

The Glamour of Business Travel #1: The American on the Beach

He stands with one hand on his hip, a Heineken in the other, at the very northern edge of South America, flirting with the two-dollar whores at *Le Snack Bar* truck parked on the beach. He buys them each a beer and with saccharine smiles they insult him in French, twittering as he replies unwittingly: “Samba?” “Dance?” Rain clouds momentarily darken the searing tropical sky. Palm trees sway, chattering in the breeze and *Le Matron* covers her impossibly sagging breasts as a few passing raindrops pockmark the sand.

He came here hoping to check out the topless European girls and dark chocolate skinned Caribbeans in their thongs. To his disappointment the beach is empty this afternoon except for grandma with her brown titties hanging below her hips, and the whores drinking their beers, biding their time until nightfall and the nightclubs, and drinking, and dancing and sex with the soldiers from the Foreign Legion.

“I gotta find some other way to make another living,” he says out loud, staring into his beer. He doesn’t want to die an old man, his lips firmly puckered from kissing customers' asses. He sighs then checks his watch. The Japanese will land at the airport at seven. And their impossible demands will start as soon as they get off the plane. ‘Stanley-san, we go to zoo tomorrow?’ They don’t care that he’s scheduled a luncheon at the foreign minister’s house a hundred kilometers in the *opposite* direction of the zoo.

He shakes his head angrily and takes a hard swig of his beer. *Le Matron* uncovers her boobs as the blinding sun emerges from behind the clouds. A dazzlingly beautiful teenage girl with firm high young breasts arrives at the beach with her mother. He watches intently. *Le mama* unceremoniously slips out of her sarong, bearing lopsided and leathery suntanned breasts. The girl shimmies out of her shorts. He stares hungrily in anticipation. No thong. She doesn’t even take off her T-shirt! You can see him scream “goddamn-it” to himself. Cautiously, the girl makes her way to the water, brown and murky at the mouth of the jungle river, and walks along

the sand without a shred of self-confidence, despite her devastating beauty. *Le mama* watches her and sighs dismissively, shaking her head, rehashing a thousand disappointments in her mind. The whores watch, their faces falling, remembering their innocence perhaps, before re-assuming their tough, bored expressions. He takes a last long pull on his beer, emptying the bottle, staring hard at the girl as though he might be able to will her out of her shirt and bikini top by sheer suggestion.

The whores' laughter sails on the breeze as the sun beats mercilessly down upon them, the young girl, and the topless *matrons*. His face pink and sunburned, the American turns toward the litter-strewn parking lot, the airport and the Japanese charter. The palm trees sway in the sea breeze, their fronds clattering their tropic sarabande, the nonstop jungle rhythm of cheap sex, warm beer, meaninglessness and decay.