

The Yellow Beetle

By Tony Beckwith

She parked the car and walked across the plaza. Out of the corner of his eye he watched her sit at the next table. The collar of her white blouse was slightly turned up at the back, under the chestnut wave of her hair.

“Is that your car?” he asked, pointing at the yellow Volkswagen.

She nodded, then turned to look at him through large, round sunglasses. “You’re English, aren’t you?” It was his turn to nod. She went on: “I’ve just driven down from London.”

“Is this your first time in Spain?”

She smiled and shook her head.

“Where do you stop along the way?” he asked.

She thought for a minute. “I had a flat in Paris once.”

He pictured her lying on a chaise lounge, gazing out of a tall window at a cloudless blue sky. Her face was lifted up to the light, her throat rising smoothly from her breast. “Did you live there alone?”

She suddenly laughed. “No, no. A flat *tire*! I had a flat tire in Paris.”

A wave of inexpressible joy burst over him. He grinned and said, “I haven’t ridden in a new Beetle yet.”

