

Seaside Hut

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The stifling heat combined with the absurd humidity meant a most uncomfortable evening as I sat in my rattan chair and attempt to read the book that I had bought from the book shop earlier. It was late in the evening, and apart from the fluorescent lights above, it was hard to tell the time of day. It was, to say the least, not my first choice of a holiday location, but it met the two big criteria: it was cheap, and it was close by. As a poor student, cheapness was a necessity, not a hipster sort of thing, and it being close by meant that I did not have to spend additional money for transport.

The mosquitoes started to flit by the lights above, casting moving shadows all over the room of whose size was sufficient to be barely noticed, yet large enough to be annoying. A couple tried to make my acquaintance, but a few quick smacks with my free hand was sufficient to dissuade them, albeit for a while. I wiped away the bead of perspiration that had formed along my forehead that was slowly migrating towards my temple. It made that kind of crawly feeling that never failed to annoy.

I sighed. Reading the book seemed to be an impossibility for the night. I sniffed the air. Apart from the ever-present salty smell of the coast a stone's throw away, I could also smell the dampness that often preceded a storm. Actually that would also explain the mosquitoes. Those blood suckers had the preternatural ability to sense rain and would beeline for the nearest cover roughly an hour or two before the raindrops came crashing down from up above. And it just so happened that this time, their closest cover was my little hut by the sea that I had rented for roughly a hundred dollars a night.

I put the book away, carefully putting a bookmark at the last page I was reading, leaving it at the small coffee table next to my rattan chair. In this time and age, it was getting harder to enjoy such luxuries that we had once taken for granted—the book, the bookmark, and even the computer-free reading time. Despite its ramshackle look, the hut itself was surprisingly leak-proof, the attap used to create the roof was weaved with nylon fibres to improve its water resistance, or so I was told by the resort agent who suggested this budget getaway. It certainly did not look like much, but at the very least I did not see any obvious holes during the day when the sun was overhead.

Then I heard it. Pit. Pat. Pitter, patter. The rain had begun, the raindrops first dropping on top of the attap roof before sliding along its inclined surface to make its final descent on to the ground below, roughly three feet from the floor in which the hut had. It was a seaside hut, and all seaside huts were built on stilts in case the tide came in too high as a way of avoiding flooding. I wanted to get up from my rattan chair, but found the percussive sound of the rain drops on the various surfaces oddly soothing.

I closed my eyes and let the melody take me away, forgetting about the mugginess, the heat, the humidity, the mosquitoes, the book and even about my hectic life itself.