

Chapter 20: A Voyage In The Bush

The next morning just as she was drinking her coffee and trying to decide what to do with her new insight about Sylvia, she got a call from the Cultural Center. The melodious voice of Michel, the receptionist/ phone clerk said, "Attend, sir. The director will speak to you."

"Lynne, this is terribly short notice. But all these emergencies have us thrown off course."

"Oh, Mr. Truman, Doug, what is it? Can I help?"

"Yes, you can. Adriana was scheduled to give a lecture at a national English teachers' conference in Atakpamay day after tomorrow. Could you possibly fill in for us?"

"What subject?"

"Oh, anything about American Literature will do. Black literature, if possible."

"How about Black women in short stories?"

"You're the expert, Lynne. I bow to your judgement. I have to give the opening speech on Thursday morning. We plan to drive up there tomorrow afternoon and spend the night. You'll be scheduled for 10 the next morning. After you speak, we can go home."

"I'll be happy to do it. I have a morning class tomorrow, but then don't have any more until next week."

Lynne was pleased to be asked. She would enjoy speaking at a national meeting. And the long ride up and the other time with Doug would give her opportunities for a long uninterrupted talk about the camp counselor program and Sylvia. And she felt thrilled to have a chance to perform professionally. This was a real Fulbright thing to do.

It would be challenging. It would be a big crowd of teachers. She started immediately thinking about what she would say. She could get some good points in about relationships between the sexes.

To her surprise the next afternoon, when she followed the chauffeur who came at two o'clock to the center car she saw that Gregory was seated in the front right seat.

This both disappointed her and pleased her. She would have to postpone the discussion of the camp counselor program again, since the subject distressed Gregory so much. But having him here might provide another kind of opportunity. She realized that the rush of events had prevented her from making what was probably a mistake . . . a mistake she wanted to make.

"Please sit back here with me, Lynne." The director said. "I'm glad to have your company."

Lynne enjoyed the change, a chance to see what she felt was the real Africa, the countryside and villages. She watched the rural scenery that she missed in her present city life. The main highway was a dirt road, with lush greenery on both sides. She saw square red mud huts with thatched rooms, some isolated, some in tiny villages with their clusters of small shops, and tin or thatched roof stands, bottle drink stands,

staring groups of people. The long stately parade of women and children with big loads of clay pots, woven mat rugs, yams, chickens, grain, balanced on their head as they walked the miles to the town where the market was being held.

"Did you learn anything about the body and the blood in the English office?"

"No Lynne. I think that Gregory told you that I reported it to the security officer at the Embassy and Tom also went to the chairman of the English department and took him out there. So far no one has heard of anything suspicious occurring."

She let her annoyance over his neutral manner show. "You think I'm crazy, don't you?"

"No, not crazy."

"Then, hysterical and seeing things that don't exist?"

"Lynne, I'll be honest. Certainly you had the highest recommendations for keeping your head here in the midst of strange and violent times here in Togo. But I don't know you well enough to know how you react to stress. There is plenty of that here, as you know, even for someone who has had three years of African experience. On the other hand, Adriana's death may be another incident in a chain of violence."

"So you think they are related?"

"Maybe. I have been meaning to ask you, did you see anything to tell if it was a man or woman, a Togolese or an American?"

"Oh, I'm glad you are taking it seriously!" She tried again to recreate in her mind the moment when she had arranged the flashlight and had her eye to the keyhole. Had she seen any skin? The word flesh colored had one meaning to many Americans at home, but an entirely different one here. Most flesh here instead of being a pale peach color was dark, black, brown, chocolate, or café au lait. Had she seen a spot of any of these colors? She had seen a long sleeve of some kind and possibly some flesh. But it had been too dark to know the color of the skin or whether the arm belonged to a man or a woman.

"No. I can say the arm was ordinary sized, not grossly fat or tremendously huge. But that is all. I hope you will let me know if you learn anything about this."

"I will if it's not a state secret. We have to be careful to keep our presence here peaceful and not stir up the explosion that many feel is coming."

She watched the African panorama. At the side of the road, an old woman in a towering headdress had a table full of rosy colored gasoline in old wine bottles. Her grand children each waved two pink bottles at the passing cars.

Yes, life was always close to an explosion here.

"At the university we still haven't heard which students haven't shown up. The English department couldn't start registration for several days because of an internal protocol struggle."

Douglas gave a weak smile, "There's a lot of that sort of thing around here."

Lynne continued, suddenly feeling intensely serious and on the brink of the dramatic truth. "I have learned one thing. The missing Sylvia. Have you heard about her?"

Douglas, suddenly started. "Yes. I have. I had forgotten about her. I was talking to the Peace Corps director at a dinner last night. He said the Peace Corps Volunteer, Sylvia Van Horn is missing. She went home on holiday and hasn't reported back on the scheduled date. The director was concerned and called her parents in Kansas. They said that they saw her off at the airport there a week ago."

"Maybe she did show up," Lynne suggested. "Maybe she reported to the English office. And maybe someone met her there."

"Did you learn anything more about her, Lynne? Do you know if she had any enemies, or lovers?"

"From what people say, she had many enemies, and some lovers."

They passed a young boy holding aloft what looked like a huge dead rat. It was an *agouti*, a bushrat, prized for its succulent meat. "*Bonne marche*, good bargain." he called, waving it enticingly.

She told the director about her conversation with Kossiwa and her suspicion of Begemey. She said determinedly, "Someone has to do something. You can't expect me to unconcernedly teach classes and meet students a few feet from where I saw a bloody unacknowledged body probably killed by one of my colleagues."

Chapter 21: At The Fufu Bar

After their sad speculations about Sylvia's disappearance there was silence in the car. Even the driver stopped his desultory remarks in Mina to Gregory. Lynne's mind was awl with plots on how to actively search for answers to all these mysteries. It seemed obvious to her that Blaise Begemey that charming "ladies' man," was the most logical suspect for one murder and possibly two. She wanted to find out if he had any encounters with Adriana. He would be at the conference and she would find an opportunity to question him. She felt that she could tell by his reaction whether her suspicions were correct. She decided to find a way to speak with him privately, but still close to other people. She didn't want to be the third murder victim.

At five o'clock they arrived at the National Training Institute. Once she got out of the car and into the muggy pre dusk air, she hurried to the crumbling building that served as the reception office.

She presented herself at a counter near the entrance to register. A woman in a glorious, elaborately tucked and pleated costume made of *Hollandais* print fabric greeted her and asked her name. This was the beginning of a frustrating exchange. The clerk had a card already made out with Adriana's name on it. Lynne tried to explain that Adriana wasn't coming and that she had taken her place. This caused a flurry. The clerk left the desk and returned with two other officials. They all agreed that it was impossible for her to have a room. Doug was occupied with a discussion with Mr. Gumpa and some of the other planners of the convention. Finally he noticed that she was having trouble and came and explained in his calm, official tone in his flat mid-western French that Lynne would take Adriana's place.

Now they agreed and gave her a key to her room. It was tied by a piece of string to a tag that said in big letters, Gallant Adriana. Then Mr. Gumpa, head of the committee for the seminar, proudly showed her the program. It looked professional. It must have been done in Lome at the American Cultural Center on a day their computer and printer were working. Then she saw that Adriana's name was listed as Fulbright professor and speaker. With the nearest photocopy machine four hours away in Lome, of course they wouldn't change it. A chill went down her back. She was in a dead woman's shoes!

Gregory took care of registration for Doug and himself. It took only a few minutes. Then Douglas said to Lynne and Gregory, "You're free to make your own arrangements for dinner. The center is giving you an allowance for food for this evening. After that you will be eating with the participants of the seminar.

Gregory said, "May I escort you? Where do you want to eat?"

"I'd like to try a local eating place, one that has real African food. I'm tired of living in yovo land."

Gregory laughed at her use of this word that meant *stranger* or *white person*. "Let's go to a *fufu* bar."

They walked through the teeming city, crowded with women with babies on their backs, school boys in khaki uniforms, men in *boubous*, *complets*, and bits and pieces European clothing. They walked through the dead yovo market which is what the stalls

of secondhand clothes shipped from Europe and America were called. She noticed a brawny teenager wearing proudly a t shirt proclaiming "Soccer Mom!" Another example of what happens when people speak twenty languages and often read none.

It was 5:30 but already dusk was starting to fall. The fufu bar was a group of benches and wooden tables under a thatched roof attached to a small windowless mud brick building. Women were stirring aromatic food in huge kettles boiling over small fires. A team of strong village maidens was pounding fufu, four of them circling the big wooden round vat and giving the big mass of white yams a slap as they circled. The rhythmic motion and whacking sound were utilitarian but they looked to Lynne like a wonderful folk ballet.

A waitress dressed in the typical women's costume, made of a red, orange, and yellow print with a design involving guinea fowl, *pintades*, brought them each a big bowl of grey fufu which looked like wallpaper paste, and also a bowl of sauce, tomato gravy with hot peppers and tiny chunks of meat in it.

"Here, I'll show you." Gregory took a pinch of the fufu between his thumb, whirled it around a little to let the loose bits drop off, dipped it into his pot of sauce and popped it into his mouth. "Ah, that is good," he said.

Lynne didn't tell him she had seen people eat fufu many times in her years in Togo. Even so, she had never perfected the technique. She tried to copy him, but made a mess of it, with blobs of fufu and splashes of sauce falling all over. The flavor was good although too peppery for her taste, and fufu reminded her of wallpaper paste, but she gamely continued eating.

"Oh, I love this," she said. In a way this was true. It was this authentic African experience and Gregory's company that she meant.

Gregory looked at her fondly. "We'll make an African out of you yet. The yams we use in fufu are important for health in Africa. They help guard against malaria and other diseases. The people in Kpalime have a big festival at the harvest. "

"Sounds like our Thanksgiving," Lynne said.

"I'll take you to it next year. There are songs and dancing and mounds of fufu. Okay?"

"Okay." She found it hard to say no to this beautiful man.

It was almost dark now. Lights, oil lamps made from old tuna cans, were lit and across the street women with little booths at the market nearby lit their candles. It was romantic, and strange. A young boy came to each table and lit the candles stuck in glass containers and old wine bottles. In the improved light she noticed customers who were probably attending the conference. She saw some that she knew from her years in Peace Corps. Then she noticed, at a table for two, at the other end of the veranda, Blaise Begemey sitting, with an intimacy apparent even in the distance, very close to a beautiful young black woman, ornately dressed with the towering Nigerian style head adornment made of shining silver and red polyester.

The candle at his table was in a red glass container which cast a red shadow on his face, attentively listening to the beautiful woman. Was he some kind of devil? Had he murdered two American women?

Suddenly a large, grotesque shadow appeared near them. Then it became a woman, tall and heavy, wearing a with carefully pleated cloth head wrap. She started to talk to Lynne. Her voice was threatening as she said ominous sounding words in a strange African language. There was no mistaking the attitude. She pointed her long forefinger at Lynne.

Lynne realized she was mixing some French and English words in with her strange tirade, " *mari, enceinte*, husband, pregnant?" What was she talking about?

"Lynne, let's go. This is only a *folle*, a mad woman, but it is not pleasant." He seemed greatly disturbed.

"What did she say? What language was she speaking?"

"It is unusual to hear in Togo, but she was speaking a language of Ghana."

"What did she say?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter."

"Oh please. You must tell me."

"She's just a crazy woman. She said you are a thief. Now let's go."

"A thief? What have I stolen?"

Another customer spoke up. "Madame." Surprisingly she spoke in English. "Madame, the man does not want you to know. The woman says you have stolen her daughter's husband, her pregnant daughter's husband. And she curses you for it."

Chapter 22 A Tall Dark Stranger

Lynne wondered. Maybe the *folle* wasn't so mad. Maybe she somehow knew Gregory and his life. Lynne realized that the American love system didn't hold here. A man could have four wives and wasn't expected to be faithful to any or all of them. She remembered the words of her Togolese French teacher, her best friend during her early days in the country, when she asked him about whether she should have an affair with a Togolese man. "Remember this: he will lie to you. And he will be unfaithful to you. Only timid men are faithful to their wives and sweethearts. But he will also give great pleasure."

Gregory led her out of the darkness, back to the familiar training school. "Please ignore that old woman. Some old fashioned women get upset anytime they see an African with a white woman. Now, where can we go? Did they give you a room by yourself?"

"Yes, I think so. It's a big room for hospital patients, but I think they emptied it just for the Fulbright professor who turned out to be me. I'm not eager to enter it alone the first time."

"I will take you in."

It was a big dormitory sort of room, far better than the ordinary quarters of the English teachers where Lynne had stayed at a conference the previous year. There were screens on the windows and it was fairly clean. Ten small beds had uncovered, soiled mattresses. But one was made up with a bottom sheet and a pillow. Gregory led Lynne to that one and sat on the edge. She sat next to him.

"Lynne, I am in love with you"

"In love?" She looked at his amazingly handsome face. She wanted to believe him.

"Yes, in love."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean you are precious to me, beautiful, valuable. I want to help you, take care of you, hold you, love you. I know that many bad things are happening now. I don't want to give you more problems. But when things become quieter, I want to be an important part of your life."

"Really?"

"Really. When we get back to Lome, I want to visit you again, a real visit. And soon we will plan a trip to magic Lac Togo to spend some time in a wonderful old German Hotel on the shores of that beautiful inland lake." His words were weighted with significance. Then he said, "Now, I am going to put my arm around you."

Lynne didn't protest.

"Doesn't that feel good?"

"Yes it does."

He kissed her softly, swiftly on the lips and then on the cheek. "You are my love, my woman, my egg!"

"Your egg?" She couldn't help laughing.

"Yes, that is what we say in Ghana. Because an egg is a good, precious thing that you must take good care of."

"Yes indeed. I'd like to be your egg."

He looked lovingly at her. "Yes. But right now unfortunately, I share a big room like this with the director. If I am gone long he will miss me. I can stay a little while. Just rest, and I will try to stay with you until you go asleep. She lay on the cot and he sat on the side, holding her hand.

She knew she should ask him many questions and utter many protests. "Do you have a wife? Why did the madwoman say that? Did you understand her language? A romance between us is a bad idea, you're a stranger, we can never really understand each other." But, instead, she found herself saying, "That will be wonderful. I like being with you."

She felt relaxed and at peace, a rare state in the past three weeks. She fell into a deep sleep.

When she woke with a start in the darkness, alone, she was apprehensive. Did he go and leave the door unlocked?

She ran to it and found it locked. She had a second concern. Was she locked in? What if there was a fire? Then she remembered she had a key. She unlocked the door to test it, then relocked it. Gregory was a trustworthy friend.

She went back to sleep and soon was dreaming. In her dream she was at camp and the head counselor was leading a group, reciting, "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall..."

Chapter 23: An Evil Twin?

When the hot sun of the morning streamed through the many open windows, she woke feeling well rested, ready once again to face the uncertainties of African life. She quickly dressed and went to join the others.

At the entrance to the simple dining room the perhaps sinister Mr. Blaise Begemey greeted her with effusive compliments. His praise and hand kissing seemed to hide mockery and sometimes when he thought no one was looking, his face showed hate. Who was the beautiful woman he had been with last night? And what other women had succumbed to his seductions?

She planned soon to talk to him about Sylvia. But he took a seat at the far side of the room. She also wanted to get better acquainted with Mr. Etou. She wondered why Lita had told her not to trust him.

She ate the French bread and butter and coffee that were provided with Douglas, Gregory, Mr. Gumpa and several other English teachers. She heard Gregory explaining to Mr. Gumpa, who had a notebook in his hand, trying to keep things organized, why Bruce wasn't there.

Gumpa sounded relieved. "Then he is going to give his speech? He is on the schedule the first thing after the opening ceremony."

"Yes, he will. He's in town, but when he learned we expected him to be housed here in the training camp he refused to go along with the idea. We had to put him and his wife up in the Hotel Roc. He insisted on modern lodging and a *yovo* restaurant and that's the only one in town."

Gregory looked embarrassed. "Lynne, I'm sorry. We had to somehow find money in the Cultural Center budget to pay for it to convince him to participate. We felt that you would be willing to share the ordinary accommodations."

"Of course. I want to be with you two and with the English teachers. I know a lot of them from attending other seminars my three years in the Peace Corps."

The group went to the large assembly room. It had some fans and open windows which mercifully lessened the blasting heat. The opening ceremony included five speeches praising the dictator for his part in allowing the seminar. Representatives among the teachers, local officials, the local party chiefs, the headmasters and even a school child each gave speeches. Each ended with the chant, "*Vive Eyadema, Eyadema Toujour!*" Long live Eyadema. Eyadema Forever! Unfortunately the slogan was too close to the truth. It had been over 25 years now that he had dominated the country. And his brutal stifling of any opposition made it likely that he would remain in power for many years to come.

Bruce was the first speaker listed after the ceremonies. Although he missed the opening activities, he surprised his critics by appearing exactly on time. He wore a wonderful white eyelet African *complet* and *boubou* outfit. He was in an elevated mood, almost dancing out of his car and into the auditorium. Instead of standing or sitting, he squatted on the lecture table in some sort of eastern religious pose. He said he was most comfortable like that. He constantly smoked. He repeated his usual words, "I can't talk without smoking," giving a boyish smile. He spoke fast, often ironically and playfully.

The program said he would talk on the history of American Literature, but he announced his subject as "American Literature, A Tool of the Establishment." His talk was fascinating and wild, eccentric and peculiar, his pronouncements salted with academic jargon, slogans and rhetoric of the radical sixties and seventies, all mentioned in passing without explanation to an audience from another world. There was a wild gleam in his eyes. The polite Africans were mesmerized by him. Lynne heard several of them murmur, "He speaks English well." They kindly gave him, a native English speaker, excessive credit for being able to speak rapidly and grammatically in English.

At one point she took her eyes off the hypnotic performance to sweep the room.

She noticed Blaise Begemey was not listening. He was deep in conversation with a man in a functionaire suit that was faded and old, far past the normal shabbiness of some of the poorly paid teachers who had large families. And it had a rip near the shoulder. Perhaps he was some sort of servant or outsider wearing a cast off teacher's suit. They looked intense. Blaise seemed to be trying to convince the other. The shabby young man shook his head, and let out a torrent of impassioned speech. Blaise responded, with a long forceful speech. The shabby man nodded, yes. Then Blaise pointed to her. Her stomach did a flip flop. What was he telling him?

She turned back to the dynamic speaker. Lynne found herself being impressed. Bruce's talk showed a keen intelligence and a lively wit besides an encyclopedic knowledge of American literature.

Once, in the midst of his flowing accusatory rhetoric he paused, as if to be sure everyone heard him and understood. He said, "Some members of the exploited classes turn on their own people through corruption and autocratic behavior." He stopped, and looked directly at Mr. Gumpa. "Some of them cooperate with the oppressors, for their own gain." Then he turned to give the same direct, penetrating look at Blaise Begemey and said solemnly, "Some use their position of power to demean and demoralize the people, especially women."

Then, there was a long, pregnant sounding pause, but no bright baby appeared. He seemed to remember he was supposed to be talking about literature and said, "Nathaniel Hawthorne for instance was a tool of the bourgeois state." And on he went with his highly original ideas.

After his amazing hour, the large group broke out in spontaneous loud applause. This man was a force. He took a seat next to Lynne. Since there was a short delay in the program, they had a moment to talk. She told him, "You are an impressive speaker. The audience was charmed. You're a hard act to follow. I hope they don't expect such excitement from my speech this afternoon."

To her surprise he said confidently and kindly. "Oh, you'll please them too. They like Americans."

"You've been here several months now, I think, Bruce. How do you like Africa?"

He turned the passion that seemed to be a big part of his character to this subject. "In my soul, I think I'm part African. I feel a kinship with Africans. They are real. Real. Not artificial, fabricated, and manufactured like Americans. Already we have several good African friends. Some students come to our house for a quiet place to study. We're

hoping to have Friday evening social literary meetings. The students have so little access to books and the other professors keep their distance."

Words poured out as he gave mini synopses of his library, his theories, his writing, his experiences. His eyes flashed, he gesticulated wildly.

"Come and see us anytime. We live at the Caisse too. I can lend you some good books on your area. I'm going to offer them to graduate students, too."

Lynne found herself liking him. He was brilliant and amusing. And he liked Africa and was trying hard to find a way to help the students. Perhaps she would visit them. She smiled at him. With his slender build, short stature, and unruly hair, he really did look like Martin.

"Lynne," he lowered his voice and said confidentially, "I know you think you know a lot about living in Africa. You know many things, many secrets. But, there are forces, situations . . . Lynne, please, things have been going on, a disappearance, a death. You are innocent, and trusting and that makes you vulnerable. If you want to survive, watch out!"

Chapter 24: Attack At Atakpamay

Bruce and his wife decided after all to eat the lunch that was served the English teachers. It was a peppery tomato sauce with a few pieces of fish in it and a huge mound of rice, far more than Lynne could finish.

The dining room was quiet. West African children are taught not to speak at meals and these well brought up teachers found it hard to chat casually as they ate, as much as they wanted to copy the American and French custom.

Bruce seemed tired and preoccupied and he and his wife only exchanged a few words. They sat near Lynne and the English teachers from the University who had learned to feel more at ease with meal conversation because of their study abroad and managed a light line of academic patter.

Lynne did talk a little with Mr. Gumpa. They had been paired up in a work team several times at the university helping five the oral exams that every English major had to take. Two professors were required at each test because no one trusted just one professor to give a fair grade to friends and relatives. They worked well together, both having the American type philosophy that you try to give students a break and give them a passing grade if at all possible.

The dining room was set up with five long tables, each big enough for 30 people. There was no privacy at all. Lynne still wanted to ask Blaise Begemey about his relationship with Adriana and Sylvia. But even though he sat right across the table from her at this meal she couldn't ask questions, whose answers might be damning, here in public. In the middle of a discussion of the value of teaching reported speech somehow the topic got changed to advanced study. Someone asked Mr. Gumpa if he had studied abroad. "Yes. I'm one of the cat eaters."

"Good heavens!" Lynne gasped. "What do you mean? Do you really eat them?" Memories leaped up of her adored yellow tabby that she had lost along with the rest of her things when her home was broken up.

"Not as a regular thing. Poor people will eat them when they can find them. They taste a lot like rabbit. But that term is sometimes used for Togolese who travel abroad. It's an odd fact that educated Togolese men have a greater possibility of eating a cat during their life than most uneducated farmers."

Regaining her politeness, Lynne said, casually, "And why is that?"

Desire Adolpho broke in, "Ekou is an expert on cat eaters, especially young ones."

Ekou gave him a furious look.

No one spoke.

As if to cover the awkward silence, Blaise Begemey continued Gumpa's explanation, "It is one of our traditional beliefs that if a man eats cat just before he leaves for overseas it will guard him against dying in a strange country and having a grave away from his ancestors. So, in the old days, there was always a ceremony in which the traveler ate cat. Probably most people still follow it secretly, Just in case."

"And now, you?"

They had all decided to join in the fun of shocking her. Desire said, lightly, "Madame Lynne, a secret ceremony is just that. I won't tell you. But whatever, some people call us cat eaters."

Lynne turned to Gregory. "And you, are you a cat eater?"

"I'm Ghanaian, Ashanti. But our customs are often much like those of the southern Togolese. I too could be called a cat eater. The US government sent me to America for training three times."

Bruce broke out of his brown study. "Life is dangerous for Americans here. Maybe, Lynne, we should have had a ceremony like that before we left the US, to make sure we do not die here."

After this gloomy remark, the table was in silence again.

When lunch was over, they all had an hour to rest. Lynne couldn't sleep. She was keyed up. Right after the siesta she would give the next lecture. She was eager to give her talk. She knew that she was not as spectacular as Bruce but she could make herself understood by explaining things a step at a time, in simple, clear language. In her own way, she felt she was an excellent lecturer and Women in Short Stories was a subject that interested her a lot.

The hour passed quickly. She went down the hall to the communal wash room and took another shower. In this heat, she always felt sticky and ready for one. She applied a little makeup and looked at herself in the cracked mirror that had lost most of its silver. She put on the beautiful African boubou her dressmaker had made her for some splendid occasion. It took her a long time to fold the matching piece of cloth into a magnificent tower-like structure, Nigerian style, for her headdress. Just two minutes after the appointed hour she was walking toward the auditorium at the special entrance on the side of the building. That timing was just right to make her seem casual and not overeager. The corridor was dark, without lights and only one small dirty window. And her eyes were blinded from the outdoor sun. So close to the middle of the day, the blasting heat was at its height. It felt like her whole body was in a non-tumbling clothes dryer.

She heard a stealthy noise behind her. She moved to turn and try to see in the gloom what it was, but instead felt a sudden sharp pain on the back of her head. Then nothing.

When she awoke, she was lying on the floor in the auditorium. Gregory, Douglas, Mr. Gumpa, and Mr. Etou and a circle of others were bending over her. Deep concern was in their faces.

"When you didn't come, we waited ten minutes. Then someone decided to look in the corridor leading to the little entrance to see if you were on your way. We carried you out here to look at you," Gregory explained. "Are you all right? There is blood in your hair."

"Someone hit me. Did you see him?"

"It was dark in the corridor. Couldn't see a thing. He must have heard us and run out the other end. It probably was a thief. You are carrying that big purse. He probably

Thought you would have money. I'm so sorry you got hurt Lynne. I told them to have extra guards. There are hard times in the country. A lot of people are desperate."

Mr. Gumpa said, "Maybe. But maybe it was the same person that killed Adriana. Maybe he didn't realize that he succeeded in killing her the first time."

Still dazed from the blow, his theory fit in with the fantastic aura of the episode. How could Adriana's killer not know? And, even though Lynne was listed on all the seminar documents as Adriana, she didn't look at all like Adriana. She was not as good looking or curvaceous. And instead of the long blonde hair, she had curly brown hair, cut short and framing her face. And they were about the same height.

Then she remembered she had been wearing the elaborate head cloth. She saw it on the floor near her, spotted with blood. Actually, the pink and white cloth was similar to that Adriana had worn at that first faculty meeting when she insulted so many people.

Tucked into her waist she saw a sheet of paper left by the intruder. It said in block letters,

"QUESTIONS ARE DANGERE. LAISSEZ INCURIOUS. DO NOT SO MUCH KNOWING. EXAMINE NOT, TALK NOT. OR YOU ARE MORT. GARDE SILENCE."

It was dirty and smudged, misspelled and not good English or French. Who would write a note like that? And why? What did she know about that she could talk about? The only thing she could think of was the body, the bloody body. But if the person thought she was Adriana, what secrets had she known? And had she been killed because of them? It didn't make sense. Her head ached. She looked for Blaise Begemey in the group bending over her. He wasn't there.

Chapter 25: A Police Spy?

After devoting about five minutes to deciding that Lynne's wound was superficial and making sure Lynne was all right and, Mr. Gumpa and Doug had a hurried consultation. Doug said, "Lynne, I don't want to pressure you, but what do you want to do? Do you think you can give your speech if we give you an hour to take a shower and clean the cut and rest a little?"

She nodded weakly. They decided to rearrange the order and have a presentation on teaching vocabulary next. Several teachers walked with Lynne as she went back to her room. In an hour the same committee of teachers came for her. This time, they went with her in the corridor. She gave her speech on black American women in short stories. She did it almost automatically, speaking from her preparation and her memory of years of reading.

Afterwards, she couldn't remember much of what she had said. The audience frequently burst out in loud applause, perhaps out of affection and sympathy for her.

But somehow, she did recall that in every story she discussed she mentioned that the woman, the American heroine, was in danger.

After her speech, the director asked her to pack quickly. There was an emergency in Lome and he had to get back, immediately. Despite the late start, they were going to return tonight. The roads were bad in Togo, narrow, potholed, unlit, with occasional places where the edges were crumbled. There were none of the American niceties like barriers at dangerous places, center lines, warnings of road endings. Americans and Europeans rarely attempted a night journey. With luck they would arrive home soon after the darkness fell.

She threw her things into her suitcase, glad to leave this place that had turned out to be so threatening to her. But she was sorry that she didn't have a little more time here to accomplish her plan of talking to Blaise Begemey to see if she could confirm her ideas about him. His conversation with the man with the torn sleeve and then her attack gave weight to her suspicion. She wanted to talk to people to see if he had been out of sight when she was attacked. Or if they knew who the ragged man was. Maybe Blaise had been prominently in sight at the time, but had sent his poor friend to attack her. And she hadn't learned any more about Mr. Etou. But, instead, she must hurry away.

When Gregory came to her door to get her bag, she was surprised to see Mr. Gumpa with him.

"Lynne. The director has kindly allowed me to ride down to Lome in the Center car. I will be delighted to accompany you."

"I'm glad to have you with us, Mr. Gumpa"

When they reached the car, Gregory sat in the second row of seats with Douglas Truman. They immediately were deep into a discussion of their work, winding up the conference, and appointments, meetings and problems to solve tomorrow.

Lynne and Mr. Gumpa sat in the third row of seats in the van, sharing their space with boxes of papers, books, and odds and ends of luggage. They had a chance for a low voiced, confidential talk.

Bruce had said that Mr. Gumpa was a police spy. It was typical of the disturbed times in Togo that everyone assumed that there was a police spy in every group, even the university English professors' group, made up as it was of one third Americans. And they noticed that some of the conversations of the teachers seemed to be passed on to authorities. There was one day when the police came and accused Mr. Adorno of distributing democratic literature. He was able to convince them that he had only used the required course materials for the American Culture class. Oddly enough, this was the constitution of the United States. The professors taught it carefully, never allowing any comparative comment about its ideas and the Togolese situation. They were all fearful, because they knew a colleague back in the really repressive days who had spent five years in jail for distributing leaflets advocating democracy. According to Bruce, everyone believed that the spy was Mr. Gumpa. And he did belong to the Kabye ethnic group, that of the dictator and most of the army.

Whatever, the Togolese professors kept their talk far from political things when he was near.

If he was a spy, he had a good cover. He certainly didn't look like a spy. But maybe that was the point. He dressed in casual American clothes and seemed gentle and his eyes, behind the large horn-rimmed glasses usually looked bewildered. His English had almost no French accent. Lynne usually felt at home with him, enjoying his informal speech with slang and the latest academic buzz words.

When they were on their way, Gumpa started their conversation whimsically, "I learned in American that schools never have problems, just challenges. Certainly you had challenges at this seminar. I'm sorry you were attacked. Who knows which of our respected colleagues is actually a madman."

"So, you think it was one of them?"

"Of course. There were no strangers at the seminar."

Lynne shuddered at the memory of that dark corridor. "Did you notice who was out of the room at that time?"

"No. The room was filling up as sleepy people arrived after their nap, coming in the front door in a steady stream. I couldn't begin to remember who was there then."

"You said that maybe someone thought I was Adriana and didn't realize that she is dead. It doesn't make sense. What did you mean?"

"None of this makes sense. But, in the dark, in that dress, you could look like Adriana."

She didn't know if he was serious and whether she could trust his report of what had happened at the seminar. She didn't know where he had been when she was attacked. With so many doubts and questions in her mind, she was glad three of her friends were nearby. Lynne remembered his protest when Adriana made general accusations at the faculty meeting concerning that camp counselor program.

"I hear that you knew Adriana in America."

His answer was aggressive. "Where did you hear that?"

But perhaps he remembered that they were near Douglas Truman who knew his background well.

He made a distinct effort to change to a cordial tone. "Yes, we met at the university, I was president of the Black student Organization at Michigan State and she was an associate member."

"Then you knew Adriana better than most of us."

Again, he made an almost instinctive denial. "No, not really."

He probably could see the disbelief on her face.

This seemed to remind him again to change his reply. "Yes, I knew her. But, she misunderstood. When she came to this country, she . . . This summer, we had to give exams to students that got a chance to take them a second time. We got along well at first. But, I couldn't hang around and talk to her. She exaggerated our friendship. Obviously she expected when she came here she would already have an African buddy. Africa is not America. Everywhere here there are people who know me and are watching me. My wife is pregnant again and sells food in the market. I help with the children."

She could believe Adriana's anger if she had expected she would have a willing beau to squire her around this strange country and then learned he was a rare dutiful African husband. But still . . . "At the meeting, she hinted at some scandals and seemed to include you in her complaints. "

"You know the proverb, Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned? We have a similar one in my language."

"She must have had a reason for what she said."

"Yes, she was a vindictive lady." His normally noncommittal look changed, to pure fierce anger.

The glossy black skin that had been glowing with health seemed to have a shadow over it.

But was he really involved in wrongdoing in the mysterious camp counselor business? She would talk to Douglas this week and find out what that was about.

In front of them, Doug and Gregory were still deep in low-voiced, private conversation.

Still trying to assess Gumpa, Lynne asked, "Why do you think Adriana was killed?"

He no longer seemed to be the relaxed colleague she had known. "Lynne, don't pry. You know what happened to the curious cat. The next attack on you might succeed."

Chapter 26: One Of Our Coupe Coupes Is Missing

After that conversation, Mr. Gumpa pointedly looked out the window at the passing landscape that was starting to look blurry in the usual early dusk. She tried to get him to explain his fierce remark. But he just grunted, and then pretended to be asleep.

She might be sitting next to a murderer! He probably told that wild conjecture about her being hit by mistaken identification to deflect suspicion from him. As soon as possible, she would tell someone in authority about it. She moved as far as she could to the other side of the seat. She was glad this conversation took place so close to the director and Gregory. They, and the strong driver, would make sure she was safe. At least until she got home.

She used the final hour of the trip to make some plans and promises to herself. She had a class tomorrow and had to go to a teachers' meeting. But as soon as possible, she was going to make Douglas talk to her seriously. Did he realize how dangerous Mr. Gumpa might be? When murder occurred in her first year in the Peace Corps she had realized that she personally could do a lot to find out who did it. She was tired of waiting and playing Ms. nice guy and leaving herself open to physical attacks. Gumpa had said, perhaps as another threat, a third one, might finish her off.

Was it Gumpa and not Blaise Begemey who should be the object of her greatest suspicion? Adriana's death, Sylvia's probable death, the attacks on her, were they all tied somehow to the Camp Counselor program and the macabre stories about the lagoon? And was Gumpa involved in all of it?

Doug and Gregory were still deep in serious conversation. They stopped only when they pulled up before her house to drop her off.

"Doug, thank you for the ride."

"It's the least we could do for you. You were obliging to take on the assignment, and a heroine to give your fine lecture after the incident. Thank you so much."

"Doug, so many bad things have been happening. I need to come into the office and talk to you. It's really important!" She glanced at Gumpa. He was scowling. Would he try again to kill her before she could talk to Doug?

"I know it is, Lynne. But, unfortunately, the message I got from Lome sounds like I'll be involved in crucial official business all day tomorrow. How about the next day? I have an early morning meeting, but could see you about 11:00."

She wanted to say, melodramatically, "I may be dead by then." But she had no proof and was used to being a good trouper. "Okay. I teach a nine o'clock class that day. I'll be at the center right after it." She wondered what diplomatic emergency they were concerned with. Her relationship to Everett had taught her that those crises were like battle alerts to the State Department officials. The Peace and stability of the host company and American policy were in danger. But, maybe more motivating, their careers depended upon how they dealt with them. Sometimes she learned what they were, sometimes, she didn't. Sometimes they were over trivial things like a refused bottle of wine, sometimes crucial things like a potential revolution.

Doug continued, "In the meantime, take care of yourself. Don't go out alone at night and lock yourself in when you are at home alone."

"Yes. I will."

She and Gregory exchanged farewell waves.

Twilight had turned to night now, but there was a bright full moon. She was glad to see that Koffi was assiduously cutting the tough grass with the long, broad knife known as a cutlass, machete, or *coupe coupe*. He greeted her warmly, in two languages. "*Bien arrive Madame. Welcome.*"

She thanked him and asked if there had been any visitors in her absence or any messages. "*Personne. Rien.* No one. Nothing."

"Koffi, I want a peaceful evening. But if someone comes from the cultural center, ring the bell." She hoped that Gregory could get away from his official duties and visit her. "But, don't let anyone else inside the gate, especially not anyone from the University, no teachers, no officials! No students. No one!" Her voice had an urgent note.

Koffi answered, "Don't worry. I know Cultural Center people well. No one else will put a foot on your property. And even the USIA people will wait outside the gate until you tell me to let them in."

With that reassurance, Lynne settled down for the night. If she felt safe in her house, she could deal with the rest. She heard the comforting whack whack whack of the *coupe coupe* for half an hour.

She slept well but woke early, thinking of the violence and malevolence that seemed to creep into every activity since her Fulbright appointment in Togo. Who was behind it all? She now was sure who had been killed or wounded behind that door, Sylvia, a tragic young victim of the temporary transplanting of Americans to this mysterious soil. Did Blaise kill her over thwarted love, or Gumpa over the camp counselor thing, or someone else because of the secrets she might reveal in her book? Right now, her latest and greatest suspect for Adriana's murder was Mr. Gumpa. But she was still suspicious of Blaise Begemey. She had too many suspects, too many murders.

She kept her mind on class preparation and in the early afternoon went to the University and taught one class. Afterwards she stayed and waited under a tree that had a cool breeze for the evening faculty meeting to begin. She bought a good tasting sandwich with a little chicken, tomato, and onion on French bread at the faculty dining room. She also got some delicious locally bottled pineapple juice. As she smelled the sewage in the drainage ditch, she was glad she didn't have to eat the student cafeteria food. Their kitchen was only a few feet from the stench.

Yet she heard students with the high spirits joking and laughing, teasing each other, in five African languages with French mixed in. English majors threw in a few words of what was often referred to here as "the language of Shakespeare." Probably the sewage smell in Shakespeare's day was a lot like this. She kept shifting her waiting station to stay fairly near someone. She kept a close eye out for Gumpa and also for Begemey.

At five o'clock she was joined by about sixty other professors, not only in the English Department but from all of the other disciplines that made up the Humanities faculty. One of the last to arrive, Blaise Begemey, made his way to Lynne. He reached out his hand. Automatically, Lynne reached out hers for the obligatory handshake, even with a suspected murderer. But, the Lady Killer pressed a gallant kiss on her hand. Aromatic French perfume wafted through the air. "Dear Miss Lynne, we must get better acquainted, soon."

They all went to one of the big classrooms. One of the last to arrive was Gumpa. He scurried in, and sat in the last row. Lynne was glad he was far from her. The meeting was led by the Dean of Humanities. It was in French so she had to concentrate hard to understand. There was general talk of inspiring plans for the future and quick dismissal of problems of shortages of textbooks and classrooms in the present.

She sat near Bruce.

"It's hard to keep my mind on academic things after seeing my bloody body, and now the murder of Adriana. I'm trying to think of a connection between them."

"So you are a sort of Nancy Drew, are you? I leave all that up to the professionals," he said, lazily. "But whatever, this is a bore!" Bruce puffed on a series of cigarettes, despite protests. He looked preoccupied and fidgety.

Lynne didn't really catch all of what they said. Most of the announcements she understood were routine things about class rooms and schedules. Some of the classes hadn't met yet, either because the teachers hadn't shown up or they couldn't find a classroom. After an announcement saying two classes would meet under a tree temporarily, Bruce made a sound of disgust, and then walked out. At the door, he said, with a Noel Coward sort of air. "It has been jolly, friends. Let me know if you find a room for my class."

As far as Lynne could tell, no one mentioned the body or Sylvia. Then Blaise Begemey stood up and said, in French, slowly, firmly, and emphatically "Someone has stolen one of our *coupe coupes*." In her mind's eye she could see her gardener skillfully using his well sharpened *coupe coupe*. In the wrong hands, it would make a fearsome weapon.

"We kept it in the shed attached to this building. The door was locked. We have a thief in our university family."

The assembled faculty made sympathetic, shocked, noises. Blaise continued, "The gardien cannot cut the grass. We have no budget for tools. Will everyone donate a few francs?"

As they passed the bowl with its growing pile of francs, an idea was struggling to be born. Was the big knife used to kill Sylvia? Blaise Begemey, probably had a key since he would soon become the chairman. It would have been easy for him to get the *coupe coupe* and kill her with it. She watched Blaise Begemey carefully. Would he really have the nerve to call such attention to the loss of the *coupe coupe* if he had used it as a murder weapon? She tried to judge his reaction. Did she imagine it, or was there guilt on his face? An intense effort to seem normal?

Tomorrow she would convince Douglas Truman to have Blaise's house searched. And they probably would find the *coupe coupe*, and on it, traces of Sylvia's blood.

Chapter 27: Lost And Found

The next morning on her way to class, Lynne mused about her life as a Fulbright professor. The sinister Alice in Wonderland quality that she had noticed earlier had persisted, had greatly deepened. In yesterday's meeting, inexplicable animosities continued to flare up. The faculty was far from a happy family. Madame de Souza, the African Queen, as she was sometimes called, continued the icy hostility that prevented her from speaking to most of her Togolese. It made it difficult for her to get information, since, with no printed catalogue at this university most of it came by word of mouth, aided by a few handwritten announcements posted on the tree.

As far as Lynne knew, Madame de Souza was still on speaking terms with her. After her request for her intercession in the camp counselor program they had not had a real conversation. Lynne hoped she would wait until after her meeting with Doug Truman to ask her what she had done about the problem. By then she might have some information for her. When she first met Bruce, she had a bad impression of him. But since her recent trip with him up north, she decided that he really was a positive force, an American that wanted to help the African students if his own bizarre personality didn't get in the way too much. Ned Emerald, the Britisher, obviously loved Africa. He was a good, caring teacher, one of Lynne's African friends had told her long before she had ever met him. But he and Bruce both had kind of wit that could sometimes be cruel.

And now, one of her colleagues, Adriana was dead. And the missing Sylvia was probably dead too. Lynne had strong suspicions that one or both of two other colleagues were murderers. All too unsettling. Last night she had made sure she always knew just where Gumpa was, even though she didn't think he would attack her in a crowded room. And she also, kept an eye out for Blaise Begemey, the lady killer.

Right after her class, Lynne went down the dark narrow hall near the English office where the faculty mailboxes were kept. She watched over shoulder to be sure neither Gumpa nor Blaise entered.

Today her class went well. She was catching onto the way her students reacted and was using little devices to reach them and make her lesson relevant to them. Smiling to herself, she was startled by what she saw. Standing in the narrow aisles in front of the battered group of faculty mailboxes was a young woman. She looked about twenty-six. She was tall and pretty and had long red hair. She had freckled white skin. She was definitely white.

"Excuse me. But who are you"

"Sylvia. My name is Sylvia Van Horn. Why?"

Desperately trying to keep her composure Lynne said, "Oh, I'm Lynne Lewis, a Fulbright professor. I thought . . . " She didn't feel like putting it into words.

Sylvia looked at her coolly. "I'm a few days late, that's all. What's the big deal? The way they do things here, half the time when you come the first day, they aren't ready, and you just wait. I hear I missed some Mickey Mouse with the registration."

Lynne was stunned. "Excuse me, but I believed you were . . . " Again she couldn't get the words out.

"I was what?"

"Dead."

"No, I'm not dead, but I hear Adriana is. You must have us mixed up."

"No, but . . ."

"Look, I've got class in two minutes. Can we talk another time?" She hurried away. "I just spent a few days in Paris, that's all," she called as she disappeared down the hall, suddenly smiling and animated. "Had a great time with my boy friend." Then, laughing she added, "That is, one of them. My French boy friend!"

Sylvia! Alive and on top of the world!

When Lynne left the building it was after the next class had started. There were few people on the street. She saw one person, in a corner in the shade of the big banyan tree. Half in a dream from her efforts to readjust her thinking after the meeting with Sylvia she realized he was a *gardien* that she had not met before.

She tried speaking to him in French, hoping she would be lucky and he would understand. "Hello, uncle. My name is Lynne Lewis. How are you today? . She put out her hand to shake his. He took it warmly and spouting French happily said. "Welcome. You are new. We like Americans."

In the dark shady corner it was hard to make out his features. He exuded a strong smell of palm wine. In his enthusiasm for his talk with her he leaped up and walked into the full sunlight. Lynne gasped. And suddenly she understood. His dark face was disfigured by a deep long unhealed wound which started to the right of his right eye and went down to his chin. It was the sort of wound you might get if you fell on a sharp machete or *coupe coupe*.

Chapter 28: Secrets In The Black Lagoon

Lynne laughed at herself. After three years, still a *yovo* who didn't understand how things were done here. Sylvia, instead of being a body that had somehow disappeared, was a young woman who had a hard time leaving the pleasures of Paris. And the disappearing body was doubtless the drunken *gardien* who had been awakened by her pounding, hurriedly cleaned up the blood and sprinkled new sand, and gotten out of the way before she came back. He probably hid the *coupe coupe* until he could clean it thoroughly.

Now that she knew the truth about her English office mystery she began to suspect that many of her African friends had known the answer to the riddle all along. The sleepy janitor was probably the uncle, cousin, brother, neighbor or fellow villager of faculty and workers at the university. When it was a question of someone being in danger of losing a job, the members of the clan drew a protective circle around the offender.

She hoped the three mysterious threats, the strange welcoming bones and feathers, the search for documents in her house, and the attack in the corridor would turn out to be as unimportant and not tied to something really serious or deadly

But, there was no talking herself out of one mystery--Adriana was dead, murdered, authorities said. And someone was responsible.

In Africa for Americans trying to accomplish anything, there was always the temptation to give up.

Everything, even the simplest communication was complicated. The scarcity of working phones, the babble of languages, the constant cultural misunderstandings, all were confounded and confused by the competing governments and bureaucracies. Dealing with the Togolese bureaucracy was difficult. But also, there were four American governmental units in Togo, the Embassy, the United States Information Agency with its Cultural Center, the Peace Corps and The United States Agency for Development. All were separate, yet tied together in ways she didn't fully understand.

It seemed like weeks that she had been trying to talk to Doug about her list of mysteries. He was a nice man who seemed to want to be helpful, but was constantly harried by his duties as country director of USIA. Well, she had an appointment now. She would try again.

She took a taxi to the Cultural Center. This time she had no trouble getting past the scholarly guard who was concentrating on a book. She knew now his name was Michel. He recognized her and just nodded in a friendly way before he waved, indicating that she could continue and returned to what she now realized were his university studies. She hurried up the stairs. Then the next hurdle, the director's secretary, Dorothy, reluctantly tore her eyes from her typewriter and sulkily listened to Lynne's request to see the director. She finished her sentence, typing slowly without answering.

Just then, Douglas came to his door. "Dorothy, I can see her right away. Please come in Lynne." Douglas Truman was welcoming. "I've saved time to let you tell me

what's on your mind. Are you all right? We are investigating those attacks on you. We can't allow that kind of thing to happen to our grantees."

"Oh, I'm all right now, but I believe I'm in danger. Mysterious things keep happening. I don't know whether they are all part of the same problem or separate. For example, this latest attack reminds me that when I first moved into my house, there was a pile of voodoo bones on the bedroom floor. And then the attack at my house, and now this thing up north. It certainly seems that someone is after me personally. Mr. Gumpa said that I'm in trouble because I'm too nosey. He was menacing. Maybe he or someone else is after female Fulbright professors in general."

"Hmmm! By the way, I hope someone told you that Sylvia turned up?"

"Yes. I actually saw her. And I found that my body was just a drunken janitor who had hurt himself on his *coupe coupe*."

The two of them shook their heads in wonderment.

Douglas broke their pensive silence. "Let's hear your questions."

"Listening to both faculty and students I overheard in French, I guess I still miss a lot, but there is something weird about the lagoon and bodies."

"Let me give you some background. The Togolese president agreed that he will relinquish power after twenty-five years when a democratically elected successor is chosen. But, it certainly seems that he is doing everything he can, privately, to prevent those democratic elections. Terrible things have happened." He hesitated and then continued. "About the lagoon. So no one told you. Maybe it was while you were on in America on vacation. There's been a lot of unrest now that people are trying to bring about democracy. There is a story that many dissenters were killed, their bodies weighted with stones and thrown into the lagoon. Protesters are continually asking for an investigation and coming up with lists of missing people, mostly young students or street vendors.

"How did the U.S. Embassy react?"

"So far, the official position is to ignore it and stall. The French seem to be backing Eyadema here and when that happens, there's little we can do. In many ways, the money system, trade, Togo is still tied to the French. And they do joint military maneuvers."

Lynne knew there were six young, short thin Marines who were presumably guarding American interests. The volunteers joked about them because most of them, even the twenty-two year old volunteers, were older and taller than their protectors.

He continued. "There are many things going on that I can't tell you about, for reasons of diplomacy."

"So it is true, or at least probably. Bodies in the lagoon! And that's why there was so little surprise about my missing body," Lynne speculated. "Probably the students were worried that my disappearing body in the English room was another example of anti protest murders. Someone told me democratic activity is dangerous."

"Yes. In the English Department, most of the professors have been to America for degrees. They get ideas that aren't approved of by the government. Sometimes these ideas are spread to students. Some of those students became the bodies in the lagoon."

Chapter 29: Camp Counselors

While Lynne digested the horrible lagoon story. Doug returned to his paper work and computer. Dorothy came in with a pile of papers to be signed. When she left, Lynne said, "I know you're busy, but I need to ask you some more things."

Doug looked at her as if half his mind was still on the papers. "Yes?"

"Well naturally, I want to know what is going on about the investigation of Adriana's death. She was my colleague. I've heard nothing."

Douglas looked close to losing this habitual patient look. "Lynne, I know that you played an active part in a previous investigation. But now, please leave these things up to the official authorities. Security officer Mariani is working on it. He is interviewing everyone that was at the picnic. There's a notice in your mailbox telling you when he wants to talk to you."

How about the Togolese?"

"Since it happened on Embassy property and she was an American they are leaving it up to us."

"But it has been two weeks now. Does he think Wampa did it? Who does he suspect?"

"Be assured we are following the proper procedures."

Lynne knew from her years in Togo and her relationship with Everett that diplomats have an adaptive method of shutting people up, assuring them that things are being taken care of when actually they haven't any idea of what is going on. But she knew that pressing Doug wouldn't help her. "Okay. But there's another thing I need to ask about, The Camp Counselor program. Wampa is involved in that too. Why is it so important to so many people? The teachers and the students have asked me to find out about it."

"Lynne, I'm sorry, but I can't spend any more time with you today. I'll send you to Peace Corps. They have taken over the testing and screening. Lita was charge during the recent screening. Just a minute." And he called the Peace Corps director on the phone. "Phil, is Lita there?. . . Okay.

"I'm sending the Fulbright professor down to talk to her. She needs to know more about the camp counselor program. It keeps coming up in her meetings on campus. " Then he listened for a while, a slight frown on his face. "Well is that still in the rumor stage?" Another pause. "Well anyway, I'd like to send her. Thanks" He hung up. "Okay. There are some complications, but a talk with Lita will get you started. Take a taxi right over there and she will talk to you."

She grabbed the mail from her slot and hurried to the road. Fifteen minutes later, she was in the office of the Assistant Director of Peace Corps for Education, her friend Lita. She had never had contact with her in her official capacity before. It was a different Lita that she had known when they were both volunteers in Dapaong amid the constant heat and often present harmattan dust that kept them all looking ruffled and grubby. Then, Lita had usually worn some sort of skirt, out of deference to the Togolese dress code, but had always completed the outfit with stretched and faded T shirts. By the end

of the day, they were always covered with red dust and her short curly black hair was often a reddish gray. Despite all that, her beauty showed through. And a tolerant kindness was her general mood.

Now, she looked capable, efficient, official. Today she was neat in a dark linen dress, brisk and not particularly friendly. That new aura of happiness or excitement still was apparent, despite her obvious irritation with Lynne and her errand. What was going on with her?

Lynne said, "I hope this isn't interrupting you. I've been trying to find out about the Camp Counselor program from the Cultural Center since I started teaching and Doug suddenly sent me to talk to you."

"Oh, I guess it's all right. When the head of USIA contacts the Peace Corps Director, we underlings jump. I assume you're playing detective again and this is part of it."

Lynne was surprised at the hostility in her tone.

"Yes. But it's important to me. I've been attacked two times and maybe the program has something to do with it."

"Ridiculous idea. But here goes. The Camp Counselor Program is one of the glories of the American mission in Togo. Somehow, a previous director of the American cultural center worked out a deal with a group of summer camps in America. Each year they hire thirty Togolese college students, pay their air fare and a little extra salary, and have them work for the summer. It's almost the only opportunity for undergraduates to get access to universities and organizations in the US that might help them get an American education. The only other one is the International Student Exchange Program. But that only sends one or two students a year. Once Togolese students get to America with either program, there is some possibility that they will make contacts in the U.S. that result in ways to stay there and go to college. It could change a future from a lifetime of unemployment to a life with a good career and income, based on an American degree. Every young Togolese that hears about it wants to go."

"But, they have to be able to speak English to do that work in the US."

"Yes. Of course. That's crucial. Many of the students at the university major in English just because of the program. Every year all applicants are tested for their English-speaking ability. The day the lists go out with ratings, there's a lot of joy and much more sorrow. Also, many complaints about the fairness of it."

"Who manages the program?"

"Americans are in charge. The students from the first said they want Americans to interview, test and choose. They know that African officials have pressures on them to favor family and ethnic groups."

"USIA used to do it, but the last two years we at Peace Corps got stuck with it. With me as coordinator. Some of our volunteers help with it. But the English Language Program at the Cultural Center is the only group with the ability to test English proficiency. So it is another one of those tangled cooperative affairs in which the cooperation is forced. Sylvia and Martin helped the Cultural Center with the screening."

"Since Mr. Gumpa has been to America and understands Americans, he works in the program as a coordinator, also as the link to the university. He collects the filled out applications and credentials. Gregory coordinates the Cultural Center/English Language Program participation. Our team of Americans gives the oral exams to those who have passed the written one."

"I've heard from three sources that there's corruption."

"People just love to scatter poison. That kind of loose talk can kill a valuable program."

"One of those who talked about it is dead."

"Who?"

"Adriana."

"Oh. That one. The minute she got here, Adriana wanted to be on the committee. But she was just too hard to get along with. Perhaps I shouldn't speak ill of the dead, but she had a bad word for almost everyone."

"And Gumpa, do the students trust him?"

"Luther? Of course. Everyone agrees Luther Gumpa is a wonderful man."

Luther? No one else called him that. Was there a faint flush on Lita's face? Lynne remembered her intense conversation with him at that dreadful picnic.

"I liked him when I worked with him testing at the University. But did you know Lita, that some people say he is a police spy? And he was secretive and hostile, almost threatening when I asked him about the Camp Counselor Program."

"Lynne, restrain your wild imagination. And please remember, a lot of things are State Department and Peace Corps official secrets. You, a Fulbright professor are just a short term visitor. Don't bumble around and cause problems for the rest of us!"