

Escaping the Rain

Judy Alexander

The scene, a hotel bar in Dallas. It is a polished rainy day, late afternoon cocktail hour. A lovely getaway with abundant space to mind gamble. The perfect site for a sane story. A time for guileless spelling. A woman (perhaps our subject) sits alone. Dressed finely, well-preserved for middle age, she sips an amalgamation of her imagination.

Down left, a pair of sprawling chimpanzees stuff peanuts. Next to them, a rotund beige swan drinks champagne. Two young palominos, with identical exteriors, glide about, tending silently. The milling intensifies when a bevy of chattering penguins enter. The rain bleats and a scarlet spaniel prepares to invade the soft with familiar melodies.

She (the woman alone) feels out of place in the zoo-bar but is compelled to wait it out. The harmony begins to float up. First "Memories," then "Let It Be," then "Moon River," all familiar. She wonders if she looks okay for what she sees is often strange. She smiles and stirs her drink.

Four black bulls approach, show groomed. They surround her pawing. Unafraid in this situation, she is an able technician with a matador's cape and being invisible gives her an advantage. It is amusing how they charge. Unlike a banderillero, she strokes their heads then whirls her cape and one by one they limp away. She hopes they still feel grand.

The rain subsides as "Someone to Watch Over Me" infiltrates. She is empty. For a moment her eyelids flicker as she tries to recall her face. Not now, perhaps another day, a different key. 'C' gets boring after awhile. She leaves a ten and exits left, without a story.