

Conway has a Visitor

The next morning Kee got on the bus. He bought a ticket to Port au Prince. During the journey he looked out of the window. There were new houses and offices all along the road from his village to Port au Prince.

When he arrived, he found a taxi and gave the driver the address. 'Do you know how to get there?' asked Kee.

'Oh, yes,' said the taxi driver. 'Mr Conway is a big man round here. Very important. Rich, too. And they say he has a lot of friends.'

'I know,' said Kee. He sat back in the taxi as it drove away.

After a long time, they arrived at the office of Conway Construction. Kee paid the taxi driver, and went in. Conway's secretary, Marie, was sitting at a desk. She looked at Kee.

'Good afternoon,' she said, 'Can I help you?'

'Yes,' said Kee, 'I want to talk to Mr Conway.'

'What's your name?' the young woman asked.

'Kee,' he replied.

'Please sit down,' Marie said. Then she picked up a

telephone and talked to Conway. 'There's a man here,' she said. 'He wants to talk to you.' She waited for a moment, and then said, 'Kee, Mr Kee. No, I don't know who he is. He's an old man.' Marie put down the telephone and looked at Kee. 'Mr Conway is waiting for you,' she said. 'Please go in.'

Kee walked to Conway's door and went in. Conway smiled and said, 'Good afternoon, Kee. My name is Conway. Please sit down. Can I help you?' Kee was surprised. Then he said, 'Yes, Mr Conway. My name is Kee. I live in the village of Bussy.'

'Do you?' said Conway. 'I know the village of Bussy well. It's very nice. We're building a new town there.'

'Yes, I know,' said Kee. 'You're building some shops and a hotel there too. But you must not build them on the graveyard. It is a very important place.'

Conway's Hopes

Kee looked at Conway. He said, 'I am a houngan, and I understand voodoo. I know you come from America, and you Americans do not believe in things like that.'

But I can do many things that you do not understand. I will help you if you are good to me.'

'You're very kind,' said Conway, laughing at the old man. 'But I really don't think your voodoo can give me all the things I want in life.'

'What do you want?'

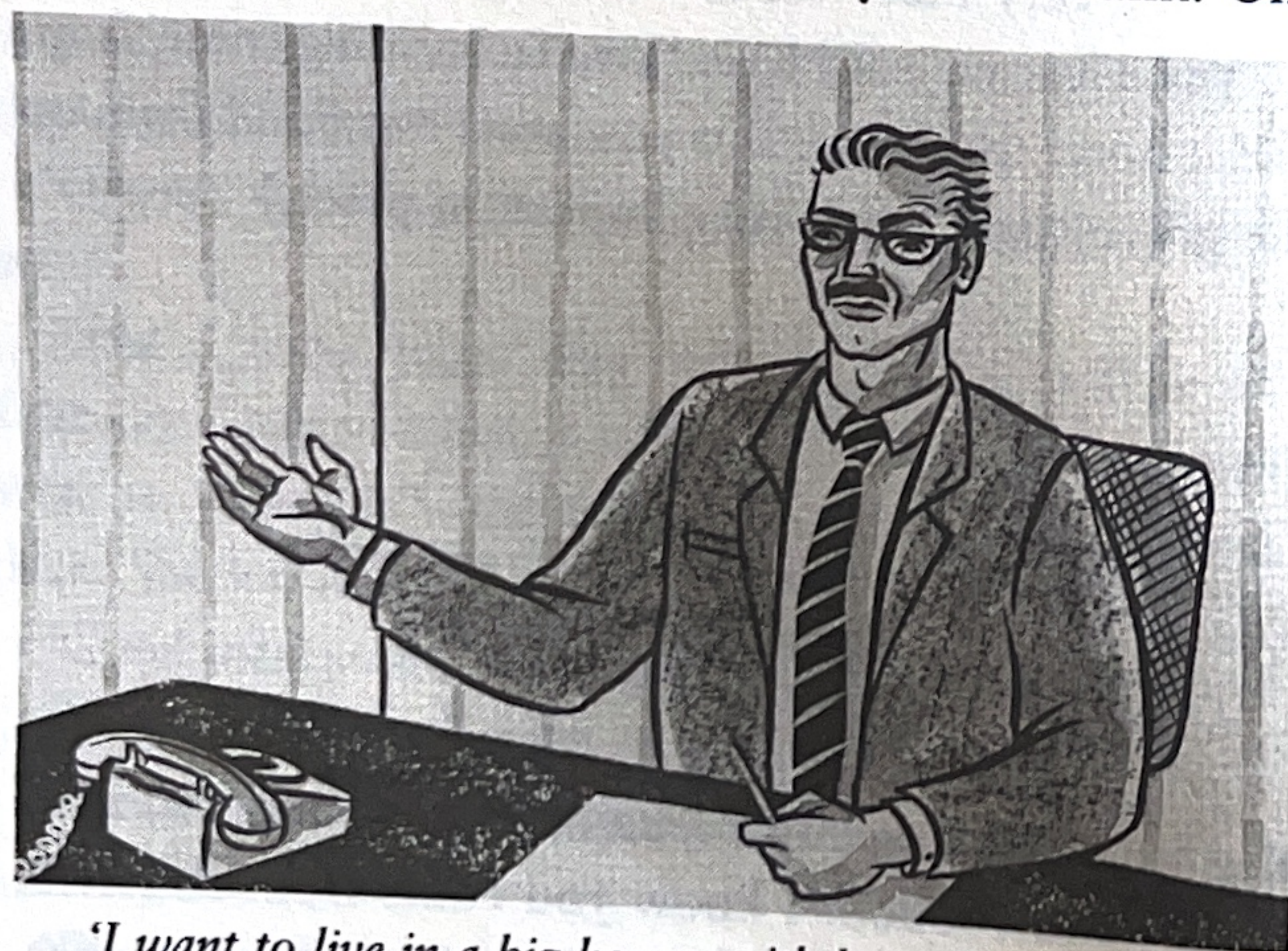
'I want a lot of things,' said Conway.

'Tell me.'

'I want to live in a big house, with lots of rooms.'

'That will not be difficult,' said the old man.

'Oh, but I want more than that. I hate housework. I want lots of people to clean the rooms and bring me food. I want to have a lot of money in the bank. Oh,



'I want to live in a big house, with lots of rooms ...'

and I don't want to work. I want a lot of things, you see.'

'All right,' said Kee. 'You can have those things.'

'That's very kind of you,' said Conway, laughing. 'Now, I've got work to do.'

But Kee sat quietly on his chair and smiled. 'I can see that you do not believe me,' he said. 'You think I'm just an old man who doesn't want to see new shops and houses. Just wait for a few days, and you will see. I'll give you everything that you want. But you must not build shops and hotels in the graveyard. Do you understand?'

'Yes, yes, yes, of course I understand,' said Conway. He was beginning to get angry. 'I won't build shops and hotels there, and you will give me everything I want. Thank you very much for your help. Now, please, get out. I'm a busy man.'

'Goodbye,' said Kee. 'Thank you for talking to me. But don't forget, Mr Conway, you must not do these things. If you do, you'll be sorry.'

'Yes, yes, yes, I understand. Now go!' said Conway.

Kee turned and went to the door. For a moment, as the old man was walking out of the door, Conway remembered the face in the book on the plane. Suddenly he felt cold and afraid.

When Kee left the room, Conway picked up the

telephone. He talked to Marie. He was very, very angry.

'Marie!' he shouted. 'Why did you send that man to my office? He's mad. Coming in here talking about voodoo! Telling me he's going to give me a lot of money! I don't want to see him again. Do you understand? If you make a mistake like that again, you'll lose your job.'

'I'm very sorry,' said Marie.

'Good. Now, I want to talk to Pierre and Henri. Get them on the telephone for me.' He put down the telephone and sat back in his chair. 'That man Kee is



'I don't want to see that mad man again.'

mad,' he thought. Then he started to laugh. 'He thinks he can give me everything I want!' he thought. 'An old man from a village! Ha, ha, ha!'

The telephone rang again. Conway picked it up. 'Pierre, Henri, listen,' he said. 'A few minutes ago an old man came to my office. He doesn't want any shops or houses in the graveyard. It's possible he'll try to stop us. I don't know what he can do, but perhaps he'll go to the police. Perhaps he has important friends. So you must start building the shops and the hotel today. Take away all the stones. Cut down all the trees. You must work fast, do you understand?'

Conway put down the telephone and thought, 'The old man will be angry, but he isn't important. I'll finish building my town and then I'll be a rich man.'

The Spirit of the Wind and the Rain

For many weeks Kee did not go back to the graveyard. He thought, 'I'm happy that I went to see Conway. He's a good man. He's not going to build shops and houses in the graveyard. The people in the graveyard

Voodoo Island

are dead, but their spirits are not dead. The spirits will help him. The spirits will give him everything he wants. The spirit of the wind will bring him good luck and the spirit of the rain will make him happy.'

But one afternoon Kee went back to the graveyard again. There were no trees. There were no stones. There were no graves. But there were a lot of men in the graveyard. They were from Conway Construction and they were building the shops and the hotel. When Kee saw what was happening, he became terribly angry. His face went white and his hands began to shake. Kee ran up to the men and said, 'What's happening? Why are you building here in the graveyard?' The men laughed at him and said, 'Go away, old man. This isn't a graveyard any more. We're building shops for the new town. Go back to your village and be quiet.'

Night came, and the village was very quiet. Kee was alone outside his house. In the garden there was a small fire and the yellow and orange flames danced in the dark, throwing strange black shapes across the ground. Kee took a stick and drew a circle in the ground. He walked round and round the circle, singing a strange song. A long way away, he could hear the sound of some dogs howling at the night sky.

Kee began to talk very quietly. He said, 'Spirit of the

The Spirit of the Wind and the Rain



'Spirit of the wind, something bad must happen to Conway.'

wind, spirit of the rain, listen to me and help. His name is Conway. I saw him a few weeks ago. He said some things to me, but they were not true. Conway is building the shops and hotels in the graveyard. When I saw him I said, "I will give you everything you want." Now I need your help, because the things I say are always true. I do not want to give him everything he wants, but I must. That is the law of the houngan. But something bad must happen to him too. Spirit of the wind, spirit of the rain, help me, help me . . .'

When Kee finished, a cold wind began to blow. It blew through the village, and then the trees began to move in the wind. There were clouds in the sky, and it began to rain. Soon the wind and the rain came to Port au Prince.

Conway was getting ready to go to bed. Then the wind began to blow and he began to feel cold and afraid. He looked out of the window. It was very dark, and there were a lot of clouds in the sky. He picked up his clock and put it by his bed because he had to wake up at seven o'clock. Then he turned off the light. Just before he went to sleep, he could hear the wind and the rain in the garden, and he thought, for a moment, that he could see the face of an old man at the window.

He did not sleep well that night. All night he had bad

dreams, terrible dreams. In his dreams he saw Kee's grandfather and all the other spirits from the graveyard. He was very frightened of the spirits and they ran after him in his dreams. He saw their white faces and felt their cold hands. He could hear strange music coming from behind dark trees and could hear people screaming and laughing, and shouting out his name.

RRRRING! It was seven o'clock. Conway looked at his clock and got out of bed. He brushed his teeth. He was very tired after his bad night. But he washed his face with cold water, and he began to feel much better. He soon forgot about his dreams of Kee and the graveyard.



In his dream, Conway saw the spirits from the graveyard.

He got dressed, and then had some breakfast and opened his letters. At eight o'clock he got in his car and went to the office. Marie was not there, so he opened the doors and made a cup of coffee. He went into his office and sat down. He was sitting behind the big desk in his office when the telephone rang.

RRRRRING! Conway woke up. He was in bed. He looked around the room. 'What's happening?' he thought. 'Where am I?' He picked up his clock. It was seven o'clock. Conway thought, 'That was a dream again. In my dream I got up and went to the office. But it was only a dream, and I'm still at home. How strange! I thought I was at the office.'

Conway got dressed and went to the office. When he went in, Marie was sitting at her desk.

'Good morning, Marie,' he said.

'Good morning, Mr Conway,' she said. 'How are you?'

'I'm fine,' he said. 'But I had a strange dream last night. In my dream, I woke up and came to the office. Then I woke up and I was at home.'

'Well,' she said. 'You're here now. This time you're not dreaming.'

Conway went into his office and started to work.

There was a knock on the door.

'Come in,' said Conway. An old man came into the



Was it the face from Karen Jackson's book?

office. He looked at Conway and started laughing. 'Hello, Conway,' said the old man. 'Do you know my name?' Conway looked at the old man and felt afraid. He knew the face. But where was it from? Whose face was it? Was it from the dream? . . . Or was it from a picture in a book? Was it the face from Karen Jackson's book?

'I am Kee's grandfather!' the old man said. And then he began to laugh and scream like a man who was mad.

Suddenly the telephone rang.

RRRRRRRING! Conway woke up. He looked round the room. He was in bed. He looked at his clock – it was seven o'clock in the morning. He thought, 'I was dreaming again. But what's happening now? Am I sleeping or am I awake?' He was very frightened now. He got up and went to the bathroom to wash his face. He looked into the mirror and screamed. In front of him, in the mirror, there was the head of a dead man. There were no eyes, and no nose, just deep black holes. A long thin red snake was moving slowly in and out of the holes. The snake looked at him with its two small cold eyes, and moved through the open mouth and went round and round the neck, and stopped. Then suddenly the head came alive. It had bright white teeth, there were fires in the eyes, and it began to laugh and scream. Then Conway remembered the face. In front of him was the face of Kee's grandfather, the face of the terrible voodoo houngan, Baron Samedi, laughing at him.

RRRRRRRRRING! Conway woke up again. He was in bed. He looked at the clock. It was seven o'clock.

He started screaming.

Voodoo Law

A few weeks later Kee was in the garden outside his house. The village was quiet and there were no lorries or cars. It was early evening and Kee was giving the chickens some food as the sun went down. He heard a car coming along the road. He stopped and looked up. Karen Jackson stopped the car outside the gate and got out. Kee went over to meet her.

'Karen!' he said. 'Come in. It's very nice to see you again.'

'Thank you,' she said.

They went into the house, and Kee gave her a drink. They sat down and talked for a short time.

'Is something wrong?' asked Kee. 'You look worried, unhappy.'

'Yes. Yes, I am,' said Karen. 'That's why I'm here. I want to ask you something.'

'Yes, what is it?'

'Well, there's someone in the hospital who is very sick. We don't know what to do. Can you come to the hospital and help us?'

Kee laughed. 'American doctors don't usually ask



'There's someone in the hospital who is very sick.'

old men for help.'

Karen said, 'I know, but you're not an ordinary old man. You're different.'

'All right. I'll come. But I don't know if I can help.'

'You're very kind. When can you come?' asked Karen.

'Now, if you want. I'm not doing anything important.'

'Thank you,' said Karen. 'You're very kind. I've got a car. I can take you there.'

Karen and Kee drove out of the small village, down the road, and soon came to the houses of the new

town. They passed the hill, but she did not turn to look at the graveyard. There were a lot of lorries at the side of the road. Karen looked at the names on the side of the lorries – Conway Construction.

'They're building a lot more houses here too, aren't they?' said Karen.

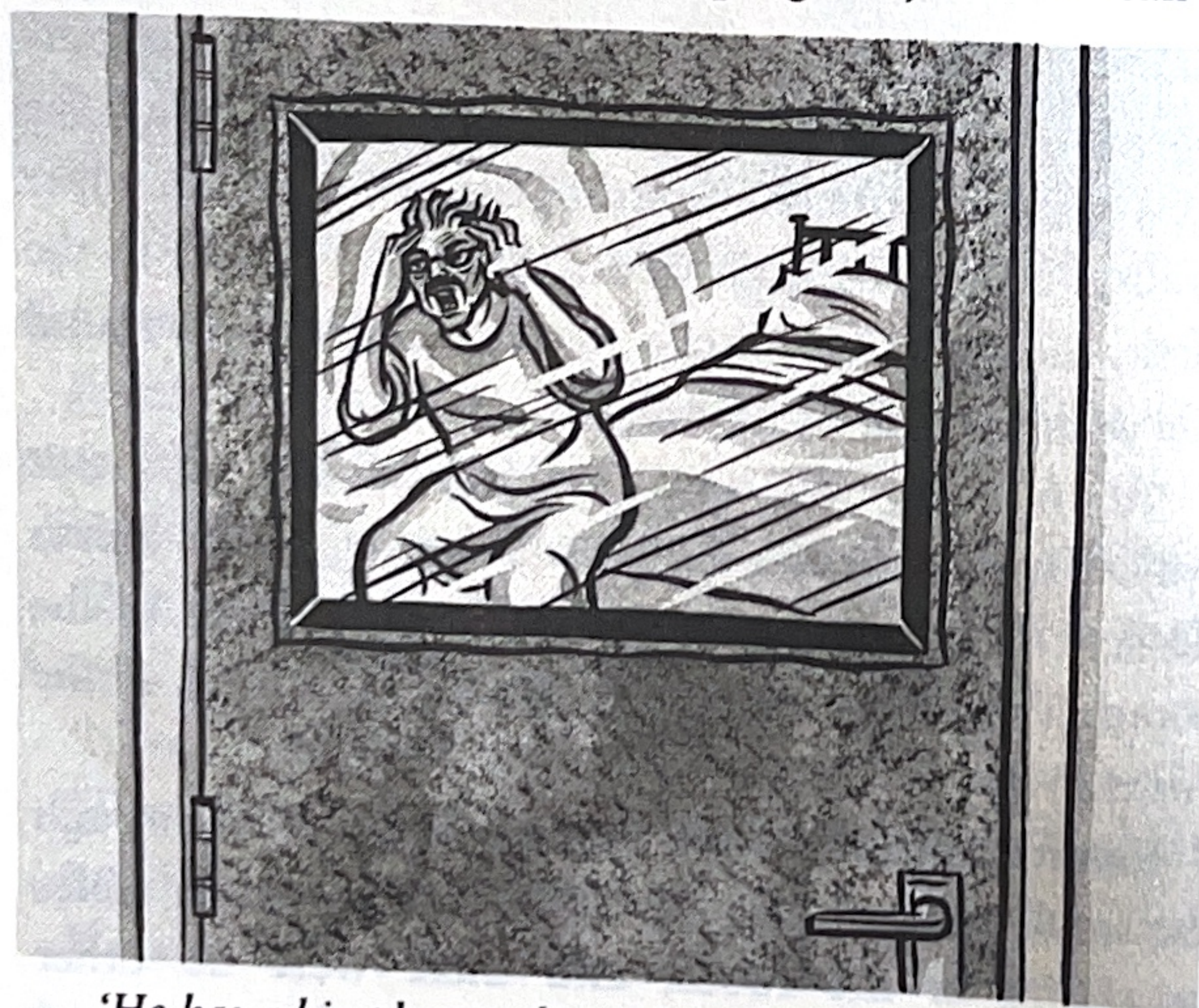
'They *were*,' said Kee.

They did not talk any more on the way to the hospital. When they arrived, Karen drove into the doctors' car park and stopped the car. She got out and came round to open Kee's door. Then they walked up to the front door of the large hospital. The glass doors opened and they went in. As they walked through the hospital, Kee noticed the strange smell, the clean white walls, and the big glass doors. When they came to the desk, the nurse said 'hello' to Karen. She went round the desk to look in a book.

'Room 473,' she said, looking at Kee. 'It's this way.' They walked to the lift and went up to the fourth floor. The doors opened, and Karen took Kee to the room. There was a small window in the door of the room.

Karen stopped. 'Look!' she said. Kee looked through the small window into the room. There were no tables or chairs in the room, and there were no other windows. Next to the wall there was a bed.

Kee looked at the man in the bed. It was Conway. He was wearing a big white coat, and he was screaming. While Kee was looking at the man, Karen explained. 'His name is Conway, James Conway. It's strange. When I came to Haiti, we were on the same plane. He sat next to me. He wanted to start a business and make money. I didn't like him very much, I can tell you, but he wasn't mad. Look at him now. He's mad, and we don't know why. He doesn't talk to anyone and he starts screaming when he hears a telephone or a bell ringing. He's afraid of sleeping too, and we can't



'He has a big place to live in, with lots of rooms ...'

do anything for him. Some of the nurses are saying he's like that because of voodoo.'

'Perhaps the nurses are right,' said Kee. Then he thought for a moment, and began to smile.

'Can you help him?' asked Karen.

'I'm sorry,' said Kee, 'I'm not a doctor. But perhaps he's happy here. He has a big place to live in, with lots of rooms. People come and clean the rooms and bring him food. He doesn't have to work, and he's got a lot of money in the bank. Perhaps he has everything he wants.'

Karen looked at the old man and for a moment she saw something cold and frightening in his smiling eyes.

GLOSSARY

awake not asleep
believe to think that something is true
bell when a telephone rings, the noise is made by a bell
blow (past tense blew) when air moves, a wind is blowing
clean (v) to work on something that is dirty and make it clean
coconut a large brown hard fruit that grows on trees in hot countries
company a group of people who work together to make money
construction building
doll a small model of a person; children play with dolls
draw (past tense drew) to make a picture with a pencil, pen, etc.
dream (n) pictures in your mind when you are asleep
dry not wet
dust (n) dry dirt that is like powder
dusty covered with dust
flame the yellow/orange part of a fire
frightened afraid
frightening if something is frightening, it makes you feel afraid
gate a kind of door in a wall or fence outside
grave a hole in the ground where the body of a dead person lies
graveyard a place with many graves
hope (v) to want something that you think will happen
houngan a person in Haiti who can use voodoo
howl (v) to make a long loud cry (like a dog makes)
land (n) ground used for building, etc.
law a law says that a person must, or must not, do something

Glossary

lorry a kind of very large car that can carry big things
mad ill in the mind (the head)
magic when somebody makes strange things happen and nobody can understand or explain them
map a drawing of a town or country that shows roads, rivers, hills, etc.
medicine something that can make ill people well again
ordinary not strange or special
pain when something hurts, you feel pain
park (car park) a place where you can leave your car
pick up to take something in the hand
pin (n) a very small, sharp piece of metal
problem something difficult to understand, or find an answer for
snake a long thin animal without legs
spirit the part of a person that is not the body; some people think the spirit lives after the body dies
steps stairs outside a house, in a garden, a road, etc.
throw (past tense threw) to make something move through the air
university a place where people can study after they leave school
voodoo a special magic that is used in Haiti