to sweep up the leaves that had fallen during the day with the short handled broom made of a bunch of stiff weeds, tied with a string. How could he see what he was doing? It was getting darker. He appeared first at one window, then the next, at the back, the side, the front. Instead of comforting her and making her feel safe, his alien presence made her feel vulnerable, naked, before unknown powers. She hated feeling so exposed. The guard or any hostile lurker could see her as if she were a manikin in a display window.

She saw that at least there were curtain rods. She had large amounts of the beautiful African printed cloth sold everywhere. Tomorrow she would cover up all those bare windows. But right now, even in the bathroom there was no real privacy. She took out a towel from her suitcase and draped it over the rod.

It was completely dark now.

Suddenly she heard the doorbell ring. Someone was outside the gate and wanted to come in. Fear seized her briefly, then reason calmed her. "Come on now. Does a murderer or robber ring the bell?"

Through the darkness, she could just make out the form of Henri hobbling down the walk and opening the gate. He slowly made his way back to her door and clapped his hands outside her door, the African country form of knocking. When she opened the door, he said, "Maaah tin" and pointed to the gate.

She was curious. Whoever it was, she wanted to talk to him.

"Yes, okay, *oui*," she said, nodding her head vigorously.

And soon, Henri showed in her visitor.

It was man, white, probably American. She examined him carefully. He had a warm, sweet smile, with ruffled, unevenly cut hair, a spotty complexion and an unpressed shirt. Perhaps he wanted to hide his youth with his scraggly mouse brown goatee. He was thin, about 5 feet 8 inches tall and had light brown eyes. He wore knee length pants made of African striped handwoven material, with wide legs, the costume of an ethnic group in the north.

"I'm Martin Appleby, a Fulbright researcher. The Center told me where you live. Do you have time to chat with me?"

"Oh, I'm so happy to see an American. I've had such a day. Come in. Sit down."

"Thanks. I'm just a junior researcher, so I don't have such a grand house. This is great! This is my second year here. I've got a rented room downtown, near the beach. I love to swim even though I'm just a dog paddler. They say you were in the Peace Corps, so I imagine you can appreciate this splendid house too."

She liked his openness. She soon found herself pouring out the story of the blood and the body that had disappeared.

Martin was interested, but, not disturbed.

"Lynne, before this I studied in Ghana for three years. Strange things happen in Africa. And here it is even stranger to me. I don't speak French, and get everything through an interpreter or sign language."

"It's wonderful to know you. Thanks so much for coming to see me. I have been feeling isolated."

"Yes, when we choose this life we choose a certain isolation. And, sometimes it feels overwhelming. It's sometimes good to talk to another American. I'm glad to get acquainted with you. You seem like a nice person. That is good. And too rare."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm an ordained minister of the Brothers of Christ. There were a lot of us in Nebraska where I got my degree. I always try to find something good in everyone, but . . . You didn't go to all the meetings at the University and the Cultural Center last week?"

"No, I was in America. I'm sorry I missed them but I'd just finished up three years in Peace Corps here and needed a few weeks of vacation."

"So you haven't met our colleagues?"

"No. I stopped briefly at the American Cultural Center early this morning to check in with the Director and was there again to ask for some help . . . But except for me and the Director there weren't any Americans around."

"Well, some of our fellow Americans are . . ." his earnest face screwed up as if he were looking for a kind way to say an unpleasant thing.

"It's ironic. They send us here to promote international understanding. But several of our American colleagues, are difficult people. Really difficult. And unhappily, some of our other colleagues are untrustworthy. You may have trouble working with them But . . .," He brightened up, "Maybe it was just me. Maybe you'll do just fine. File my views way back in your brain some place and then just start over and get your own impressions of everyone. Maybe a nice person like you can turn the whole situation around."

"That's asking a lot, when the situation already involves a disappearing body." In a few words as possible, she told him about the mysterious occurrences in the English office. "Let's hope there aren't any murderers among your difficult people."

She liked the way he laughed at this idea. "OH, I don't think so. There is probably some other explanation of your bloody body."

"Martin, oddly enough, suddenly I'm hungry. Let me make us something to eat."

"I never turn down food."

Lynne made a simple supper for the two of them and they soon lost themselves in talk about their plans for the year. Her house seemed safe, almost cozy. Then she remembered another problem.

"Martin, something disgusting was here when I arrived." She described the pile of bones and feathers.

He listened with avid attention and asked careful specific questions about the content and shape of the scary object.

"What do you think it means? Is someone making some gesture of good will? Or playing a joke on me?"

"Lynne, voodoo is no joke. I'm here doing research on animist practices and fetishes in Africa life. I know some fine fetishers."

"How do you reconcile your status as a minister with voodoo?"

"I respect the African religions. The same God rules over everyone. And the same devil fights for human souls. I'm sorry to tell you . . . He stopped, his kind, mottled face serious. "We know now that you have an enemy who can get into your house easily. As for voodoo and the fetishers, don't be fooled. Voodoo does work. It's a force here. You're in danger!"

Chapter 7: A Not Quite Chairman

Lynne woke at dawn which always came in this equatorial area 6:30. She remembered with pleasure the later part of the previous evening when, after his gloomy prediction, Martin had helped her with the dishes and they had exchanged stories about exasperating and funny things that has happened to them in their time in Africa.

She set out early for the university. She didn't need a taxi. It was only about a ten-block walk to the English department. It was uncomfortably hot, and the results of her luxurious shower were soon gone. She felt like the top layer of her skin was liquid. As she walked, she reminded herself that the first thing to do was to insist that someone listen to her story about the missing body and do some investigating.

The sandy soil had already been swept clean, as was the custom. Lynne knew that by night everything would be littered again, since it was also the custom to throw trash on the ground to be swept up the next day. As she approached the university, she found the road and paths swarming with students. As was usual with all but destitute or mad Africans, they were all impeccably groomed, beautifully dressed, the women with their hair elaborately tressed, wearing intricately constructed dresses made of bright African print fabrics. About one half of the men wore neatly pressed American or European style dress pants and short sleeved dress shirts. The others wore either the *complet*, a two-piece pajama like suit made of African print sometimes embellished with embroidery or a *boubou* made of woven figured damask called *bazin*, in any of a rainbow of tints.

At least the office was unlocked today. Lynne entered. She looked around her. The shutters were open and the single light was on so visibility was at least moderate. A pleasant looking Togolese man in a dress shirt and slacks, with a café au lait complexion sat behind the table close to the edge of the left side, looking ill at ease and tentative. Lynne said, "Professor Adolpho?"

"Yes. Are you Madame Lynne Lewis?"

"Oh, please call me Lynne. But yes, that's me.

I got your letter. I was here yesterday, but . . ." Her voice trailed off. Where should she start?

"We had an unexpected holiday. The party asked students and teachers to attend a manifestation of loyalty."

"Yes. I saw the note. But I was here and I looked through the key hole and saw a body and saw blood running under the door."

Professor Desire Adolpho looked unhappy, but not surprised.

"You think you saw those things."

"I did see them. Has anyone investigated?"

"Someone came to my house last night and told me about your story. I came out here and there was nothing there. Just look at the floor. There are no stains, nothing."

She looked where he pointed. The floor was still discolored and mottled, also dirty, covered with a thin film of sand and dust.

He looked sympathetic and apologetic. "Perhaps you were frightened and nervous. The first days in Africa are often a shock for foreigners."

"But, Dr. Adolpho."

"Excuse me, Lynne, but we will do the American thing. You too must call me Desire, my given name."

"Desire, I was a Peace Corps volunteer here for three years. I'm used to Africa."

"No one who has lived in America gets used to Africa. Believe me, after 10 years in America getting my doctorate at the University of Chicago, it was hard for me to deal with when I returned last year."

"But, let's think about it. Who could have been here? Who could have died? Is anyone missing?"

"It will take time to learn that. Communications are difficult."

"But here at the University?"

"We'll only know when registration is complete whether all of our students showed up. And as for teachers, they often straggle in anytime during the first three weeks."

"Well, how about the key? Who could have unlocked the door?"

"Ah, the key. Who knows? Many people had keys. And many keys to other offices fit this one."

"Well, I give up. How about registration? When do I teach and where? Not to mention what?"

Now, Desire Adolpho looked really embarrassed. "I'm sorry to have to tell you the schedule has not been made out for the year yet."

"No? Why not?"

"The previous chairman will be on duty until tomorrow. I cannot start work until then. You see, his things are still here." She saw stacks of books and also a pen in a stand, a note book, and a sign saying Blaise Begemey.

"And he hasn't made out the schedule?"

"No. He says that is my job."

"So how can students register? There are at least a hundred waiting outside the door right now."

"They will have to wait until tomorrow until I take over."

Three weeks of vacation in America had made Lynne forget some of the lessons of acceptance, patience and flexibility that Africa and three years in the Peace Corps had taught her.

"But why didn't someone get things ready?"

Desire looked hurt and angry. After all, he was the chairman. "Please realize that we have our ways of running this university. I could not offend my colleague who is also my friend and cousin over this matter."

"Oh, I know. Please forgive me for my rude American impatience. What should I do? . Do I have an office or anything?" Again Desire looked, apologetic.

"This is Africa, Lynne. This is it, the only office we have. As soon as we get the schedule made, we have to register our 220 students personally by hand."

"Oh. Can I help you?"

"Not today, but tomorrow we'll have a staff meeting and Thursday and Friday we need professors to make lists."

"Okay. I'll be here. And listen--when things calm down--, I'm going to receive some books from American that might interest you. My house is in the Caisse, right across the street from the University. Please stop over and see me any time."

Suddenly the door burst open and a beautiful woman with pale white skin and yellow blonde hair, stalked in, if you can stalk in such a cramped space. She looked like something out of a magazine ad, thin and attractive with long manicured nails, subtly tinted stockings, high heeled shoes. Her eyes were brilliant with anger.

As she entered, she was saying loudly, "I have never seen such incompetence. Yesterday they call off registration for a parade. What's the excuse today? . Ever since I arrived in July, my time has been wasted by this poorly run university. Believe me I will report this to Washington. These are not the conditions of my Fulbright grant."

She broke off the tirade and turned to Lynne, looking at her aggressively and suspiciously. "Who are you?"

"I'm Lynne Lewis. I'm a Fulbright professor"

"That's what I thought. You have my house!"

"What do you mean? The Center gave it to me."

"Yes, but they should give it to me."

"Excuse me, but who are you?"

"Adriana Gallant, Fulbright professor."

"Well, I don't know what happened. The Cultural Center is in charge of those arrangements. Can I ask you a question, Adriana? Did you come to the university yesterday? Did you see anything unusual?"

"I wasn't here yesterday. No one was. As far as I can see, everything here is unusual. They call this a university. These rundown stucco buildings. Why in East Lansing we have a better campus for our garbage dump."

Lynne could feel herself blushing. This wretched woman would only destroy what little international understanding the American government gained through the Fulbright program.

Well, Africa had survived famine and drought and war and exploitation. It would doubtless survive Adriana Gallant. But she knew that Africans were proud people. Deliberate rudeness and disrespect infuriated and pained them. Sometimes they got vengeance.

She turned to Desire Adolpho. How could she apologize for her fellow American's unthinkable treatment of their supervisor and host? The Togolese professor now looked like a different person, he had such a look of venomous hatred.

The old saying, "If looks could kill" flashed through her mind. Lynne remembered Martin had said there were several ugly Americans posted to work in the English Department. Had one of them done something like this and been killed for vengeance? Was that why blood was spilled in the English office yesterday?

Chapter 8: Cross My Heart

Lynne was entering her house, hot, sweaty, and tired, when the telephone rang. It startled her. She had never had a telephone in Africa before. In a country where few people had phones, calls at home were rare. Could the call be for her? Probably it was a wrong number. She answered it on the fourth ring, expecting to hear someone speaking a language she didn't understand asking for someone she didn't know.

"Oui?" she said hesitantly.

"Lynne, Everett here."

"Oh Everett. I'm so glad to hear from you."

"Glad you got back safely. I traveled up north this week. Just got back. We've got to talk. Can you come right over to the Embassy lunch counter? I just have a little free time and then I'll be tied up until late tonight."

He obviously hadn't heard about her horrendous experience. And the meeting he proposed wasn't private or romantic. It would be a bother for her, to walk to the road in the heat again and then flag down a taxi. But, she really wanted to see him soon. And she knew he was a busy, important man. "Sure. It'll probably take me about 45 minutes, but I'll be there."

"I have something important to tell you. Hurry."

Thrilled again at the idea that this might be a historical meeting she quickly washed her face and combed her hair.

It was almost an hour later when she reached the Embassy.

The lunch counter was inside the Embassy compound. It took her a few minutes to show her passport and sign in with the short, young marine at the gate. The lunch room had just four small tables and a counter leading to a compact modern kitchen.

Everett was at the table in the middle of the room. He was a nice looking man, tall and manly with regular features. He rose and kissed her on the cheek. "Wonderful to see you again, Lynne. Sit down." They ordered at the counter from the list written in chalk on the black board. When they were seated again, Everett said, "I think it's best to tell you the truth."

Lynne felt like her heart stopped. When people started talking about the truth, it usually meant they were going to say something unpleasant.

"Lynne, I think you and I have made a mistake in, well, I think we should cool it for a while. For us both to be stationed in Lome, that can lead to, I mean we should see other people."

"Go on." Her voice was rising with anger. She didn't even care that the waitress behind the counter a few feet away was watching with great interest and enjoyment. She probably couldn't understand much English, but could hear her tone and see her furious face.

"Lynne, you know we never had any agreement of exclusivity."

These diplomats. When cornered they could always come up with a technicality.

"Oh. My mistake." Her sarcasm was heavy.

"You and I have had a fine relationship, many good times, but no fireworks."

"Everett, you said you wanted to tell me something. And you had something for me." She felt almost as if by saying these words she could restore the situation she had imagined they meant.

"Yes. I wanted to tell you about this. And I do have a present for you. Remember you had heard that Frenchman joking about a Dixieland musical number called the *Agouti Promenade* and you were trying to recall the tune of the Muskrat Ramble? I found it in a catalog and sent away for a copy. Now after five months it finally arrived."

"Oh, Everett. I really expected you to talk about a closer relationship between us." She hadn't meant to admit this.

Everett's voice took on that official tone that State Department officers know how to do so well.

"Well Lynne, we're both mature adults. We never had an agreement."

"You don't recall that you asked me to apply for a Fulbright so I could stay in Africa near you?"

"Lynne," Everett's voice sounded human again, almost pleading. "I know I'm behaving like a skunk or maybe a muskrat, but I'm just not ready to march down the aisle. At least not with you."

"Ah, I think I get it now. Everett, have you found someone you really care for?"

"Yes, I've really fallen in love. You know, I'm usually a rather careful guy, taking things step by step. But I just met someone who overwhelms me. She's highly intelligent and charming, fascinating witty, stylish. Well, you'll meet her soon. She's a Fulbright professor like you."

Oh no. "You don't mean Adriana?"

"Yes. Then you've met her. You know what I mean."

"Uhhhh . . ." Lynne kept herself from saying, "No, I don't know what you mean. That vicious, insensitive, imperious . . . beautiful blonde woman."

"I hope I haven't upset you. We're still friends?"

She wanted to shriek at him and curse him. But she had learned that in this small American community, you must never make enemies, especially not powerful ones at the Embassy. She somehow got out the ridiculous words. "Sure, Everett. Friends."

The waitress brought them their sandwiches, obviously interested in the drama unfolding in the tiny room. Maybe she did understand some English.

Lynne took a bite of her food. The grey steamed hamburger, prepared by a cook who didn't understand the point almost choked her.

"Everett, I'm not hungry. I want to go now."

"Wait. I want you to help me. Adriana told me that she's been threatened. She didn't explain but said it might have something to do with Mr. Gumpa. Please find out the problem and do something about it. I have to go out of town again tonight."

She realized she hadn't told him about her bloody body. Well, let him hear it from someone else. Through gritted teeth she said, "Okay, Everett, I'll try." So someone threatened that selfish witch!

"Look, I don't blame you for being angry with me. But this is important. The State Department has no authority at the university. That is all through USIA. You'll be working with both Adriana and Gumpa. Help her. It sounds serious. I believe she is in real danger!"

Chapter 9: A Left-Handed Compliment

Lynne hurried home, really annoyed that horrid Adriana was preferred over her. She had been so stunned by that revelation that she hadn't felt like talking to Everett about the bloody body, and hadn't asked him details about the threat to Adriana. The way she treated people, a threat wasn't surprising.

She went to bed early, disgruntled. But the next morning, she probed her feelings as if to investigate the spot where a tooth had been pulled. There was hurt pride and disappointment. But one strange secret part of her was relieved and exhilarated. Maybe life would offer her some exciting adventures before she settled down again to being someone's wife.

Full of energy, she was ready to tackle the staff meeting at the university. She would insist that they tell her what was being done about the body.

She ate and showered and picked a cheerful dress made of a green African print. Twenty minutes later, hot, perspiring, and dusty from her walk, she approached the English office ready for the day that should be interesting even though difficult.

The meeting was in one of the large classrooms. The large shabby room wasn't air conditioned, but at least there was a breeze. All the windows were open except for a few that were broken and boarded over.

Desire Adolpho presided. He led the group in thanks to last year's chairman Blaise Begemey who bowed graciously in response. Blaise was a dandy. All the African professors dressed well, with neat suit pants and short sleeved dress shirts, all pressed and well matched. But the ex-chairman even wore a tie, beautifully coordinated with his shirt. He smelled of a musky men's cologne. He smelled like France.

Desire, now at last legally and formally chairman, was more self confident and in control. He asked everyone to respond when he called their name. There were nine professors in the English department. Desire called the roll. Typically, he didn't use alphabetical order. Adriana Gallant. Lynne looked at her. She was beautiful, damn her. She wore an intricately crafted African two piece costume made of a mostly pink print, made of the expensive, popular Hollandaise cloth.

The chairman continued the roll-- Blaise Begemey, M. Gumpa, Lynne Lewis, Madame de Souza, Innocent Ekou. She turned to get a good look at Ekou, the man she was told to mistrust. She almost laughed at the irony of his name. She knew it was fairly common here. Innocent Ekou was tall and thin with golden skin. He had arched eyebrows and high cheekbones, and flashing eyes. She had seen pictures of devils that had a similar look.

The chairman went on, " I must note that I, Desire Adolpho, myself am here."

Martin had said she had difficult American colleagues. She had already, met one, Adriana who certainly fit that description. Although, to give her her due, she looked great, almost queenly. Most of her bright yellow hair was tucked under a headdress, folded magnificently in the Nigerian style, towering high above most heads.

Lynne looked around, wondering who the other problems were. Desire went on with his role call. Ned Emerald. Paid by the British Council to teach in Africa, Ned Emerald, was tall and dignified looking with white hair and an almost military bearing. Someone had told

her that he and his wife Margaret had been in Benin and Togo for twelve years. She had heard a little about him, all of it good. And of course he wasn't an American.

Then the chairman announced, Bruce Bradford. When she saw the other white man she gasped. He looked so much like pleasant Martin! His ruffled hair was badly cut. His shirt was African and handwoven from the north. He was thin and about Martin's size and also had a scraggly goatee. He, too looked pale and unhealthy. He, too had grey-brown eyes, but his were bloodshot with dark circles under them. Bruce looked tense. As the meeting went on with its numerous administrative details, he became increasingly nervous and restless. He lit one cigarette from the butt of the previous one, completely ignoring the Togolese teachers near him who were fanning the air to dissipate the clouds of fumes. When Madame de Souza protested and asked him not to smoke he whimsically but firmly said, "Oh, I must smoke. I can't think or talk with out smoking."

Even when Mr. Gumpa started coughing he didn't stop his incessant billows of smoke. Silently, Lynne marveled, "Is this kind Martin's evil twin?"

Adriana made a scornful remark, but he seemed impervious to public opinion.

Desire started with the business of schedules. When he read off the assignments, Lynne learned that she, Madame de Souza, and Adriana were all assigned to teach second year American Literature to the same students, all the American Literature majors.

Desire shuffled through his papers and then stopped the proceedings to have a low voiced conference with Blaise Begemey. While the two of them continued to search for papers and talk, the group broke up into several conversations, in English, in French, in Mina.

Despite her dislike of Adriana, Lynne wanted to be professional and tried to convince her to have a meeting with Madame de Souza, so that they could coordinate their text assignments. She suggested this in a low voice, trying not to disturb the meeting.

Adriana's voice was low and also hostile and vehement, "I'm not going to waste my time like that. I don't need your help."

"But can't we know what you will be teaching? What if we all teach the same thing?"

"You can't have my materials. I'm going to copyright them."

"But, it would help me to have some idea..."

"All right. Here is something you can have."

Suddenly, there was one of those coincidental pauses in the many separate conversations in the room and her voice carried high and clear. "Here is some information about what happened at Michigan State last year." She pulled out several sheets from her briefcase, folded them and handed them to her.

Lynne noticed that Madame de Souza hadn't said a word, aside from the no smoking request, except to Lynne, during the entire meeting, and most of the time fixed her eyes at some spot on the cracked blackboard. When she overheard Lynne's discussion with Adriana, she fixed Adriana with a look of cold hatred.

Desire was ready to proceed. He said "We need your help all day Thursday and Friday to registering our students. We don't have a computer and I and our secretary can only do so much." There were some English, French and Mina grumbles and complaints. But no one refused.

Then Bruce spoke, "No. I won't. I didn't come to Africa to be a clerk." And he walked out.

The chairman shrugged and continued.

Soon Desire seemed ready to end the meeting. Lynne felt hesitant about speaking about a subject that might have dangerous political overtones to this group that showed some over politeness and some animosities. She knew a member of the English Department had served time in jail for distributing democracy information back before the present days of relative freedom of the press which came after perestroika, African style.

But she couldn't stand to have the meeting adjourned without some mention of the body and some effort to find out who it was and why it was in the English office.

"Please, I'm sure you all heard rumors of the body I saw in the English office."

There was dead silence.

"Do you know anything about it?"

The chairman looked at her angrily. When he turned off his genial nice guy side, he looked fierce.

"Madame, the authorities are taking care of that. We need not concern ourselves. It is illegal to interfere with an investigation. We concentrate on education, the police take care of bodies."

"But, who was it? Is anyone missing? Is there any student or teacher who didn't show up?"

There was another silence.

Madame de Souza opened her mouth, swept a haughty glance around the room, then closed it. Finally, Mr. Begemey, perhaps still feeling a little of the prestige of his recent chairmanship said, "Maybe a student is missing. But there is no way to find out yet. As for teachers... where is Sylvia?"

Desire Adolpho said, "Don't start terrible rumors. She will be here. Now, we have covered all of our business today."

The group burst into a babble of private comments and conversations, again in three languages. Lynne could hear some chilling French words-- for death and lagoon. What were they talking about? That sounded like a horror movie.

Adriana rose. She really was a stunning woman, perhaps more beautiful now because of her cold haughty fury. "I have something to say. You people are playing your little power games. I know what is going on. Change, or you will be sorry. I have access to people in power in the American Embassy. I'll tell them what I know about the camp counselor program!"

There were murmurs of protest, but she continued, "Someone tried to frighten me, left me a voodoo curse symbol, threatening my death. I know who it is. I will get that person."

The chairman protested, "Madame . . . "

"Madame Adriana," Mr. Gumpa protested. He reminded Lynne of a black Woody Allen. Short and slightly built, he had a tentative, hesitating air and his eyes looked bewildered behind those big glasses "Please remember our friendship at Michigan State. Please trust me. I do my work well. I know my people."

Mr. Ekou looked as if he was trying to be so unobtrusive, no one would see him.

Adriana venomously continued, "Pay attention to what I say. I can give my words teeth."

Lynne was mortified at the behavior of her fellow American. Her original dislike was compounded by knowing that Everett was in love with this terrible woman.

Impetuously, she said, "Adriana, you can't treat our Togolese colleagues like that."

Adriana spit at her. "I'm not here to cater to corrupt educators, I'm here to help the students. I studied anthropology and know how to deal with Africans and reach their hearts. I don't need you to tell me what to do."

As she left the room, a group of students thronged around her asking her what was going on and when registration would begin. She seemed like a different woman with them, all sympathy and charm. The students smiled broadly, always disposed to like and respect a teacher, especially an American.

But she noticed a student wince. Adriana was giving each student a friendly little squeeze on the arm. She was using her left hand.

If she were any other American, Lynne would have given her a tip about African courtesy. But she was fed up with being scorned by Adriana. She watched, enjoying the sight of her ignorant misbehavior. With her beautifully manicured left hand she was giving each student a little pat. The students tried to be polite. They neglected to tell her that her action was a great insult, disgusting beyond measure for them. One by one their smiles were replaced by looks of revulsion. The left hand was used for only for the most repulsive filth.