

for good reason. Requests are called in, not in conversational tones but in code that only Margot knows in case anyone is listening on the line. "Ackee" means he wants to taste her down there. Foreign men love that. "Banana" means he wants her to suck him off. "Sundae" means he intends to be kinky—anything goes. Of course they know she's in business, because she makes sure to slip them a wink on the first day of their arrival. Flattered, they initiate conversation. Margot flirts, reading their stray glances, which almost always land and linger between her exposed cleavage. That is Margot's cue for a forward invitation. She goes to the employee restroom to freshen up, spray perfume between her breasts, and powder her face before sauntering to the client's room. She undresses for the client, whose main goal is usually to satisfy a deep curiosity that he never had the balls to satiate with the women in his own country. Like a black woman's breasts, for instance. Many of these men want to know the shape of them; the nipples, whether or not they are the same color as tar pressed on the heels of their leather shoes from the paved roads in Europe or America; or if black nipples have in them the richness of topsoil after a thorough rain shower. They want to touch. And she lets them. Their eyes widen like children ogling baby frogs for the first time, careful to hold them so they don't spring from their grasp. She doesn't see it as demeaning. She sees it as merely satisfying the curiosity of foreigners; foreigners who * pay her good money to be their personal tour guide on the island of her body. Margot stashes the money in her purse when she's done and hurries home. By then the robot taxis are scarce, so she walks into town and waves for one there. She has long ago rid herself of any feelings of disgust. She used to stay back and shower in the clients' rooms, scrubbing every part of her until her skin was raw. These days she goes straight home and falls asleep with the smell of semen sunken in her pores. Replacing the disgust is a liquid hope that settles inside her chest and fills her with purpose. She rolls over