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Sunday, June 6th

Was pack-jammed, my most glorious day in the Virgin Islands. It began, quite against my wishes, about 4:30 in the morning, with the first pearly light of day on the water and the birds singing. I wish for three days off I could sleep, sleep, sleep, but perhaps I'm like that beauty parlor friend of mine who took a month's vacation each summer. "It takes the first two weeks to stop rolling pincurls," she said.

I tossed for about an hour, and then the morning light was too beautiful to miss, so I turned on my recorder and talked about the last few days until I knew someone would be in the kitchen, and called for coffee.

What an exquisite, newborn experience sunrise is! On the beach, at the farm, a pearly miracle. I have decided to spend practically all the day snorkeling, so at 9 o'clock I was in the boat with Randolph, whose English I can barely understand, headed again for Turtle Beach. Tony likes snorkeling, but he's not quite as enchanted as I am. It's like being addicted to opium, I imagine -- more and more and more. Bess goes down under the water and brings up bits of coral and chases fish and explores caves. When I see the bubbles rising -- she has a sort of breathing secret -- I cannot match and do not try to. There is still too much to see from the top.

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And then, back at the beach I sunned on the sand to the best brown I've had in a long time. And then took a delicious nap. Lunches have been cold and buffet: salads, seafood, cheeses, and we sit around casually in slacks or shorts.

But the day was not to be wasted. And so in midafternoon I set out for a place Nobel Samuel, guide for the park service, assures me is the best snorkeling on St. Johns, possibly anywhere: Cinnamon Beach. We reached it in a jeep, on a rough road that wound its way along the steep sides of the wooded mountain, to come around a curve and see a fantastic vista below -- far, far below. White sand beach, with softly lapping blue-green water and jutting rock. The vegetation was wild. A mixture of tropical and desert, it seemed to me. Century plants, some of them 40 feet tall, I was told. Trees had huge bulbous knots on them, pockmarked. They looked like enormous hornets' nests. Perhaps some tumorlike growth.

Occasionally we saw small unobtrusive signs that pointed off to some hidden villa. There are private citizens who have homes, a few, here. But mostly it belongs to the National Park Service. They call these ⁱⁿ⁻ ~~low~~ dwellings. Somewhere on the island the Arthur Goldbergs have a home, and the Herman Wouks, and I understand Claire Boothe Luce has, or used to have, a home close by.

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The world is coming increasingly, and there are those who would guard it a bit from complete inundation by the world.

I am very grateful for the foresight and the great good taste with which the Laurance Rockefellers have bought and developed and guarded this bit of the island known as Caneel Bay Plantation. Eventually, I understand, it is destined to belong to the National Park Service, which practically surrounds it.

Nobel Samuel was along with me, a guide of the National Park Service. He knows all the inhabitants of the sea and is a wonderful instructor in snorkeling. Cinnamon Bay lived up to everything he had told me about it. It is just as though I had read only the first page of the book before. But now it is truly another world. A staghorn collar, with branching antlers that reached up toward the surface ten, fifteen feet (the water is so clear and distances I cannot judge), delicate sea fans waved softly in the current, lavender and grey-green. The enormous brain corals, big round masses with a ^{convoluted} ~~convoluted~~ surface just like you see in pictures of human brains. It takes thousands of years for this to build so big. Brain coral can be sawed into building blocks, which had been used by the Danes in the sugar mill we visited.

There were sea rods, like fingers -- enormous, many-fingered Gorgonians. Some of the coral had incrustations of orange and gold.

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and mustard color, even red. Some of these, they told me, were stinging corals and should be avoided.

But the fish were what I loved. Once I found myself swimming along in a school of blue tangs, beautiful, luminescent blue. It was an exhilarating feeling. The rock beauties, with yellow heads and brown backs and yellow tails, were among the most numerous denizens. And the yellowheaded *RASS*, with blue scales below. Blue tangs are bright yellow when they are little. And there was the amusing four-eyed butterfly fish, who has a spot close to his tail that looks exactly like an eye in the wrong end of him. Striped, almost round, well-named. And I wonder who named the Sergeant Major -- broad stripes across him and a rather self-important-looking face. Probably somebody with a sense of humor.

The loveliest of all is the Queen Angelfish. You could practically hang it up for a light, it shines so. Blue and gold and green, brilliant and delicate. Very few things are ugly, but the lizard fish, which looks for all the world like the iguana, certainly qualifies. And once I saw a barracuda lying motionless close to the bottom, long, grey, rather like a submarine. I knew at once what it was. I didn't feel in the least frightened.

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All the time Nobel⁽¹⁾ Samuel was going up to the surface, saying a few words to identify what we were seeing, and then diving back down to point it out, so that you hardly knew when he was up or down. The swimming and conversation was just like a ballet. But I could tell in his tone of voice in talking about the barracuda that he wanted to attract my attention to other facets than the fact that it was a so-called dangerous fish. He said, "This fish has parasites that live on it, make their life just riding on its back."

There were some fish that I never did quite identify on which you could see every single scale standing out sharply -- orange and amber and melon on into brown, and underneath often a pink or red stomach. I was never quite sure that Nobel⁽¹⁾ and I saw them at the same time, but he believed what I was describing was the pink-bellied pilot fish.

One of the most interesting was the pompano. This often stays close to the bottom -- thin and flat and almost the color of the lovely beige-white sand of the sea floor, and with a little dark outline where their spine probably was, and two long fins that went out parallel with their tails.

Few things are dangerous, but one I was told to beware of was the sea urchin. Sometimes they are as small as a walnut,

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sometimes as big as a watermelon, black, with long black spines. If you touch them, they would sting and it would be quite painful for 30 minutes or so, but only painful. They grew in multitudes -- in crannies in the coral, sometimes in the sandy bottom. You had to watch carefully where you walked or, if you swam in shallow water, how far down your feet went.

Once Nobel¹ dived down and dislodged one with a small stick and brought it to the surface, a dangerous feat to be tried only by an expert. Very ugly. It is hard to remember that this thing is not a vegetable, but really an animal.

Saw groupers and grunts and ^{as}grammers, lovely, yellow-tailed damsel fish, and one completely forgot time, and the water was so buoyant that I felt I could swim for hours without touching bottom or going back to land. Indeed, it was two hours before we swam in to the beach and started home.

I noticed little Park Service signs, unobtrusively along beaches, pointing out water fountains, comfort stations, places to picnic, to pitch a tent, and frequently families in these spots. Just as I landed, there was a family beside their tent and a gentleman walked out on the sand and said, "This is prettier than the Pedernales, isn't it?" Slightly taken aback, I said,

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"Yes, indeed it is." Then he stuck out his hand and called his name -- I wish I could remember it, Dr. Something -- from the University of Texas. He introduced himself, and he said, "I taught Lynda Bird in geology. She is a mighty good student." We had the most pleasant conversation. He comes down and brings his family on campout trips to some National Park area, and this is one of their favorites. That goes under the Small World Department.

We drove back over the precipitous road in the jeep to the cottage just in time for a bit of a rest and to dress for dinner. This is the only time during my stay here that I have planned to live like Washington. Girdles and gloves and an effort to be a hostess. But I thought it would be interesting and appropriate to have a few people in for dinner, so we had asked Governor and Mrs. ^ePaiwonsky, the Cyril Kings (his job approximates that of Lieutenant Governor, but has a different title). He is a quite urbane-looking, pleasant, sophisticated Negro whom I had already met at the arrival function.

And the Henry ^{Diamonds ?} ~~Dahlmans~~ are here. I had been looking forward very much to seeing him again, because all of our conversations about the Natural Beauty Conference had been over the telephone and I had come to decide that he was a very intelligent doer of Mr. Laurance Rockefeller's wonderful ideas. And we had asked the

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young, attractive Bill Favors -- he runs the Caneel Bay Plantation, we had been to their house for cocktails. And some friends of Tony's and Matiana's, Mr. and Mrs. Cramer, who had been on the flight down from Washington with us. He was returning from Washington, where he had received a reward for exceptional service to do with his job as head of the Virgin Islands Corporation. This corporation handles the utilities and certain businesses of the islands, and he's just about put it on its feet, I understand. He's from Massachusetts, has known the Kennedys a long time, was crippled, with arthritis, I believe. A very erudite and interesting man.

It was a delightful evening for Tony and Matiana and Bess and me. Drinks on the terrace, looking out at the sea and the stars, with varied, interesting conversation. Nice counterpoint to the life we had been leading, mostly of being together, the four of us at meal-times. We talked about the history and the future of the islands, the products and the personalities. A delightful, well-spent evening.

But then, early to bed.