He found her standing on a narrow balcony above a store. She pointed to the stairs at the side of the building, and he started across the street, leaving his Thompson behind. His driver called out, “*Jefe, tu arma*,” but Camilo waved him off. He had his pistol, he’d be fine.

Clare met him at the door and let him into a modest room laid with common red tile, the kitchen on one side and a bed on the other. Ala was asleep in a second room, its door half open. Camilo stepped in to look at her, lying without a sheet, wearing only a diaper, her face turned toward him. Yes, the resemblance to his mother was strong. He thought, again, *I should leave*. It would be simpler now than later. But turning back into the main room he found Clare just behind him, standing on her toes, wearing a black dress that clung to her hips. He could not walk out on this.

Clare closed the bedroom door, and he whispered, “Will she sleep?”

Clare laughed and said out loud, “Once she goes down she sleeps like a stone. For three or four hours a freight train wouldn’t wake her. In the middle of the night that changes, and sometimes she comes in and lies down with me.”

Camilo glanced around at the apartment. It surprised him, how small it was. Not small for Cuba, but for an American. “There is no other room?”

“The bathroom,” she said, gesturing at a door.

“But—you have no maid?”

“A maid? That’s for people like Domingo. Do *you* have a maid?”

“I have soldiers,” he said. When she laughed at this he added, “Che has a maid.”

“He does?”

“Fidel, too, so Celia doesn’t have to spend time cleaning. They live in houses. Me, I sleep on a narrow bed in the barracks. I am the one who embodies the Revolution. Even Fidel says this.” Except, he thought, that he had a yanqui girlfriend and a daughter no one knew about.

“You didn’t bring your machine gun,” Clare said.

He tapped the butt of his pistol. “I have only this. I’m almost naked.”

Floating in on the night air, through the open balcony door, came the sounds of a *son cubano*. The two soldiers in his car had turned on the radio. Clare went to the balcony and looked down. “Are they going to stay? Right there?”

“Yes, it is a good idea.”

She looked from the car to Camilo. “Does it seem to you that we need a chaperone?”

“You don’t want them here?”

“I’m sure it will be fine, Camilo, if you just want to sit and talk.”

All right, he’d tell them to go. He leaned over the railing and gave a whistle between two fingers. Instantly the men scrambled out of the car, holding their rifles.

“*Tranquilos*,” he said, with his hands in the air. They could leave, he told them, and he’d drive himself back to the camp later when all was quiet. “You can throw me the keys.”

They looked doubtful, but Camilo held out a hand. They turned off the radio, locked the car, tossed up the keys and walked off down the street.

Then he wasn’t sure what to do. Did he have to slow down now, as well? Did she mean all the time? He had to talk to her, he remembered that—though looking at her, all he wanted was to kiss her and take off her clothes. He held back, searching her face for clues until she laughed, until she came to him and pressed her breasts against him and let him know she was ready.

Late at night they lay in bed, the hum of the city drifting into the room. Camilo, after sleeping in the woods for two years, was alert to every sound: the grind of a truck on Neptuno, a ship’s horn out in the harbor, a rumba on someone’s radio. While in Clare’s arms, kissing her neck, her eyelids, her teeth, he’d been oblivious to the city. He’d even forgotten about Alameda, asleep in the next room. Now he glanced at the door and asked, “Will she come in?”

“Not yet. She’s good for another couple of hours.” Clare stretched out naked beside him, her head propped on her palm. “So now we can talk,” she said.

“Okay.”

“I want to hear about these tribunals. Are you part of them?”

Camilo drew back. Not far, for there wasn’t much room on the single bed. “I am part of everything, so yes, I am part of that.”

“The executions too?”

He closed his eyes. Already he’d seen forty men stood against the *paredón* and shot.

“Camilo, I’m not the *Prensa Libre*, I’m just curious. Do you think the trials are fair?”

“They are quick. But yes, I think they are fair.”

“How quick?”

“Thirty minutes, perhaps an hour.”

“*Thirty minutes*? Then they are shot?”

“Some of them. There are many who must be tried, many who were killing and stealing. Batista did nothing to stop it.”

He hated the trials, yet found himself defending them. Clare stood up and pulled the bedsheet around her. “I thought a revolutionary’s job was to fight for justice everywhere. These trials don’t sound fair at all.”

“The U.S. ambassador also makes his complaints.”

Clare watched him. Her apartment was orderly. Every plate was washed and put away. She had placed his boots by the door, and his pistol in its holster lay at the foot of the bed. After she’d stared at him for a full minute, he rose and pulled on his pants.

“All right,” he said, “I do not like these executions. I know the trials are short, but I don’t think innocent men are being punished. All the same, I find it difficult.”

“Why?”

“In battle I have killed many men. Once a soldier of Batista ran into me in the woods and I shot him in the chest, no more away from me than you are. He was so close I caught his gun before it fell. I *had* to kill that man, because he would kill me. But these executions—”

She waited. Clearly, she wasn’t going to help him.

“They are cold blood and I hate them.”

“So why do you go?”

“I was told I must.”

“Told by who?”

He glared at her. Of course she knew who it was.

“What if you said no?”

He gave a little laugh, almost a bark at her innocence. “I cannot say no to Fidel. No one can do that. If you’re part of the Revolution, you don’t say no to *el jefe*.”

She considered this. Then she stood, dropped her sheet and walked naked to her tiny kitchen. She took a towel and a pair of mangos, brought them back to the bed and gestured for him to sit down. Face to face, they ate the fruit in silence, the juice running over their hands, her breasts standing out from her chest. After they finished the mangos she cleaned her own hands with the towel, cleaned his, dropped the towel on the floor and gave him another long look. “Do you understand what I have done?”

He was lost, he understood nothing.

“I have left my husband.”

That was what he’d wanted, when she first told him about Domingo. But now it made him nervous. He stood up, then sat down again. Did he have to be more responsible, now that she’d left Domingo?

“You’re not going back to his house?”

“No.”

“Good,” he managed to say. But he saw, in her watchful face, that she read his doubts. She waited him out until he gave his excuse. “I have no money. I have nothing.”

“The money is not important.”

He did not believe this. He was not like Che, who thought money should play no part in romance, fatherhood or family life. “What *is* important?”

“You and me. And Alameda.”

“So I can come here again to see you?”

“Yes, that’s what I want.”

“Good,” he said again, and this time he meant it. He would think about Alameda later.

Clare gave him a quick smile, picked up the towel and walked across the room on her toes. She put the towel and the mango pits in the kitchen sink, washed her hands, took a blouse from her closet and put it on. She pulled one of her chairs close to the bed and sat down on it. The bottom of her blouse fell onto her thighs, and he caught a glimpse of the hair between her legs. He wanted to stare at it, but made himself watch her face.

“What *I* want to do next,” she said, “is to take the kind of photos that interest me. Especially portraits. I’d like to take some of Fidel.”

“That you must do on your own.”

“Don’t worry, I’m not asking for your help.”

Of course she was, he thought. And the more sex they had, the more demands she would make of him. He could see it coming. He thought of their old life in New York, the long hours when they lay in bed laughing and kissing. Now there was Alameda, asleep in the next room, and the Revolution, and many people watching him.

“That day when Fidel came to Havana,” Clare said, “was that his son in the back of the truck?”

“Yes, that was Fidelito.”

“Tell me about him.”

Too much English tired Camilo out, so he explained about the boy in Spanish. He described the scene at the *Granma*, and the argument that followed.

“You liked Fidelito,” she said. “Because he was a boy?”

“I wanted to protect him. I do not dislike children.”

“Yet Alameda makes you nervous.”

“*You* make me nervous.” It was a joke but she didn’t laugh. “I am no father,” he said. “You must know that.”

“But in fact, you *are* a father.”

The refrigerator hummed. The girl slept. Clare sat on her chair in front of him. He said, “I mean that I would be no good at it.”

She watched him, her face rinsed of emotion.

“Does Domingo know you are here?” he asked.

“He loaned me his car and driver to find this place, so I’m sure he does.”

“He doesn’t care that you leave?”

“He cares a lot. But he restrains himself. That has always been how he gets what he wants.”

Camilo could not believe this. No man would help a woman like Clare leave his house.

“He’ll show up here some day,” she said. “I just don’t know when.”

“And Ala?”

“She misses him. She calls him *Papá*.”

None of this would be easy, Camilo thought. It was too soon after his years in the Sierra, years in which he rarely spoke to a woman save for Celia Sánchez, Vilma Espín and his one lover. He didn’t know how to defend himself.

Clare put her hands on her thighs, smoothing them slowly. Her long slender toes lay flat on the floor. “Tell me,” she said. “Does Fidel know anything about me?”

“No, I cannot tell him.”

“Does anyone know?”

“My men. Some day, when things are calmer, I will tell Fidel.”

Clare’s mouth tightened. “Don’t say things to make me happy, Camilo. If you don’t want to tell anyone, just say so. We’re in my bedroom, we’re not fighting some battle. Don’t be a *comandante* when you come to see me.”

“Of course not,” he said. But what he thought was, *No soy rival para ella*—that he could not keep up with her. Not when it came to talk, and to these conflicts. Because they *were* fighting a battle.

Still, it was Clare who stopped asking questions, who stared at him, who told him to lie still on the bed as she rubbed herself all over his chest and mouth. It was Clare who said, when he came into her a second time, *“I have to have you*,” the words coming out in a rush as if against her will. After that she said nothing more, but was *muy muy buena en la cama*.