

Excerpt from
"Boca Moon"
by Frank Foster

CHAPTER ONE

It was almost two weeks since the blackness paid her a visit. She'd been expecting it and this was the night. As it did every time, her last diver's light went out. All she could feel when she reached out her gloved fingers were the limestone walls of the cave. Couldn't even see enough to check her regulator to see how much air was left. But she didn't have to. She knew she was in danger herself; she'd looked for Dave too long. How could he have lost track of their guideline? Panic rose in her throat...

A loud ringing, a new twist to the dream. Then she got it: it was that new alarm clock. Got to get rid of it. As she peeled back the furriness of her nightmare-laden sleep, she realized it wasn't the alarm but the phone. Fumbling for the handset, she saw 6:02 a.m. on the digital clock. Although she usually slept nude, she was drenched in perspiration. Who could this be? Don't have anything to do today. Wanted to sleep in. But at least it sent her nocturnal visitor away. Until the next time.

"Lynn Woo," she mumbled into the handset.

"Lynn, it's Whit. Sorry to call this early, but--"

"Admiral, do you know what time--"

"Any chance you could come over here right away?"

Lynn sat up in bed. There was panic in the voice of Whitman Jenkins IV.

"Whit, what's up?" Lynn asked, using his nickname instead of calling him the usual "Admiral", and not knowing why.

Jenkins' voice tightened. "Just come as quickly as you can. Please?"

"On my way," Lynn said. She hung up, sprang out of bed, and looked in the mirror. No time to put her face on. Just a quick brush of her silky, black hair, then she went to let out her black Labrador retriever, Mullet.



Lynn rarely allowed Mullet to sleep in the room with her because while dreaming he would whap his tail on the floor keeping Lynn awake. When Rolf was with her and insisted, Lynn made an exception. The dog was working that tail hard when Lynn opened the door to the laundry room - Mullet's "room". After Lynn let him outside, she pulled on her usual island garb of shorts and one of those khaki outdoorsy looking shirts. She slipped into her sandals, then hit one more quick lick with the hair brush. No coffee, no nothing, just out to her Honda CR-V, holding the door open for Mullet.

Looking out on the Gulf of Mexico, she saw only blackness, heard only a gentle surf. But that was illusory, because fifty feet above her, the tops of the casuarinas were bowing like ballerinas with each gust from the strong east wind. The bayside water would be sloppy today; she was glad she didn't have to take any tourists shelling, or any divers diving.

As she drove she stewed about the phone call. She didn't need another crisis, but Jenkins' call sounded like one. She just wanted to enjoy her new island life. The admiral's voice. There was something in it she'd never, ever heard in all these years: fear.