

Outside, the man had slipped into the seat of his car and sat there. He just wanted a damn drink. It was still early enough and he wasn't ready to go back to the hotel. There was a small store up the road a mile or two with a flashing beer sign in the window. He turned the engine over, pulled out, and backtracked to the store.

It seemed that no one around there liked to burn much electricity. That was a good thing for him. At the store, he grabbed a couple of local beers out of the cooler and went to the counter. A young teenage kid was manning the cash register while the voices of older men could be heard in the back, probably playing cards. The kid took his money without looking up. He was too engaged with his pocket video game to care about much else.

The killer took a couple of deep pumps on the first bottle, trying to decide whether to go on the hunt or opt for prey that was right under his nose. He realized he had already decided that when he walked out of the bar. He drove back and pulled into the same spot as before. No one would even notice a car sitting there until daylight. Plenty of time. He finished his first beer and started on the other.

He was glad to be able to observe without being seen. Not that it would matter, really. Hours of drinking and the delirious effects of one of those private booths, any one of them would be lucky to find their feet to walk out. One by one, he watched the patrons of the bar get in their cars to go wherever it was their cars would take them. It was 2 a.m.

According to the sign, they stayed true to their hours of operation.

When he was inside earlier, he had counted five waitresses. That

included the little senorita who had offered to get cozy with him in a booth. *The little slut.* The others had left but she was still inside.

Unless,

she went out the back with her boss. He waited. He had long since disconnected the interior lights and left his driver's side door open. Finally he heard the door squeal open and shut. Then he heard the click of the deadbolt. Owner was locking up from the inside. He probably lived in back. The girl was by herself. He watched as she walked away from the bar in the direction of what he assumed was home.

He grabbed the velvety roll off the passenger seat. It was compact. The killer always came prepared. With the stealth of a large cat on the hunt, he stepped silently from the car. His shadow was swallowed up by the darkness. There wasn't a soul on the road. The sound of the sea hitting the shore helped to disguise any sound that might be unusual to the woman. As she turned to start up a pathway carved out of the thick vegetation, the killer sprang. In that moment, he gave her no room to struggle or cry out. With a quick jab to her neck, he pulled the syringe back out. Her body went limp and he carried her back to his car a short distance away.

*Got lucky after all.* That was his first thought as he headed back toward a remote cove-like area he had passed earlier. It was close enough that the woman would still be trapped in her drug-induced state. It was ideal because it was in a flood zone. No homes were built within a wide area on either side. During monsoon, where rushing waters flowed from the mountains to the sea, houses and people would be washed away.

Desolate.

Private.

Do not disturb. *My kind of place.*