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Yet Another Morning

by Garf Collins

It was a perfect day in the Dominican Republic. I looked out onto a blue sea gently lapping a magnificent sandy beach, tree-lined and dotted with small beach cafes. But no wind- not good on a windsurfing holiday.

As I was finishing my leisurely breakfast, I saw the man sitting at the bar. He had been there every morning since I arrived. He didn't look like the usual holidaymaker. There was something about him which intrigued me. He wasn't dressed for water sports, but although a bit overweight, he had the signs of a former active life. As I passed him, I said, "Not much chance of a sail today."

He turned, and I could see from his face he had spent many years in the sun, "No, not likely today. The trade wind might come in tomorrow."

"You seem to know about this environment. Are you involved in the resort?"

"You could say that. I manage one of the hotels which you lot use. Don't have anything to do with the beach stuff these days." He nodded to the barman who poured him a large Scotch.

"I imagine you were involved back in the day, though?"

“Yes. I windsurfed a lot when I was a kid. At Southampton Uni, I was in the University windsurfing team, so in the summers I worked in a sailing resort in Minorca teaching their best windsurfers.”

“That must have been great. What did you do after graduating?”

“Nothing basically. Wish I’d known that every year the Universities turned out thousands of psychology graduates. Half of our lot went into marketing. Some of the others continued studying law and medicine. I couldn’t find anything I fancied, so I was unemployed for months.”

“So, what happened?”

“I got a job as a barman at a ski resort in Chamonix and learnt to ski. Easy for me. So I soon found myself teaching beginners.” He nodded to the barman again and gestured to my glass which was refilled.

“At least that was a good stopgap.”

“Some gap - it lasted twenty years. Alternate seasons of ski and windsurfing resorts. Had to end. I knackered my knees. So I moved into hotel management. Been doing it for ten years now. Not much need for psychology. Mostly consists of keeping the local employees going and pandering to the clients.” His words were becoming less distinct.

“But at least you live in beautiful places. I’m amazed you aren’t looking out onto that fantastic beach.”

“I like a view, but I like to sit with my back to it because then I can lean on the bar.”