



There are thousands of deserted tropical islands near the coast of Thailand. White sand beaches extend for miles. Coral reefs² protect the islands from tiger sharks³, and blue bays⁴ reflect the tropical sun. Verdant⁵ jungles⁶ flourish⁷ on these islands which are saturated with monkeys⁸, snakes⁹ and parrots¹⁰. The islands are lost in time. The footprints¹¹ in the sand on the island of Koh-lepe are perhaps¹² those of Robinson Crusoe: and if not, they are those of pirates.»

-National Geographic



PART ONE

«Lester!» shouted¹³ Manolo from the shade¹⁴ of the palm trees¹⁵ where he was playing the drums¹⁶, «let's do a duo.»
«It's too¹⁷ early and too hot,» I shouted back. I drank from the bottle of whiskey that I was holding¹⁸ and rolled¹⁹ a cigarette.

Manolo, from Carabanchel, had recently arrived on the island of Koh-lepe. He was already²⁰ my best friend. He defined himself as an Iberian macho. Previously, he was a waiter²¹ in the Museo del Jamon cafeteria in Atocha. He became tired²² of serving chorizo sandwiches and glasses of beer. So he saved up²³ a little money. One day he informed his boss that he was flying²⁴ to Australia the following²⁵ morning. He told his boss that he probably would not come back²⁶.



THE WHISKEY SHACK

CHAPTER ONE

«What do you mean⁶⁸?» said Manolo suspiciously⁶⁹.

«Koh-lepe, like Spain, has a matriarchal society.»

«What's that?»

«It is a society where the women dominate the men.»

«Listen Lester, I don't know about Spain. But I know that in Carabanchel, me and the boys carry⁷⁰ the stick⁷¹. All my girlfriends⁷² knew this. And if they didn't like it, I showed⁷³ them the door. Also, I don't believe that our

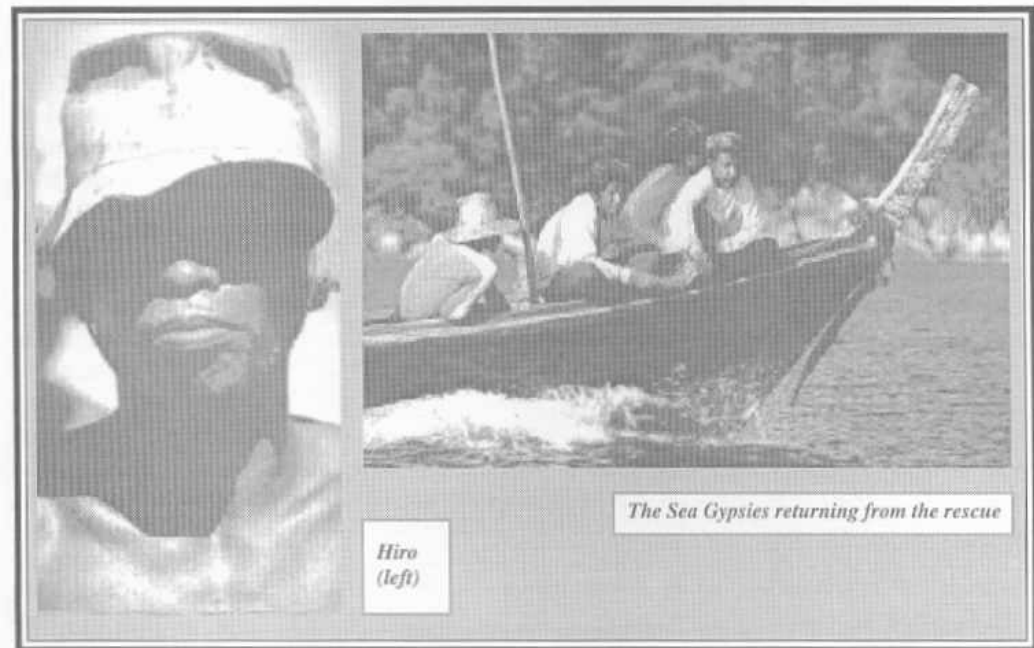
«The Sea Gypsies are guarded⁷⁷ by Marine Police. This is to stop them from going back⁷⁸ to their old ways⁷⁹.»

«So where's his uniform? Where's his badge⁸⁰? And where's his gun⁸¹?»

«His uniform is his naked⁸² chest⁸³. His badge is his marriage license⁸⁴ to Wanna. And his gun is that bottle of whiskey that he's holding⁸⁵.»

«Wanna? You mean that enormous woman who left⁸⁶ the island on a boat⁸⁷, the day I arrived?»

«That's her.»



Hiro
(left)

The Sea Gypsies returning from the rescue

friends the Sea Gypsies, like Hiro for example, lets⁷⁴ his wife tell him what to do.»

«Manolo, Manolo, Manolo, don't get angry⁷⁵. I believe you. But Hiro is not a Sea Gypsy.»

«What do you mean?»

«Hiro is the chief⁷⁶ of the Thai Marine Police on the island.»

«Hiro is chief of Police! What Police?»

«Christ! that's one hell⁸⁸ of a woman,» said Manolo.

«Yes, and poor⁸⁹ Hiro is married to her. She's gone⁹⁰ to Thailand. It is a three day voyage⁹¹ on a boat from here. She has to buy more whiskey for her Whiskey Shack.»

«If I were Hiro,» exclaimed Manolo, «I'd pray⁹² for a hurricane!»

I laughed and picked up⁹³ a coconut⁹⁴

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from the sand.

We didn't speak for a few minutes. I made a small hole⁹⁵ in the coconut with my knife⁹⁶ and we drank the milk⁹⁷.

«Does Wanna let the men take⁹⁸ all the whiskey they want, when she's gone?» Manolo asked.

«No. Usually, she leaves enough⁹⁹ whiskey for three days. But this time she didn't leave anything¹⁰⁰. And she locked up¹⁰¹ the shack and took the key¹⁰² with her.»

«Ah, that's why I have seen some fights¹⁰³ between¹⁰⁴ the Sea Gypsies.»

«Yes, the men are nervous and irritable. You see, the alcoholism rate¹⁰⁵ on the island is very high among¹⁰⁶ the men.»

«And the women?»

«No, the women don't drink. But they play poker and eat a lot.»

«I'm not surprised the men drink, if this is a ma-ma-matrical...»

«Matriarchal!»

«Yeah, that's the word, matrilineal society. The men need to escape from their wives. This island is so¹⁰⁷ small, where can they go? All they can do is drink!»

«Well, don't forget¹⁰⁸ your theory Manolo...»

«Yeah, that probably worked for a while¹⁰⁹. But one day, a boat full of blond children arrived on Koh-lepe. They asked the big¹¹⁰ Sea Gypsy wives,

'Hey, where's Daddy?' And the next¹¹¹ time, the men came back from seeing their blond girls on the other island...»

«The big women were waiting for their disobedient husbands¹¹² with big sticks¹¹³,» I said, finishing¹¹⁴ his colorful¹¹⁵ theory. «Yes it's true,» I continued «Beatings¹¹⁶ are common on Koh-lepe.»

«The women beat the men?» asked Manolo.

«As much as¹¹⁷ possible!» I affirmed.

«Now that I think about it, this does sound¹¹⁸ a little like Carabanchel. I'm not talking about the young modern men like me. But my father, for example. He was also a waiter in the Museo del Jamon. In the bar, he complained¹¹⁹ about his wife, my mother. But at home, he would always¹²⁰ do everything¹²¹ she wanted him to do.»

«I am married to a strong¹²² Andalusian woman,» I said.

«From my experience, it is more of a psychological beating.»

«Well Lester, don't worry¹²³. I'm an expert in the field¹²⁴ of women. I'll teach you during the next few months how to turn the tables¹²⁵ on your Andalusian wife.»

I sighed¹²⁶ heavily¹²⁷, but decided that it was better not to say anything¹²⁸.



Namna sitting in the doorway
of the Whiskey Shack



Thai fishermen arriving in the Sea Gypsy Village



PART TWO

We played the drums together for a while in silence. Then, when we were resting¹²⁹, Manolo said, «Hey Lester, why is the Whiskey Shack open, if Wanna has the key?»

I took another drink of whiskey, and replied, «Well Manolo, you see, Wanna made a big mistake¹³⁰ this time¹³¹. She didn't leave any whiskey for the men. Hiro was the first to break down¹³². My hut¹³³ is next to the Whiskey Shack. I woke up¹³⁴ this morning to see Hiro carrying¹³⁵ a large¹³⁶ trunk¹³⁷ of wood up the beach. Before he arrived at the shack, he was joined¹³⁸ by three or four gypsies, and the rest of the Marine Police. They used the trunk like a battering ram¹³⁹. They ran¹⁴⁰ towards¹⁴¹ the door of the shack,» I paused for a moment.

«And...?» said Manolo smiling happily¹⁴².

I threw¹⁴³ the reserve bottle of whiskey to Manolo. He caught¹⁴⁴ the bottle, opened it and drank. I could see his adam's apple¹⁴⁵ going up and down like a piston¹⁴⁶. He gurgled¹⁴⁷ like a baby with pleasure¹⁴⁸. «Will she beat him?» he asked innocently.

«Absolutely,» I replied. «There is no doubt¹⁴⁹ about that. In fact¹⁵⁰, usually when Wanna beats Hiro, it's a good excuse for all the Sea Gypsy wives to beat their husbands. It's a phenomenon or tradition that is unique¹⁵¹ to this island. I call it, 'Wanna's Hit Parade¹⁵²'. It keeps¹⁵³ the men docile and well-behaved¹⁵⁴ while they are at home. After all¹⁵⁵, remember¹⁵⁶, they are pirates.»

Suddenly¹⁵⁷ we heard shouts¹⁵⁸ of laughter in the village¹⁵⁹ behind us. Ten Thai fishermen had arrived from their fishing boat. The boat was anchored¹⁶⁰ outside the coral reef. They

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went directly to the Whiskey Shack. Hiro appeared¹⁶¹ behind the bar. They wanted whiskey, and Hiro was happy to help. When they tried¹⁶² to pay¹⁶³, the Chief of Police shook¹⁶⁴ his head and smiled. The Thai fishermen threw the bottles of whiskey to each other¹⁶⁵. They were already drunk¹⁶⁶. Unfortunately one Thai threw a bottle very hard. It hit¹⁶⁷ a Sea Gypsy on the head. He turned around¹⁶⁸ and punched¹⁶⁹ the Thai fisherman. The other Thais began hitting the Sea Gypsy. Other Gypsies ran to help their friend. As the fight intensified, a few Thais took out knives. But the Sea Gypsies, who had robbed, raped¹⁷⁰ and killed for centuries¹⁷¹, were prepared.

Manolo and I watched in amazement¹⁷² as bicycles¹⁷³ arrived with new AK-47 rifles. This was the first time we had seen guns on the island.

«Oh my God, they're going to massacre the Thais!» shouted Manolo. «Let's take cover¹⁷⁴,» I added¹⁷⁵ as we escaped to the safety¹⁷⁶ of the palm trees.

When the Thais saw the guns, they ran to their little boat. The boat was made for four men, but ten of them got in¹⁷⁷. As the boat left the beach, the Sea Gypsies shot¹⁷⁸ at it. The boat rocked back and forth¹⁷⁹. The explosions of gunshots¹⁸⁰ filled the air. Fountains¹⁸¹ of water inundated the boat. The Gypsies were laughing, and they stopped now and then¹⁸² to drink from their bottles of whiskey.

«Hey Lester,» shouted Manolo excitedly, «this is great¹⁸³! It's even better¹⁸⁴ than watching Real Madrid massacre El Barca four to nothing!» But then suddenly, about half a kilometer out¹⁸⁵, the little boat sank¹⁸⁶. The Thais fell¹⁸⁷ into a

dangerous channel¹⁸⁸, where the currents¹⁸⁹ were very strong. They were quickly pulled out¹⁹⁰ to the open sea, which was full of tiger sharks.

Manolo shouted, «Jesus, they are going to die¹⁹¹!»

«No. Look!» I shouted and pointed¹⁹² to the Sea Gypsies. They were running to their boats.

«Yes, yes,» shouted Manolo, «they are going to save¹⁹³ the Thais!»

«The old saying¹⁹⁴ is true,» I declared happily. «You can stick¹⁹⁵ a knife in someone, you can even shoot them, but if you are a seaman¹⁹⁶, you never let them drown¹⁹⁷!»

The fishermen disappeared from sight¹⁹⁸. But the Sea Gypsy boats were very fast. They reached¹⁹⁹ the Thais quickly and pulled them out²⁰⁰ of the water one by one. The rescue was successful²⁰¹, and the Thai fishermen were soon happy to be on dry land²⁰² again. The Sea Gypsies and fishermen decided to celebrate with a party. As the day ended, Manolo and I beat the drums, the Gypsies barbecued²⁰³ fish, and the fishermen played guitars. Wanna's Whiskey Shack was completely emptied²⁰⁴. Hiro sat drunkenly²⁰⁵ on an old World War II airplane fuel tank²⁰⁶ in the middle of the Sea Gypsies. He was holding another bottle. The sky was a deep purple²⁰⁷, mixed with blood²⁰⁸ red. Finally, when night fell²⁰⁹, there was a marvelous ambience of camaraderie²¹⁰ between the men.

Then, as I rested²¹¹ my fatigued hands on the drums, I saw an enormous shadow²¹² on the sand in front of the fire. The full moon²¹³ was low²¹⁴ in the sky²¹⁵. It was directly behind the owner²¹⁶ of the shadow. I followed²¹⁷ the shadow with my eyes, until they



reached a person. It was a woman. A very large one.

«Wanna,» I whispered²¹⁸ to myself.

Only Manolo heard me. He also looked.

«Oh no!» he exclaimed.

We looked at her in silence. She continued to watch the festivities. We could feel her massive presence. She stood tense in fury. The night already²¹⁹ seemed²²⁰ different. The Gypsies also began to feel²²¹ it. One by one, they looked over to where she was standing. One by one, they all fell silent²²². They moved away²²³ from Hiro. But he didn't notice²²⁴. He kept on²²⁵ singing. Manolo whispered to me, «Look behind Wanna. You were right. Can you see all the other Sea Gypsy women behind the trees?»

«Yes. Yes and they are all armed with big sticks²²⁶,» I said.

«My god, this is going to be a massacre,» he whispered back.

«Let's move away²²⁷ slowly²²⁸ and then disappear,» I suggested. «It will be safer if we sleep²²⁹ in the jungle tonight.»

«Good idea,» agreed Manolo. But as we moved away from the fire, another group of Sea Gypsy wives appeared on the other side²³⁰ of us. Manolo looked at me. His face was white. We were completely surrounded²³¹. The Sea Gypsy men had also seen their wives. A few of them picked up²³² the bottles of

whiskey. They drank them quickly²³³. Even²³⁴ the Thai fishermen began to get nervous²³⁵. They had also seen Wanna and her friends. Hiro was the only one left who did not see the danger. The song he was singing was an old pirate ballad²³⁶. The Thais were wondering²³⁷ if their rescue was so fortunate after all²³⁸. I thought that our only possibility of escape was a petition to Wanna for diplomatic immunity. But I looked at her face²³⁹ again. She turned around²⁴⁰ and picked up²⁴¹ the heavy²⁴² boat oar²⁴³ that she had put²⁴⁴ against²⁴⁵ a palm tree. Tonight, I thought, no diplomatic petitions would be accepted.

I turned to Manolo and whispered, «Have you ever prayed²⁴⁶ before?»

«No, never,» he replied. «Well you can start²⁴⁷ now. But stop when Wanna swings²⁴⁸ the oar.» «Why stop?» whispered Manolo. «Because when you hear the crack²⁴⁹ of the oar against Hiro's head... run like hell²⁵⁰!» (*)

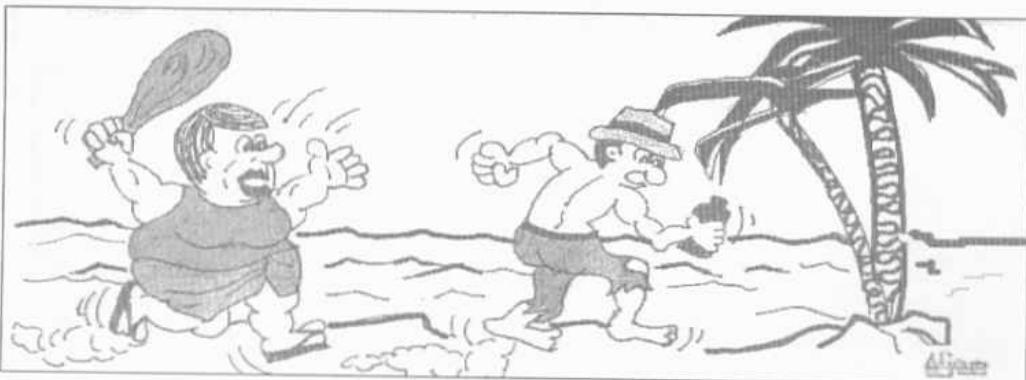


Richard Clarke



Lester Moores

(*) See page 104.



STILL, YET AND ALREADY

STILL

SECTION ONE

Still is equal to 1. **Todavía o Aún** and 2. **Sin Embargo o No Obstante** depending on its position in the sentence.

1. Still as todavía o aún:

1A. Still = Todavía o aún. In this case **still** indicates an action or state that began in the past and continues now.

- Lester drank whiskey in Koh-lepe. He **still** drinks whiskey now.
(Lester bebía whiskey en Koh-lepe. **Todavía** bebe whiskey).
- The Sea Gypsies were drinking this morning. It's now evening and they are **still** drinking.
(Los gitanos de mar estaban bebiendo esta mañana. Ahora es deS noche y están bebiendo todavía).

1B. Position of still in the sentence. The position of **still** is quite complicated because it differs depending on tense, auxiliary verbs, and the verb to be. For case by case examples of the placement of **still** please see the corresponding exercises in the workbook.

2. Still = Sin Embargo o No Obstante. In this case **still** is usually placed before the subject of a clause or a sentence.

- Hiro does not like to work. **Still**, he sometimes fishes.
(A Hiro no le gusta trabajar. **Sin embargo**, a veces pesca).



- The Sea Gypsies were angry, **still** people's lives were in danger.
(Los gitanos de mar estaban enfadados, **no obstante** habíanS vidas en peligro).

YET

SECTION TWO

1. **Yet** = **Aún no** or **Todavía no** and **Ya** depending on the context of the sentence, and **Sin embargo** or **A pesar de todo**, depending on its position in the sentence.

1A. **Yet** = **Aún (no)** and **Todavía (no)** in negative sentences. It indicates that something is going to happen.

- When the gypsies reached the Thai fishermen, nobody had drowned **yet**.
(Cuando los gitanos alcanzaron a los pescadores tailandeses, **todavía** nadie se había ahogado).



- Hiro was happy, because Wanna had not returned **yet**.
(Hiro estaba contento, porque **todavía** Wanna **no** había vuelto).

In the above examples, the action is to occur, or possibly occur in the future or immediate future and **yet** is normally the last word in the sentence.

1B. In positive sentences **Yet** = **Aún no** or **Todavía no**, but its position is after the auxiliary verb to have. This is a less common construction in English.

- I have **yet** to see a Sea Gypsy who does not like to drink.
(**Todavía** no he visto un gitano de mar que no le guste beber).