

Sherman always slept naked in Acapulco, whether we were bumbing it on the beach or staying in one of the cheap rooms at the hotel Playa del Hornos. It was something that I could never fully understand, for Sherman among our weekend group was probably the most prudish of all, though, like the rest of us he engaged without restraint in our weekend debauches. He was possessed, however, with a semblance of a conscience which plagued the boy only after his promiscuous activity had thoroughly exhausted him. I can remember vividly how more than once after the girls left Sherman would get up from bed and walk out onto the porch naked as a jaybird to watch the sun come up. He always tried to hide it, but I could still hear him crying. I don't think any of the others ever did know.

To say that Sherman was a tragic figure would be stretching it a bit, though I am positive that Sherman certainly viewed himself as such. Opinion in the group was divided on this question because Sherman could show so many different faces. He was quite elastic in that respect. We were all unanimous in one area, however, for none of us disagreed that Sherman was to some extent cursed from birth. Nothing else could explain the reason why his mother named him Sherman. His last name was Berman, you see, a surname not calculated for straight faces at introductions. Sherman Berman. Can you imagine a mother naming her child that?

"I was a ugly child," said Sherman when he was drunk, which, in Acapulco, was most of the time. "Jesus, you never saw an uglier kid in all your life."

They wouldn't even take pictures of me because I was so ugly. Besides my mother wanted a girl, and I guess I really disappointed her. She was a typical old Jewess, and because she was, she remained vindictive right up to the day she was hit by that taxi in the Zocolo. I didn't even go to the funeral. "

I must admit that it did sound like something out of a Greek play. Sherman's father married his mistress three weeks after his wife's untimely end. Sherman went to Paris with them on their honeymoon. In fact he went a bit farther, for he boasted that he seduced his father's wife on the very night that their wedding vows had been consummated. It was a wild story that was typical of Sherman, but there was an unusual hint of sincerity in his tone as he told us about it. I, for one, believed him.

It couldn't have been two o'clock yet because the big waves had not started rolling into the beach. At two o'clock the breakers some of which reach twenty feet or more start coming in as if on schedual and the beach boys at the Playa Condesa where we were drinking will start running around the place moving the beach furniture and the thatched sun covers up to higher ground. It never ceases to amaze me why they always wait until the very last minute to do this chore. I have never asked them. I guess I haven't because I'm always satisfied to drink my planter's punch and eat those delicious camarrones fried in Banana oil. Only the people at the Playa Condesa cook them that way, and by two o'clock most of us are thoroughly gorged on the fried shrimp and yet manage to do some body surfing before the big waves die out with the afternoon.

Sherman reached over to take a shrimp from my plate. We were laying on our backs in the sun, all four of us, with our heads just under the shade of the thatched sun cover. In spite of the sun cover Sherman had his old straw hat over his face. He peeled the shrimp, dipped it in the sauce ^{He brought out another} and ate it slowly. ^{He sat and munched loudly}

" Those two Australian girls have been giving us the eye ever since they sat down over there," he said, not lifting the straw hat from his face.

Both Bob Lightfoot and Ronnie Alonzo sat up. I looked up but could not see them.

" To your right, " Sherman said. " There's two of them. "

I saw them. They were sitting under one of the thatched covers and were,

