

Dying for the sun

I mark '#13' and the current time on my pad. Unlucky for some? Or is it? I wonder.

Returning to my beer, I watch and wait.

As adult only hotels go, this is one of the best I've been to. The management and staff seem to have an inhuman desire to please. Around the pool lie sun worshippers from age 18 to 98. Many of whom, it feels, have been in situ for months. Their dark brown, leathery skin taking on almost elephantine qualities. As far as the eye can see, and the space allowed, they lie side-by-side and back-to-back like the world's first horizontal human game of Tetris. The slight breeze gifts a mixture of coconut oil, Hawaiian tropics, and cocoa butter.

Yet, amongst the throng, sit two empty beds. In the bar across from them, I'm perched on the bar stool. Comfortable in the shade. Watching. Waiting. Beer in one hand and pen in the other. Waiting for this unwary couple to lie down. Quizzical looks pass between them as they scan the crowds. No other beds and no prospective owners in sight. They lay down their towels and stretch out.

Seven minutes ... That's the maximum it has ever been. I press 'Start' on the stopwatch and wait, sipping my cold beer. The barman grins and winks at me as he continues to wipe down the bar, surreptitiously watching as well.

The signs begin around a minute later. Each of them rubs their arms and legs to get warm, despite it being a searing ninety-five-degree Fahrenheit. They exchange glances, followed by checking on the condition of their fellow guests. A discussion ensues. Unlike their body temperature, their agitation and tempers are rising. I don't have to be close to know what's being said. Before long, this couple, as with all those before, grab their belongings and head off toward the beach. The

two crows perched on the nearby palm tree cackle and caw as they go. I press 'Stop', and mark the time ... Five minutes, forty seconds.

"Not bad," the barman says. "Better than the last lot."

I smile. What neither of them knew was that two leather-clad pensioners waiting for God had passed away only 1 week before. The barman had seen no other people using the beds before them, and it seemed no one was ever going to use them at length again.

As another couple wander up to the beds, I mark '14' and the time on my pad. I sip my beer and click 'Start'. I watch and wait.

427 Words

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