

XXIV. After Dark

OLEANDER AND HIBISCUS bloomed in profusion on Miami Beach. How beautiful it had grown—Carl's city! The city stood fresh and new, as gloriously colored as when it first blossomed from the sand. Carl's bells rang out from the campanile and a new generation of golden-skinned youth played in the paradise he had lifted from the bottom of the sea.

Through its streets Carl moved slowly, hardly known by the new crowd whose cars flashed through the streets he had built, whose fast boats skimmed the waterways he had dredged, who lived in the hotels he had created and the homes he had built on land he had brought by barge and cart with which to build a new world.

He walked ponderously, greatly weighted now, to the cash-and-carry market to select vegetables and groceries and have them carried home by a little colored boy in pace with his slow steps. Only the old-timers recognized in this slow-moving man in his middle sixties the fabulous Carl Fisher who had created Miami Beach. In all this beautiful city, nothing bore Carl's name. That was the way he had wished it to be.

Most difficult to bear were his visits to St. Francis Hospital on Indian Creek every week to have the liquid in his swollen abdomen drained away. The hospital was a landmark in the growth of the Beach. It had been built by Jim Allison, and when Jim died a rumor swept the city that the hospital would be sold and turned into a hotel. A friend of the nuns in charge of the hospital came to Carl about it.

"Stop worrying," Carl sent his word as reassurance to the nuns. "I've taken care of everything. Take a look at the deed—I've provided the building can never be used for anything but