

VOODOO CITY

Doing Crowley rituals was one thing - messing with voodoo another. Throw in a dash of sex, booze and mushrooms and you had a surefire recipe for psychosis. But who cared! It was all borrowed time anyway. And then there was that sheer exhilaration of going out beyond the pale.

He didn't quite know what to make of her. The culture clash was so extreme that they rarely made sense out of bed. They did have good times knockin' around the Quarter, but that was after midnight and alcohol did most of the talking. In the morning, all hot and bleary, he'd slip from her room. But most times, she'd be gone already, leaving the address of some new dive for that night's rendezvous.

She never asked about the Crowley action. Just accepted it, as she did life in general. She would wait in patient empathy, still as a willow in the dead heat. When he had finished she would begin her chant "ayanman ibolélé pilé piem pa dim padon". She would murmur the words in childlike patois until they caught fire and poured forth in a guttural cascade.

Then she would rise from the floor and dance languorously, until the spirit took control and shook her in soft spastic rhythms. Later, as she held him in a vice, she would peer through him, her eyes glazed with exhaustion.

He was drinking a lot more now, not from any sense of pleasure but to blunt his jangling nerves. Try as he would to rationalize his paranoia, he was sure someone was watching him. Could they have traced him here? No, he had covered his tracks too well. Then what the hell was that on Toulouse Street last night?

It was time to move on. Where next? San Francisco, Portland, maybe jump the border to Vancouver? Go tell her tonight. Maybe she'll come too. Foolish thought! A Creole orchid, like Marie, would wilt—away from this city. Can't leave without telling her, without hearing her sing one last time....ayanman ibolélé pilé piem pa dim padon..."