

A Caucasian Lullaby



They danced on effortlessly as if in a frictionless plane. They laughed as the lead changed hands but held on so as not to drift apart.



He looked up at the sea gulls snatching fish from the sea and wondered, *Do they ever do this just for fun or only when they're hungry?*



A monstrous bolt of lightning split the heavens in two. Eerily silent. In one god-fearing flash, their nocturnal universe was lit up 360 degrees.

As they stepped off the bus the staff greeted each guest with a garnished glass of *Welcome Punch* and a cheer.



Jake had already changed into his shorts, tank top and flip-flops at the one runway airport and the sun felt good against his skin. He'd been looking forward to his Caribbean diving vacation for months and was eager to get into the water.

He sipped the fruity drink as the staff showed them around the grounds. A piece of mango stuck between his front teeth and he was

unable to dislodge it with his tongue.

Stranded on this balmy island with 80 feet sea visibility white sand beaches—and me without dental floss?

He separated from the group to get away from the intense sun and dropped into the boutique to search for dental floss. The wooden hut was packed with island tchotchkes that only tourists buy—like *Times Square* shops that sell cheesy *Statue of Liberty* mugs and *checker cab* magnets.

But the tie-dyed t-shirts waving from the rafters caught Jake's eye. Cartoonish caricatures offered native advice to the tourists:

"We be jammin;

Positive vibrations;

Yes, mon we 'd got de Cuban cigar."

It was easy for Jake to imagine himself wearing any of those colorful t-shirts while chilling out with a *Red Stripe* under a coconut



tree. But back home in Central Park such a shirt may not translate so kindly.

There was no dental floss. But he selected a yellow visor with a kiwi logo from the shelf and a miniature palm tree with hanging fruit. The salesgirl sauntered over to the register to ring up his purchases when Jake realized, "*Why pay cash he may need later?*" and headed back to the bank booth to retrieve his credit card.

When he returned to the same



spot ten minutes later, the boutique was gone.

As he circled, the *Welcome Punch* grew into a rush of euphoria. He thought about the island's nickname, "*Nature Island*," which turned normal activity into heady epiphanies.

He looked up at the sea gulls snatching fish from the sea and

wondered, *Do they ever do this just for fun—or only when they're hungry?*

He zeroed in on one bird diving



and tried to choreograph its flight by darting his eyes and juking his head. But conceded, he held no power whatsoever over its movement.

Off the beach in the grassy reeds he watched a mother beckoning her puppies with a stern glance, who were testing their boundaries.



These two symbiotic relationships—sea gulls plucking fish from the sea; and mother minding her puppy litter, showcased Mother Nature at her Personal Best, balanced, and in control.

But then another version of Mother Nature intervened disrupting the placidity. The resort's own hostess in a fetching bikini with Santa beanie pranced around the beach taking drink orders from the guests. Jake craned his neck as

she passed but conceded he held no power whatsoever over her movement.

So he waved her over for a margarita, even though he didn't drink.

In the meantime, in a tableau of firsts, the *Welcome Punch* grew more intoxicating in the best of ways and opened doors of a less prurient kind. Especially, when he met Cheryl.

Cheryl singularly beamed when he noticed her waiting in the beach towel line. He was borrowing and she was returning. Jake figured anyone who could vibe returning a beach towel was an intellectual curiosity.

They talked briefly about the lovely resort, nutrition, and the pros and cons of zen and the pursuit of balance and harmony. But she was in a hurry so they agreed to meet later that evening in front of *Le Disco Coconuts*.

As they entered the crowded disco the scent of international fragrances hung in the congested air. It carried from the 30 ft. bar all the way back to the packed dance floor where global bodies jammed to the infectious samba beat.



Suddenly, the dance floor started spinning like Dorothy's house in [*The Wizard of Oz*](#). Jake grabbed on

to Cheryl's arm. But she too was off-balanced and together they tumbled backwards onto an overstuffed couch. Cheryl bounced on top of Jake bumping their foreheads twice forcing her mouth wide open showing rows of symmetric teeth.

Jake looked up into her eyes and cracked, "*Our children would have perfect molars.*"

Cheryl slapped his shoulder playfully but with moderate force and as he blinked, anticipating the blow, her pretty face froze in the strobe lights.

Her ringlets undulated like sea coral. He reached out to pinch a few strands but Cheryl shrieked at his touch and her voice reverberated a hundred times in his ears flinging him onto the dance floor where his sandals skidded to a stop.

On the downbeat, he swept Cheryl up from the couch to the flashing dance floor. They whisked along gleefully traversing the black and white squares as if they'd been



partners for years. As the music blared he spun her from the waist mindfully guiding her release. But she continued to spin without loss of speed lifting them both straight

up dancing in mid-air defying gravity.

Jake cupped his hands and hollered over the music, *"I hate it*



when this happens."

As her spin slowed he could see she was smiling. Her silhouette radiated, with no present light



source, like [*The Burning Bush*](#) where God gave Charlton Heston *The Ten Commandments*.

They touched down lightly. Cheryl added a pirouette. They laughed as the lead changed hands



but held on so as not to drift apart. They danced on as if in a frictionless plane.

"You dance very well," Cheryl was visibly pleased.

"It's no ordinary person who can do this." Jake responded without taking his eyes off her.

"And an extraordinary one to find one," Cheryl topped his gallantry by one.

Their repartee flowed back and forth organically even as Jake felt pressured to maintain the lofty banter.

He stepped back to admire her style and good looks and sensed she felt the same about him. Her shift dress betrayed her lithe figure. Her long arms added stature and height. Their eyes met often and at ease. Their rhythm was in synch. Their hands gripped well. They danced the same size steps. Their hips sambaed without knowing how. They looked good together toned and tanned. If the maître d' had still been around, he'd surely have awarded them the best table.

As the evening grew late they sought fresh air and exited through the double doors into the night. On the landing of *Le Disco Coconuts* they stood shoulder to shoulder and looked out.

It was a glorious, star-filled night. The full moon shone brightly even as it sat oddly low in the equatorial sky. Improbably, it lit the beach for miles. Lanky palm fronds swayed deeply in the breeze and cast large flickering shadows on the sand. The wind tossed their hair and cooled their skin. A chorus of night-time critters sang back and forth in rhyme. Cheryl half-turned

toward Jake and spoke first. Her face was luminescent in the moonlight.

“Jake, have you ever seen a moon like this sitting so low in the sky?”

Jake felt light-headed as she spoke his name as if he’d been hiking in the thin air of Machu



Picchu.

He grasped Cheryl's arm for balance.

“I've never felt an arm like this!” He blurted.

Cheryl bolted down the stairs to the beach. Jake caught up beside her and they skipped down the



creaky slats step by step. Then two at a time. They skimmed the hand rails as they picked up speed. Sand crunched under their feet. They tossed their sandals and finally, sensing the bottom, leaped blindly on a whim.

They landed on their hands and knees turned towards each other and roared with laughter that they

had survived. They linked wrists to ankles and somersaulted towards the shore feeling the heat of each other's breath at the apex of each tumble. Cheryl's weaker arms gave way first and she collapsed on top of Jake. Their mouths brushed once then again harder. Taught lips found center and clung like magnets.

Jake curled his tongue over Cheryl's upper row of teeth touching each one like a maestro plays an arpeggio.



Still embraced under Cheryl, the maestro looked up to peek on Cheryl's status; her eyes were glowing like Michael Jackson's in



the *Thriller* video.

He looked away to gather his wits then stood up and helped her to her feet. But unexpectedly, she pulled him back down with a kiss and drew his tongue back to the gateway of her mouth. Their teeth clinked wildly.

This titanic lip-lock was no horny folly typical of the bikini

waitress sashaying on the beach taking drink orders. A natural attraction bonded their second kiss compounded by the drama of the crashing tide, the cool sand between toes and the moonlight.

He marveled at the speed of their intimacy leaving lesser emotions in the sand. It was strange how normal instant intimacy felt with a woman he'd just met. His rationale bounced between two opposing mindsets.

His first impulse was to relax and embrace the magic. His second impulse was a need to *understand* it—a flawed endeavor because it distracted his attention from Cheryl. He tried not to over think it.

He broke the kiss without knowing why. Cheryl looked at him for a sign.

"Let's take a walk along the beach," Jake pointed spastically with an arm that had sprung free. But his remark rang hollow. The maestro didn't want to take a walk along the beach, anyway. He wanted to stay put and find out what lay on the other side of Cheryl's *wall of teeth*.



"I climbed over your wall of truth!" Jake gushed, then froze like a tightly coiled sprinter in the blocks.

*"My wall of **truth?**"* Cheryl echoed with an audible gasp, her voice rising on the last word.

Jake meant to say he climbed over her *wall of teeth* but spoke *wall of truth* instead.

In fact, *"wall of truth"* better described Jake's conquest when he scaled her top row with his tongue. It was his moment of liberation—his own Bastille Day in the Caribbean during a diving vacation, the chokepoint of self-doubt lifted.—leaving a portal for joy and freedom and love.

"Did you feel a closeness when we kissed?" He was concerned his jumbled words had spoiled the mood.

"Yes Jake, I did feel a closeness," Cheryl answered with conviction. *"It was lovely. Best first kiss, for the record books."*

Jake laughed but needed to know more. He pulled her by her belt buckle close parodying Johnny Depp.

"And could this closeness reach farther?" He gazed into her eyes. *"To our souls?"* He followed-up not meaning to sound neurotic or demented.

But he couldn't wait for her to answer. Anyway, he'd forgotten the question. He knew what he wanted to do which was to cut the chatter and kiss her again. Cheryl seemed to agree and with more intensity than before.

Locked lips led to a wide arms embrace.

A delightful frenzy. His fiery feelings were jumping for joy, care-

free yet dialed-in. Wide opened



alive.

He exhaled slowly through his nose to conserve air in his lungs and extend the oral gymnastics for as long as Cheryl could hold her excited breath.

His elliptical workouts had finally paid off!

He vowed to lock this moment in his cerebral cortex forever—even coaching himself on how to remember it:

- *This is the land of no time-outs; no referees; no middlemen.*
- *No do-overs; no second chances; no rewinds; no instant replays.*
- *No operators standing by.*
- *This is Nature at her Personal Best.*
- *Rock on!*

He took her hand and they



strolled along the shore towards the colony of lights in the distance with a noticeable breeze and the salty air in their faces. The mortal travelers

could not have prepared themselves



for what happened next:

A monstrous bolt of lightning split the heavens in two. In one god-fearing flash their nocturnal universe was lit up 360°. The bolt stretched from straight above their heads all the way to the heavens then arced down to the horizon. In eerie silence.

It was unlike any moment Jake had ever seen.

During the flash, it was clear to see, the lights were at least an hour away. They grew fearful for their safety and figured they'd better get off the unprotected beach—and fast!

Jake followed a thumping reggae beat for about 50 feet in the sand through knee-high oat reeds leading to a red cabin. Familiar



laughter came through the screens. "[*Dancin' In The Moonlight*](#)" played from inside.

The door swung open as they approached revealing friends he hadn't seen in decades. They were seated all around on stuffed couches and arm chairs and appeared comfortable.

He eyeballed each one of them before entering and realized none had aged and none knew each other through him.

But the group shared two things in common:

- being frozen-in-time.
- and him.

Cheryl entered dancing breaking the ice. The gang of ten stood up and joined in.

The interior was well-lit like an off-broadway stage but the smoke clouded his vision. He heard, "*It's been a while*" as he entered but couldn't decipher the speaker. He blinked while considering how to reply to a voice that wasn't real.

When he reopened them he was back on the beach looking up at the sea gulls snatching fish from the sea and wondered, *Do they ever do this just for fun—or only when they're hungry?*

Jake zeroed in on one bird flapping



and tried to choreograph its flight by darting his eyes and juking his head. But conceded, he held no

power whatsoever over its movement.

The End