

Chapter 30: Old Lovers Never Die

As Lynne left the Peace Corps office, preoccupied trying to penetrate the meaning of Lita's hints, attitude, and revelations, someone entering the building in a great hurry almost ran into her. Blinking, she found herself inches from Everett. He grasped her shoulders to prevent a collision.

"Lynne. Sorry. You're thinking hard." He said it fondly.

She felt fury. Almost ran her down after dropping her for that hostile witch! But, like a diplomat, she controlled her feelings.

"Yes I was. Sorry Everett. What are you doing here?"

"Oh, just another of my many Embassy duties. My current appointment says I'm both Economic Officer and Political Officer. It seems like everything is included in one or the other. We have a coordinating meeting for a program. You're looking good! I'm so glad to see you. I've been thinking of you."

"You have?"

"Every day."

"Oh."

"Please, you are probably angry with me. But things have changed."

"Yes. They have." She didn't say it sarcastically or mention why they had changed.

"I've missed you. Could I see you? Some evening or for lunch?"

Instead of saying the fierce, *no*, that she had been practicing in her mind, she realized that he might be helpful to her. Maybe she could get him to do something about her suspicions of Gumpa. And Lita told her that there were official secrets. Maybe she could worm some of them out of Everett while he was in this penitent mood.

"Yes. At your office. There are some things I want to ask you."

"Okay. That wasn't what I meant. But it will do for a start. By the way, I learned something about one of your colleagues during the course of my duties."

"Please tell me about it."

"Mr. Ekou is in trouble. For years he's in charge of the International Student Exchange Program for Togo which manages to send one or two African students from the University of Togo to the US to study each year. The way it works, One or two American students pay their regular American university tuition and then come and study here for a year. In exchange, one or two Togolese students, paying only the very low college fees here, can attend an American college for a year. I learned he has been running that program like his own little domain, enjoying the power it gives him to pick the one undergraduate student, or possibly two, in all of Togo to get an all-expense-paid year at an American university. Last year he chose his own son."

"Amazing that he can get away with it."

"Yes. Over the years, Ekou did plenty to help his friends and relatives to benefit by the program, but almost nothing to make the experience worthwhile for the young Americans who spent a year in Togo. You can imagine the complaints Americans make when they come here and are assigned to dorms with no screens or hot water and get

food they're afraid to eat. And they usually end up without any credits because the systems are so different. Finally, someone with enough pull and determination has made a complaint to a Senate committee. He may lose that plum."

"Oh, so that's why Lita didn't trust him. Maybe he had something to do with . . . "

Her mind was spinning with possible implications.

"Lynne, I want to talk to you, but I have to see the ambassador now."

"I'll call your secretary and see when you have a free half hour." She said this in a businesslike way.

He looked unhappy.

"That's better than nothing. Yes, do that. But plan it soon. I want to talk to you about something else."

"In that case, why don't you set up the meeting? "

"I will. I'll arrange to see you soon."

She hurried away. After a half block, she looked back. He was still standing there, looking thoughtful and a little sad. That had been a friendly act, giving her the information. He could be nice. And, for a pale white man, she had to admit to herself, he was nice looking.

Chapter 31: The Other Twin

Lynne walked to the big market planning to buy some papayas and mangos from the open air stalls on the ground floor. As she made her way on the uneven streets, through the crowded lean-tos and stands, she saw a man who stood out in two ways, first, he was in rumpled, unironed African clothes amidst the neat homecoming crowd of workers and, second, his skin was white. It was Martin!

She hadn't seen him since that horrible Columbus Day celebration. She had heard that research into African religious practices usually kept him in villages. She called him. "Martin!"

He wheeled around and a broad smile wreathed his scruffy face.

"Lynne. How are you?"

It felt like finding a brother. Though he did look like Bruce, instead of the flashy, moodily brilliant dynamism, he had a kind, warm, benevolence.

"Oh Martin, can we talk?"

"Sure, let's get a cool drink at this *buvette*."

They were just a few steps from a typical Lome street bar. About the size of a small American living room, it was basically a veranda attached to a small mud brick building where the drinks and the precious refrigerator were kept. The straw roof shaded them from the fierce sun.

Some members of the street crowd also turned in at the *buvette*. Aside from Lynne and Martin, the tiny patio was mostly filled with Africans. But, about two tables from them, Lynne saw Sylvia with an African man in a purple flowered *complet*. Where had she seen him before? Then when she turned she realized it was Jacobou, her old French teacher, now an embassy guard. It must be his day off. She waved at both of them and got an exuberant wave from Jacobou and a more subdued one from Sylvia.

She heard a babble of voices. Some words of Ghanaian accented English competed with French and some of the African languages. Sylvia and Jacobou were too far away for any of their speech to reach them.

Martin and Lynne were soon seated at a rickety wooden table. They got icy bottles of Fanta orange from the waiter.

"What a delicious taste on a ninety plus day. This is heaven." Martin said, gratefully.

"Yes. But I've got to destroy our peace by asking you to talk about something sad. You discovered Adriana. Now, before that, just as you entered the pool area, did you notice anyone or anything unusual? Maybe the murderer was still nearby."

"Something is teasing my mind. Something . . . I'll try to recollect what it was and tell you later."

She continued "Okay. And I want to talk to you about something you said when you visited me that first night."

"Yes?"

"Those difficult colleagues, both Togolese and American. Now one of them is dead. And I hear scandal about another. Just who were you trying to warn me against?"

I'm concerned about the Camp Counselor . . ." Someone turned on the radio and loud African high life music blared from the Nigerian boom box. Martin shouted over the noise, "About what?"

She shouted back so he could hear her over the thumping music. But the music suddenly was turned down just as she continued with the words, "*Camp Counselor Program*." She lowered her voice again. "Yes. I hear you worked on screening. What can you tell me about it? "The music rang out again and she raised the volume of her voice again. " I think and so do others that there is corruption. . ." She said it so loudly that fellow drinkers at the next table looked startled.

Then the volume was lowered. "That's better. I can hear you now. I do know a lot about it and know what you are talking about. It's serious. But we can't talk here and I don't have much time. I have to meet some African friends nearby in ten minutes. How about this... Tomorrow is Mohammed's birthday, a legal holiday, and I have some special plans. But the following day, I can come to your house in the evening for a long talk. Maybe you can help convince the authorities to . . . "

The volume of the music became even louder.

Lynne put her mouth close to Martin's ear and said loudly, "Okay. Come. I'll feed you."

He said "Great" and then continued with words she couldn't hear.

Once again, surprisingly, the music stopped momentarily. His words rang out, distinct and clear. "Adriana knew and was going to tell." Without the competing music, his words seemed to float on the air. "I'm almost sure I know who's guilty. I have to think about it a little more. Be careful. We're all in danger."

Chapter 32: Joy In The Afternoon

Lynne found a taxi and returned home with a sense of accomplishment. She knew now why the camp counselor program was important, maybe important enough to kill over. And she knew that interest in democracy could bring death to Togolese students. Since Sylvia was alive, and also the drunken gardien, she had no reason to suspect Blaise Begemey of killing anybody in the English department. But she was even more suspicious of Gumpa as the murderer of Adriana. In two days she would learn from Martin what he remembered and suspected. Maybe together they could pin down who had killed Adriana and who was responsible for those two attacks on her. Then, she would go to Mariani.

She had just returned to her house when she got a call from Gregory. "Well, Gregory, is your big diplomatic emergency over?"

"Soon you will learn what we were working on. Now things are quieter. Tomorrow's a holiday, but I have to work. I have an assignment that, if you are willing, will be enjoyable for both of us. I must drive out to Lac Togo to arrange with the hotel for a conference there in a month. Would you like to go with me?"

"Yes, I'll love it."

She vowed that she would use this opportunity to tell her of her suspicions of Gumpa and insist that Gregory tell her what he knew about corruption in the Camp Counselor program, even if it made him cross.

He picked her up at nine the next morning. As he drove, he held her hand. His skin was soft and satiny, delightful to the touch. Holding hands felt strange and innocent, like the first time she had held a boyfriend's hand seventeen years ago. She stole glances at his beautifully sculptured profile. She wished she could etch his face on her memory to call up any time she wanted to see it in the future.

They reached the big palm surrounded inland lake in forty-five minutes. The old hotel built in the German Colonial days was shabby, but gracious and lovely.

She sat at a beach side table in the shade of a palm tree on the beach while Gregory had his business meeting.

"Lynne. May I join you? I'm just passing through and decided to stop for a drink on my way back to Lome."

It was Fred Emerald. Lynne always enjoyed his semi-dignified British way and his cultured accent."

"Of course. Nice to see you. We never have a chance to chat. You never gave me the low down on our colleagues. I know you have been here a long time."

"Yes I have. Well, let's see. You have met them all now. Your fellow Fulbrighter Bruce is an amusing fellow. He is an encyclopedia of American culture, in his mock radical way."

"Yes. He's outstanding. His mind is fast and original. When he speaks, the audience is blown away."

"Yes. It's amazing that he can pull it off in public most of the time."

"What do you mean?"

“He has really a major alcohol and drug problem. I’m a close friend of the Ghanaian doctor he goes to and he told me the whole story. Haven’t you noticed the way he will burn like a first magnitude star and then suddenly get completely worn out? A few magic pills make the difference between Bruce 1 and Bruce 2.”

“I didn’t know that. But now that you say it, it sort of rings true.”

“Well, it is. I haven’t time to tell you the other scoops, Sylvia’s affair not only with her Frenchman but with a Togolese French teacher, the big fight Sylvia and Adriana had over some scholarship, Ekou’s source of power,”

“Oh, you’re tantalizing me. I’m trying to learn more about all of them.”

“Well, not now. I’ve finished my drink and must go.

I didn’t ask you what you are doing here. But, I can guess.” He said this in an arch, meaningful way, nodding his head in the direction of the tall, handsome African gentleman that was coming toward them.

He slipped away. Saying, “Toodle oo!” and waving at Gregory who had almost reached the table.

Gregory said, “the United States Government is paying for our lunch. So eat the best and enjoy.”

At one time, before the violence that erupted in the struggle for democracy, the hotel had catered to a European clientele, mostly Germans looking for some winter sun, and had served a magnificent lunch buffet. Even now, they were able to get a delicious salad, a fine beef stew, and an apple tart. Lynne and Gregory ate a delicious, leisurely lunch. Then Gregory said, “I have been offered a room to rest in. Will you go with me?”

Lynne had been wanting a meeting like this since she met him. She didn’t think. She just agreed.

When they reached the hot, but airy room, overlooking the big inland lake, Gregory said to her, “Now the time has arrived. I have known many women. I married a woman in Ghana many years ago, but have had little to do with her for years. That first meeting with you was like a thunderbolt. I love you. Do you have the same feeling for me?”

She didn’t examine her feelings carefully. How glorious to be loved again. She just said, softly, “Of course!” This man, his dark eyes glistening with love, or passion, was the most gorgeous human being she had ever seen. His touch was delicious. His skin was soft and resilient. Here, in this romantic spot, through the open window, she could see the palm trees swaying in the warm breeze, hear the echoed voices of boatmen calling to each other as they poled their *pirogues* across the lake.

“My beautiful flower, my precious object.” He didn’t call her an egg this time, and preserved the fragile romance of the afternoon. “The time has come to act on our love.”

Afterwards she lay in his arms, noticing how the light glistened and played on his black, beautifully muscled chest. Only one flaw. She didn’t use the opportunity to question him about his knowledge of corruption and murder. She didn’t want to say a word lest she break the spell. Maybe one purpose of living was to store up memories of incidents of pure joy. Gregory took a shower and came to sit on her bed, with a towel

around his waist. The late afternoon sunlight coming through the windows turned some stray drops of water to gold. Joy in the afternoon!

Chapter 33: Rip Tide

On the way home, Gregory drove with his arm around her, occasionally murmuring loving words to her. She couldn't bear to break the spell of his loving attention so her questions went unanswered again. He dropped her off just as the sun was going down. "Goodbye little one. I have to go to the director's house to report on the arrangements. Don't forget, something important happened today. You are my woman now."

"And you're my man?" she asked, lightly.

He smiled a bright, perhaps laughing smile. "Oh of course. Your man."

She basked in the glow of the pleasure of their intimacy. She knew this was a surface relationship. But he had a wonderful surface. And he was a fine man. She scribbled a few rhapsodic words in her journal, then lay on her bed, reliving the afternoon. She day dreamed of Gregory in a lavishly embroidered African robe.

She added a few more words to her journal entry, "Happy birthday, Mohammed! What a fine holiday I've had!" Suddenly, she heard shouting at the gate, then the doorbell, then pounding at her front door. Since it was evening, Koffi should be here. What was going on? She had told him not to let anyone in the yard.

Annoyed and alarmed, Lynne threw on a boubou and ran to the door. She opened it a crack.

Koffi said, "Madame, Madame is here!"

It was Douglas' wife Mary Beth. There was usually something a little formal about her. She was conventionally attractive, quietly dressed, very neat. Lynne was conscious of her own rumpled dress. She wished she had combed her hair.

"Mary Beth. How nice to see you." She couldn't figure out why she was there. She had never visited her before.

"They've got me doing some official business. Something happened. Someone said you know Martin Appleby, a Fulbright researcher."

"Yes. I know him. I think we all know him."

"But you know where he lives?"

"He told me he rents a room downtown near the beach. He said that Thomas helped him find it."

"Oh, so Thomas will know where it is."

"Yes. Why do you want to know?"

"Some people called Douglas and said a white man, an American, was swimming at the main beach opposite the Hotel de la Paix. The surf is always dangerous, and the waves were especially high today. They said a rip tide came up unexpectedly. One minute he was there, the next he was gone. And of course there's no life guard. A group of young African men went to the guards at the American Cultural Center. They said someone named Mr. Martin had disappeared, that he worked at the center. Doug went immediately and looked over the beach which was crowded with Togolese enjoying the day. The sea was really wild and only about twenty people were in the water. He looked for Martin. Then he saw a pile of clothes. They looked like the kind of thing Martin would wear."

Lynne wiped perspiration out of her eyes. Her distress made the hot sticky room seem even hotter.

As she listened to the rest of the story she felt embarrassed that Mary Beth who lived in a huge mansion, air conditioned at the government expense, was with her in the sweatbox of her living room.

Mary Beth went on with the story, "The pile of clothes remained on the shore. Maybe they were too shabby even to tempt the thieves in this poor country. The searchers kept looking in the water, hoping to find Martin among the foolish daredevils who were still swimming. But there wasn't a single white person there at that time. The people in the water were probably Ghanaians or Nigerians who had a tradition of swimming. Generally, only the fishermen of Togo go into the water."

Lynne agreed, "An African friend explained to me, fishermen are the only ones who have charms against drowning." A shiver went down her back. Oh Martin!

"We are all hoping that it wasn't Martin the person saw swimming. We aren't even sure those are his clothes. Or if it was him maybe he returned to shore farther down, just decided to return home another way in his bathing suit and didn't bother about retrieving his things. Doug wants to check all that out. But we couldn't find out where he lives. You've helped us a lot. I'll go and tell them right away to ask Tom where his apartment is."

Mary Beth stood up and went to the door. She shook her head, perplexed. "Lynne, you know how hard it is sometimes to understand what the Africans are saying. One of them said something like about seeing double. He said maybe it was the two headed god, Legbo."

"But, he's wrong," Lynne said. "Legbo has three heads."

Chapter 34: Unusual Suspects

Lynne was still hoping that Martin was all right. He had said he wasn't a strong swimmer. Surely he wouldn't have gone far into the water on a wild surf day. Maybe he was just taking a long walk on the beach in his dreamy, absentminded way.

She made herself a sandwich of canned sardines and French bread and a cup of tea for supper. As she ate, she mused. It was strange. Her life had no major drama in it for twenty-seven years. Then since her husband left her and she came to Africa, this was the second time she had run into a cluster of mysterious murders and unexplained deaths of people close to her. And because of the confusion and lack of structure here, she, personally, had to help find the guilty person.

Wiping the sardine oil from her hand with the big bandanna handkerchief that she used as a napkin, got out her journal and started making one of the charts that she habitually used to organize her plans, ideas, and life. Even though she had a strong suspect, she decided to start all over again. First, she would start list all the strange and violent events, putting in what facts she knew and possible perpetrators.

MYSTERIES, DEATHS, MURDERS, ACTS OF VIOLENCE				
VICTIM	WHERE	HAPPENING	WHY	DOER (perp)
Guardien	English Office	Bloody Body	Drunk, Cut Self	Himself
Adriana	Picnic	Murder	whistle blower?	Someone At Picnic
Lynne	House	Burglary	Wanted Document, Which?	Togolese Thugs
Lynne	Atakpamay	Attack on Lynne	Why? Stop Her Snooping	Someone At Seminar
Martin	Surf, Lome	Disappearance	?	Maybe Will turn up, or Accidental drowning
Students Young Protestors	Lome	Disappearances	To Stop Democracy Movement	Supporters Of Dictatorship

Some of the early mysteries had been solved. The body in the library was only a temporary body. She laughed now, to think of how frantic she had been as she ran from the campus that first morning. But she realized there were two times she had been in real danger, and hadn't expected it. Several people had hinted of a menace, especially when she tried to investigate. There must be a connection between so many separate violent and suspicious events.

Another petty thing still bothered her. Who had left the disconcerting, smelly, voodoo warning in her house that first day? She had an idea about that. The next time she saw Everett, she would ask him something. She glanced at the darkness outside her windows and went to the door to check the locks. Peering out the front window, she saw, watering the hibiscus, her blessed new gardien, Koffi.

Reassured, she returned to her speculations. Probably the camp counselor program was the thread that tied all the violent and mysterious events together. Gumpa, Lita, and Gregory all acted sneaky and hostile when she tried to find out about it.

Was poor Martin drowned to keep him from telling her what he knew? He had promised to tell secrets and clear up some mysteries loudly in a public place. Someone with a sinister connection to the earlier incidents could have been there and passed the information on. Not Sylvia or Jacobou, of course, but any of the Africans in the crowded bar that happened to know English.

And then, to get to the major mystery, Adriana's death. Suspects had to be people who had attended the Columbus Day celebration at the American Recreation Club. She started with a list, the Togolese English teachers, the Fulbright grantees. But there were also other Togolese, guests from some European, other African, and Asian Embassies. And there were waiters and staff helpers. The waiter had been very important in the murder that occurred in the Peace Corps. She recalled the bushy haired stranger that was accused of murders in famous American trials. But here, the murderer couldn't look different or strange, or at least no stranger than the exotic assortment of people that attended.

But she was probably killed by someone that knew her and had a reason to kill her.

She started a list:

Picnic Attenders That Knew Adriana

1. Ned Emerald and his wife
2. Bruce Bradford and his wife
2. Mr. Gumpa
3. Blaise Begemey
4. Desire Adolpho
5. Lynne
- 6 Douglas Truman
7. Mr. Ekou
8. Madame de Souza
9. Gregory

She got that far but then saw more possibilities. Adriana had probably met all the employees of the American Cultural Center and many at the Embassy, in getting settled. Some of her neighbors could be foreign diplomats invited to the picnic. The servers were people who had might have met her in earlier visits to the recreation center, or official receptions. And there could be many others who had had encounters with her.

As far as Lynne could tell, (Everett aside) to know Adriana was to hate her. She put another name on the list, Unknown. And then put 190 possible!

Then how about opportunity? Who could have left the others and gone to the pool area to kill her? Most of those attending were in full view of many other people most of the time. Even to go to the W.C. required a long, public trek either through the crowds to the stairway near the pool or to the indoor facilities in the building itself, full of kitchen crew, people watching television or playing billiards. Countless people must have seen Adriana go to the pool to swim, if they were noticing, and countless others had to have seen the murderer go back to join her. But probably they didn't pay attention or remember. And, because plants screened the pool, and very few people used it, the murderer could have privacy. Any noise would have been masked by the many loud

conversations, the athletic events, several radios blaring, and occasional loudspeaker announcements.

The authorities should interview everyone carefully and figure out who had been missing from full view of the general festivities long enough to drown golden haired Adriana. But that seemed a hopeless task for inept Mr. Mariani and whatever helpers he could gather.

And was anyone wet? She tried to remember if Blaise Begemey looked wet or rumpled after Adriana's body was found, but couldn't remember. And Gumpa, how had he looked after the murder? She could only remember seeing from a distance. She seemed to remember a group of people using melting ice cubes to contend with the heat at one point, putting cubes down each other's necks and in pockets. Who was it that did that? Did their horseplay somehow shield a wet murderer?

Just then, the telephone rang. She was starting to get used to that clamorous sound. Maybe the call was about something good. "Hello. *Oui? Allo?*"

"Lynne Lewis?" The voice was strange. Her name was pronounced with a deep French accent. It sounded like *Leen Lowees*.

"*Oui? Qu'est que sais?* What do you want?"

The voice continued, in something that attempted to be English, but was mangled wildly in the pronunciation. *Que re os ee tay keeled ze cot.*"

"What? What are you saying? Who are you?"

The voice repeated the meaningless syllables. It was starting to sound more like words she could recognize. *Curiosity killed the cat.*

"Why do you say that? What have I done to anger you?"

The voice repeated again the deeply accented, "Curiosity killed the cat." Then added, "Und eet weel keel you."

She got this right away. A death threat!"

Chapter 35: Disorder And Loss

The threat and her organized speculations made her determined to actively investigate. She would start with the question of Martin, go to his lodgings and ask his neighbors what they knew about his disappearance.

Early the next morning she went to the littered street near the market where Martin lived. A young man who said he was Martin's roommate was sitting in the shade in the courtyard on a low stool, weaving a basket. He looked like an Ashanti, like Gregory. He wore the same sort of rumpled, Ghanaian clothes that Martin wore. He insisted on speaking English, said he didn't know French. But his English was some kind of Creole, hard for her to understand.

"Please, I am a friend of Martin's. Do you know what happened to him?"

"I been there."

The basket weaver obviously understood her English and answered her questions willingly. Listening carefully, she pretty much made out his story. His name was Ollie. Martin was his friend in Ghana. Martin was made a prince there and was engaged to a Ghanaian princess. Just as soon as her father gave his permission, Martin would go back to marry her. Yesterday Mohammed's was a holiday. Martin wanted to go to the beach to celebrate. He liked all religions. Ollie didn't want to go swimming at first because it looked too dangerous. But Martin insisted. Then for a while, they swam together, but he realized how strong the waves were. He told Martin he was not going to swim any more and was going to the beach to dry off. He begged Martin to return too. That was the last he saw of him. He waited for about an hour, hoping he would see Martin come out of the water, then tried to get some friends to help him look all over the beach. The other Africans on the beach said, "Don't bother looking for him. *Yovos*, white men, know what they are doing. He must be all right."

They didn't find him. They went to tell the Americans Cultural Center. They brought some guards and they all looked. They still didn't find him. Some tears rolled down his chocolate brown cheeks.

He wiped them, then continued weaving. Then he looked at her in wonderment, "He say, 'I see me. I see me.' "That happen. I see Martin. I see nodder him. Two Martin

Chapter 36: The Togolese Mayor Of East Lansing Michigan

Once home again, she tried to figure out that strange conversation. Africa was full of unexplained things, hints of sorcery and witchcraft, eye witnesses that saw people turn into owls and leopards turn into men. What was he talking about?

The telephone rang. Reluctant to answer after the telephone threat she had received, she let it ring five times, then picked up the receiver.

"Hello?"

She was relieved to hear an American voice answering her. She said questioning, "Everett?"

"Yes. I told you I'd call you. You didn't sound enthusiastic, but I have an inducement. Will you meet me for lunch? By then I expect to be able to tell you more about your friend, Martin, and also, something about a person who calls himself the Togolese mayor of East Lansing, Michigan."

Lynne was intrigued.

"Okay. Where and when?"

"Could you get to the *Pirogue* at 12:30?"

"Yes, I'll jump into a taxi. See you soon."

The day was tropically hot as usual. Soon, she was sitting at a picturesque outdoor table at the *Pirogue*, named for the long dugout canoe in the courtyard that served as decoration and trade mark, and was wiping perspiration from her face as she watched the door.

When Everett entered, she was surprised to find she had a warm, friendly feeling for this man who had been part of her life for two years before his defection to the camp of horrid, now dead Adriana.

"Hi Lynne. What shall we eat?"

"I think I'll try the *agouti*." Despite the unsavory appearance and sales methods, waved in the air at the side of the road, with its long rat tail still attached to its body, when smoked and put into a stew, this rodent, bush rat, or grass cutter as the Ghanaian called it, was delicious. It was one of the few real African dishes on the scanty, fake French menu.

"Ugh." Everett said. "I'll stick with their old standby, broiled *dorade*. It tastes just like red snapper. And french fries."

When they had placed their order, Lynne went straight to the point. "Everett, first of all, what did you learn about Martin? Do you know any more about where he is and what happened to him?"

"The next morning, early, when it was light and almost no one was on the beach Togolese police searched the full length of the beach in both directions to the fences that keep people out of the port on one side and the Ghana border on the other. They didn't find Martin, alive or dead. Maybe he just left by land and is visiting friends or whatever. He is supposed to give a lecture at the American School tomorrow morning. If he doesn't show up, that will be a bad sign."

"The waves were high. Someone remembers a big argument they had once had with him about swimming on a rough day. He just laughed at his warnings. He said he had been swimming in the ocean all over Ghana for years. That Mama Wata, the goddess of the sea, was a friend of his."

Well, at least Everett wasn't announcing Martin's death today. Maybe he was all right, just doing something surprising. "Okay. We'll hope. Now, tell me. Who is the Togolese Mayor of East Lansing, Michigan. And why haven't I heard of him before?"

"Yes, you're from Michigan. Well it seems that a Michigan woman was in that first group of volunteers that came to Togo twenty years ago. She met and married a Togolese customs official and took him back to East Lansing where she is a school teacher. Jean Tossou has done a number of things in America. He's a disk jockey for a show on Africa and he has at various times owned an African gift shop and then a restaurant. None of his enterprises have been successful, I'm told. Even so, he's always been hospitable to any Togolese who make their way to East Lansing, helping them find work if he can. He had one daughter by his American wife, but also has two sons by a Togolese. He raised them in America. It seems the oldest one is quite an athlete. He was the best tennis player in his American high school and Jean is in town right now trying to fulfill a lifetime dream, to have his son play on the Togolese Olympic team."

"Well, that is mildly interesting. Maybe we can hang out together if I ever return to Michigan."

"Yes. But this is what's important. He knew Adriana at Michigan State and he also knew Mr. Gumpa."

Everett seemed embarrassed. "Lynne, I have talked to a lot of people about Adriana, and see I didn't really know her at all. I feel like a fool for jeopardizing our friendship for her."

Lynne interrupted him.

"Excuse me. But I want to ask you this while I think of it. Did I ever tell you that the first day when I entered my house, I saw on the floor a hideous voodoo curse symbol mess of smelly fur and bones."

"No. You didn't tell me."

"And I want to know who left it. I need to know who had a key to the door. Please tell me the truth. Did you have access to my apartment?"

"Actually I did. It is usually the Cultural Center that finds the house, but in this case, while they were waiting for you to come, they allowed a consultant that was visiting us to use it as an unusual favor. When he left, he returned the key to me."

"And did you lend the key to Adriana?"

"Yes. She wanted to see what it was like inside since she had requested a similar house for herself. But why do you want to know? Do you think she . . . but why?"

"She was furious because I had the house. She wanted it, wanted me to give it to her. I don't doubt that she wanted to scare me out. But she knew nothing of voodoo. How could she do it?"

Everett sighed. "I know how. She told me about a student, named Kokou who adored her. His mother is a voodoo priestess . . ."

He didn't seem to know how to continue.

She didn't help him out, just waited. When he seemed permanently stuck, she said, "Tell me more about what you learned from the Togolese mayor about Adriana."

"He said Adriana had a young student friend in America who is now in the Peace Corps in Togo. It seems that Adriana fancied herself the Great White Goddess and savior of African students at Michigan State. She was active in the African American student association. You already knew that Gumpa was president.

"The other guy, his name is Desmond Titus, is an African American. Did you know him in the Peace Corps?"

"I met a lot of other volunteers, but usually didn't pay attention to their last names. What did he call himself? Des? I didn't know anyone by that name."

"Who knows what people called him? Anyway, she specialized in African American literature. At Michigan State he took her class and she became in a sense his patron or do you call it matron, these days?"

"Not lover?"

"Who knows?"

"But it was because she learned he was going to be in Togo that she zeroed in on this country. That and the fact that it is Gumpa's country."

"Did the Mayor tell you all this?"

"Yes, he likes to spread the news. He's as good as an African drum. This man Desmond might be a good suspect."

"But we have a strong suspect already."

"Who do you mean?"

In a long burst of talk, Lynne summed up her reasons for suspicion of Gumpa.

"Lynne. Your suspicions are possibilities, not facts. You are imaginative, but you should control your theorizing. But we are investigating Gumpa."

"Okay. By the way, I'm sure you've learned that Sylvia was found. She was just in Paris with a boy friend."

"Yes, and now I remember who she is. That Peace Corps girl that taught at the university. Adriana told me that she had learned that Sylvia wasn't fit for the job. And she was writing some kind of smear book about Togo."

Lynne was so annoyed to hear him accepting Adriana's ideas so uncritically she didn't ask for more details.

She changed the subject. "I hope I get a chance to meet this Jean Tossou before he returns home. I would like to know more about Adriana's past in Michigan."

"Yes. Lynne, the past is important. Please remember a year ago today. We were close friends. Old friendship shouldn't die." He fixed her eyes with an intense, pleading look.

"Ummm. I'm not sure if that's true. When someone gives friendship a death blow . . . Maybe old untrustworthy friends should just fade away."

Chapter 37: Blame The Victim

And then it was the day for her appointment with Mariani. When she entered his office at the Embassy, she was relieved to see him looking more sure of himself than he had at the fatal picnic. He had the air of being possibly competent rather than obviously inept.

Seeing him the first time up close, she scrutinized him. Mariani was of average height. He was probably thirty, typical for a beginning State Department officer. But already he was almost bald with a thin swatch of black hair carefully combed from left to right to give a passing illusion of having hair.

Lynne had heard that he was married, but his wife was still in the States, awaiting the birth of their first child. Because of the rudimentary medical situation in Togo, official state department families arranged to have their babies in modern American hospitals. Maybe he did better at dressing when his wife was with him. His tie was purple striped, too bright with his yellow shirt. His suit was shiny and a grey that was almost green. Today at first, he seemed to be trying to hide his insecurity at the newness of the job with a magisterial posture.

"Good morning, Ms. Lewis." His voice was deep and resonant. "I'm interviewing everyone that was at the Columbus Day Celebration. Do you have anything to tell me, any suspicious things you saw? Or heard?"

Lynne opened her mouth. Where would she start? She had noticed a lot and suspected a lot.

But before she could say anything he answered his own questions. "Of course not. You're just like the rest. You didn't see any thing. You don't know anything. You can't imagine who would kill such a nice lady. Even so, let's go through this list of questions."

Tired of his attitude, Lynne took over. She asked a question that had been on her mind. "Did the murderer have to be especially strong?" He seemed relieved to be given a form for the discussion and answered willingly. "No. Just average. A woman could have done it."

"Were there finger prints on the stick?"

"No. Prints didn't show up oh the piece of tape wound around the handle."

"Do you think the murderer got wet?"

Mariani looked at her with dawning respect. "Those are good questions. Probably a bit wet. There may have been some sort of struggle. But it was so hot, clothes would soon dry. Everyone was sweaty, drinking and spilling iced drinks. When water was spilled on that sweltering crowd, people were glad to feel cool and wet for a few minutes. Some people even carried ice cubes. So a lot of people were walking around wet from time to time."

"One more question, and then I'll answer yours. Do you have a record of all the people who went to the front of the lot, near the pool?"

"Not really. I'll tell you what we do know. Now remember the layout of the place. The pool was toward the front behind a big hedge. Just to the left of it was the entrance to the guard station where people entered and left. The guards had a record of people

who left the center and the time. No one left in the two hours just before the body was discovered.

Now it's your turn to answer. Tell me as precisely as you can your movements and what you remember of people's movements."

"About 1:00, I was at the pool and there were several teenagers in it, but no one else." After that, I know that people were constantly coming and going. There were many different activities in different parts of the grounds, and people wandered from one to another. During the pie judging and chili judging, a lot of people followed the judges then bought food and ate.

"Good. But try to be more specific. Who did you see and when? Tell me anything more you can remember about the placement of the people. Especially Adriana. Since Adriana was a loner, it's hard to find anyone who knew about her movements. She came early. No one remembered selling or serving food to her. Have you any idea when she went back to the swimming pool?"

"I don't know when Adriana left to swim. But not long before the body was discovered, I couldn't see Everett, so speculated that she and Adriana had slipped off somewhere, probably behind a clump of bushes on the far side, to have some privacy. "

Mariani scribbled some notes, then said, "We have already investigated why Everett left the chili judging. Someone spilled tomato sauce on his shirt. He went back into the building at the recreation center, and scrubbed the shirt as well as he could while wearing it. It was a red and black print, so didn't show the remains of the spill afterwards. I noticed that he was back there in that building near the food until just before he went to the pool to look for Adriana. But you were watching his movements, their movements?"

"Please, I . . ." She didn't want to reveal her former romantic situation. "Did Everett tell you he had a personal interest in her?"

"Yes, he did, and congratulations-- you have passed the test. I was waiting to see if you would mention that to me. Now I feel more like I can trust you. Please tell me more of what you remember."

She described the terrible scene of Martin and Everett trying to rescue Adriana.

"You obviously are observant. Tell me more of what you remember about that day."

The details poured out of her. She needed to talk about this` horrible event. She knew life in Benin was precarious, but she had been focusing on the twin dangers of health and revolution.

She told him everything she remembered except for a few of the private details of her conversation with Gregory.

"I'm trying to remember more about the activities that day of person I consider a strong suspect, Mr. Gumpa."

She told him why she suspected him and told what she could recall of his activities that day. Then she said, "That's all I can remember, Mr. Mariani."

Suddenly, he leaned closer to her and looked directly into her eyes. She noticed the left one was slightly crossed. "Lynne, Please call me Tony. Will you help me?"

"First, tell me. What do you know about Martin's disappearance? I've found out a little. That could be tied to the other things."

"Let's not complicate things unnecessarily. We are working on it. You will know when we have some definite result. But, our first and main problem is the murder of Adriana. You can help me?"

"How?"

"See what you can find out about Adriana. She just started her Fulbright year in July. But she got to know a lot of people. I want to know more about relationships. About everyone that met her and how they reacted to her."

"I'd like to help you, but everyone says, you shouldn't say bad things about the dead. I didn't like her. I would be looking for unpleasant things about her."

"Maybe the bad things you can find out are the reason she was killed. You can help me solve this case. People who tell me how intelligent and pretty she was don't help at all."

He took on a look of glee. "There is an old legal slogan that says it well. *Prosecute the victim!*"

Chapter 38: Speak Ill Of The Dead

Now that Mariani had asked her to see what she could learn about Adriana she felt that she could finally talk about her without seeming to insult the dead. She had a mission.

Immediately after her conference with the flashy security man, she went across the street to the Cultural Center and asked to see Gregory. The staff knew her and waved her right in. She was family now.

She walked directly to Gregory's open door and tapped lightly.

"Lynne, how good to see you!"

"I've a real reason. A mandate from the security officer. What can you tell me about Adriana? I, myself, only saw her a few times."

Gregory said hesitantly, "I didn't have pleasant contacts with her. She wrote to us, soon after she got her appointment, saying she wanted to be close to the people of Togo, to participate in their lives and wanted to live as they do rather than in some expatriate enclave. We took her at her word and Tom worked hard to find her a fine big traditional house right near the market, near us here, too. It was old style, with plenty of open windows for air. There's a lot of noise and continual crowds, but that's Africa."

"I'm beginning to understand. When she met me, she said I had her house."

"That woman! I don't like to criticize your dead colleague, but she was exasperating. When she saw the house, she wouldn't even stay one day. She said she needed complete air conditioning, because of an allergy. You know, traditional houses don't even have windows that can be closed tightly, just wooden shutters and no glass. And then she said she needed plenty of hot water. Traditional houses are lucky when they have running cold water! The waiting list for houses at the Caisse, where we put you, is at least six months. And yes, she did say she wanted your house."

"What did you do?"

"We found her a room for her to stay in at the University guest house on campus temporarily. Of course she hated that too. It isn't modern. We explained that she should have asked us to put her on the waiting list at least six months in advance, as you did."

"Okay. Another thing." Lynne hesitated. She remembered how she had hated tattle tales in grade school. "She was rude to me. I know she was rude to Desire Adolpho. And she made a scene at the teachers' meeting. But, oddly enough, I got the impression that she really cared about her students. And was pleasant to them."

"Yes, that could be. Maybe she cared about them too much!"

"What do you mean?"

Suddenly, Gregory became discreet. "Those are only rumors. Ask someone else. It is bad to deeply malign the dead."

Chapter 39: North Again

She couldn't get another word from him on the subject. That evening she tried to sort out what she knew so far about Adriana and people who disliked her. Adriana cared a lot about her relationship with students. That was good. But what had Gregory hinted? Could it have something to do with the mysterious Desmond Titus, mentioned by the Togolese mayor of East Lansing, Michigan? She got that far in her speculations when she got a call from Gregory.

"Lynne, something came up that might give us a pleasant opportunity. I have to drive up to Dapaong to make arrangements for still another conference the Director wants to schedule. Would you like to go along? The Director says if you will, the Center will pay all expenses. While you are there, you will have to stop in at the *lycee* and meet the senior English students. The prefect of the Savanna Region is the brother of the headmaster there."

"Oh, that sounds like fun. But it's a long trip."

"Yes, we'll have to start early and spend the night, probably at *Affaires Sociales* in Dapaong."

Lynne didn't comment on the romantic implications of the plan, only quickly agreed. "I don't have classes tomorrow or the next day. I'd love to go with you."

At six the next morning, Gregory arrived. Kwami, the driver greeted her warmly. "Ah, Madame Lynne, we meet again."

Gregory sat in front with Kwami.

Lynne enjoyed watching the countryside again. As the hours went past, she saw the varied terrain of the main road of Togo. In the south, the vegetation was lush, the villages had some stores with modern signs, and the little village huts were square. Many of the men wore *complets* made of brightly printed African cloth.

At noon they stopped briefly in Atakpamay and ate at a roadside stand where a woman that was related to the chauffeur stirred a huge bubbling pot. "You don't have to worry about her food, Lynne," Gregory said. "It is free from microbes, safe even for a delicate *yovo*."

She ladled out big bowls and gave them *ablou*, corn mush rolled in green leaves. It was good--tomato gravy with a few hunks of chicken, but peppery. Her mouth tingled.

Then they continued north. Near Sokode the villages started to have round huts. Many men wore long flowing *boubous* made of damask and trimmed with embroidery.

They passed Tougoulou just as a wailing call sounded from the simple mosque in the city center. About twenty men flung themselves prostrate, their faces in the sand, to pray.

They made one quick stop to get cold drinks, for the driver and Gregory, the big green half pint bottles of Bier Benin and for Lynne, a similar bottle of Lion Killer, a lemon soda made by the same brewery in Lome, under the tutelage of German manufacturers. At that point Greg joined her in the back seat. He said. "I will sit next to you the rest of the way. I have some things I want to talk to you about."

Once the car was underway, he began, "If we speak softly we will have a little privacy even though Kwami knows some English. You have been much in my mind since our other trip. My many duties have kept me from visiting you again."

She knew he was still legally married to the woman in Ghana he had mentioned and had several children by her. Maybe some of them lived with him. "Yes. I know all of these dangers and tragedies have added to your duties. Tell me, what have they found out about Martin? Everett said they were hoping he would turn up for his lecture at the American school. Did he?"

"No. Lynne. He didn't show up."

"Oh, poor, dear Martin. Have the authorities learned anything more about him? Do they know if. . ." She didn't want to put her conclusions into words. She didn't finish. But she mourned because she believed another American life had ended too soon in Africa.