

The city



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The city had beauty comparable to that of no other; as the sun rose over the bay, it cast a golden glimmer over the waves, rising further shining its warm glow on the immense skyscrapers, whose windows reflected the light onto the skyscraper standing next to it, bouncing the light toward the ground below - as if a primitive method of lighting the city was used, comparable to that used within ancient Egyptian pyramids.

The city's skyline was a mixture of old and modern architecture, tall skyscrapers stood watch over the city beneath, old grand stone buildings, once pioneers in architecture, now standing in the shadows of the immense guardians above; the stone walls once rough, worn smooth from years of erosion, beaten by wind and rain, worn smooth by the city's inhabitants as they stood against the walls, waiting, waiting for lovers, buses and friends.

The sun held the city in a warm embrace, yet somehow, some buildings remained cold, the hospital a plain, sterile, concrete building stood in the centre of the city, steadily releasing a stream of screaming ambulances into the maze of roads which criss-crossed their way between the buildings . The new pavement followed the roads in a mindless fashion, the people they carried did likewise: their journeys being halted at junctions by simple lights, red screamed " Stop! , whilst the green encouraged them to cross, the flashing amber daring those who were brave enough to sprint past the cars, who's drivers engaged the clutch, changed into first gear, accelerating, eager to complete their journey. A steady siren for the blind rang out and seemed to politely remind those strolling to the other side in a leisurely fashion that the cars on either side were highly anxious to continue their journeys.

At the turn of every corner, there was a new sight, a new sound, a new scent; from the West Indian food shop, painted a vivid red, with a bright yellow sign which read " Jerkin' Is the Habit", the green walls inside could be viewed from the large windows which lay on both sides of the open door.

The smell of strong spices, which seasoned the meat, which had been thoughtfully laid out under the glass counter, and the sweet scent of the fresh fruit juice being made in the kitchen behind; where a knife-wielding, middle aged woman, in blue overalls and a white apron, cut through the flesh of a chicken, a sharp crack could be heard as she chopped through the bone.

The smooth bass riffs of a reggae song, in which a man claimed he had " Shot the sheriff", were emitted from an old stereo, placed upon the large worktop, on which was a variety of meats, spices and cutlery were placed. To the West African supermarket named " Accra Market", the exterior laden with yam, plantain, salt fish and other exotic foods, set upon foldable tables, whose fragile legs strained under the pressure of the heavy items they supported.

A strange aroma wafted onto the surrounding pavement, a blend of heavily spiced foods, mixed with the smell of household cleaning products. The surrounding air pulsed with the sound of Ghanaian highlife music, mixed with the busy ambience of the city; which coupled with the bright sun which filled the city and the shop's large, fluorescent, white sign with an immense black star and a subtle undertone of red, yellow and green washed over the white

background, brought a slice of Accra into the city, which was a world apart from the modern, developed city.

The next turn brought a large imposing estate, a group of youths gathered in the five a-side football pitch, whilst cars manoeuvred the assault course which the road had become, the battered tarmac roads, littered with bikes and shopping trolleys, along with the more conventional road obstacles such as potholes and bollards; each car with its own sound, produced from the engine as it bounced on the rev limiter, along with the different music as each driver listened to their radios and CD's, from the heavy drum beat of a classic hip-hop song, to the up-tempo percussion of a funky house anthem.

As the darkness of the estate was left behind, the new light brought a more suburban setting; the calm atmosphere was a direct contrast to the hostility of the estate, the pavements were lined with the a mixture of your common high street brands, from the Pizza Hut with the buffet adverts enticing people through the glass doors for a late afternoon meal, to the Starbucks, complete with an outdoor seating, the green parasols, emblazoned with the infamous logo, protruding from the wooden benches, where groups of people sat, laughing and joking whilst enjoying a cup of coffee, watching the world go by.

At the same moment, amongst all the calm, a business man who is seated inside, and had earlier bought one large coffee, so that he may take advantage of the free Wi-Fi, a look of anxiety etched on his face, as his fingers pound the keys of his top of the range laptop, preparing for a presentation at one of the inner city sky scrapers later that day.

As the warm sun set, gradually merging into the horizon, allowing its now hazy, orange, glow to withdraw from the city, casting long shadows into the bay, their darkness embraced the face of a statue, which stood nobly in the water, as a reminder to the inhabitants of the city of the independence their country had gained long in the past. The normally passive expression, carved into the face of the statue all those years ago, appeared concerned, for it knew, having watched over the city for so long, that the calm, warm, welcoming atmosphere was about to change.

As the last of the sun's light dipped under the horizon, street lamps lit up and cast a luminous, unnatural, harsh glow over the city streets. Large signs hung above shops enticing people through their doors, like moths to a flame, further added to the unnatural, neon, glow cast by the street lamps. Other than the change in light, the city appeared to be just the same as when the light had bathed its streets. Things were not so different on the surface, the buses and trains still ran through the city like clockwork, whilst the planes flew over the city, rising and falling into the airport.

People still flowed like a steady stream over the pavement, in and out of shops; the same sound waves filled the air. It was only when you delved deeper into the minds of the inhabitants, did you find the true mentality of this supposedly beautiful city.... A young man walked through the busy city streets; he was tall with a muscular build, his skin a tanned brown. His dark brown hair cut short framing his chiselled features. He was dressed head to toe in a colour scheme of white, black and grey, his check shirt fitted immaculately, a dark grey t-shirt lay under the shirt, complementing the garment above.

The shirt came to rest over a white and black belt, which had been neatly strung through his loosely hung jeans. The jeans fell neatly over white and black high-top trainers, which appeared to have just been removed from the box seconds earlier; despite his height, build and clothing, he was not an imposing man, he did not walk with a swagger or an air of authority. A young woman walked by his side, her beauty was astounding. Her soft, dark brown hair fell effortlessly over her face, a face which needed no makeup to cover any blemish, which might seem to disrupt her smooth skin, which had been blessed with a caramel complexion.

Her eyebrows had been shaped neatly, bringing out the shape of her eyes, the colour of them a soft inviting hazel. Her lips, sumptuous, lightly covered in a clear subtle gloss, causing her lips to shimmer in the moonlight. She wore a casual outfit, yet she seemed to give the clothes a touch of elegance, as they embraced her hour-glass figure. Her expensive leather jacket worn open, over a white top, she wore figure hugging jeans which ended just above black flat shoes. As the pair laughed and conversed through the darkness, the twinkle in their eyes the only light the two needed in their lives.

It was clear that the couple were happy together, joking as the young man tripped over a crack in the pavement. They felt completely comfortable in each other's presence, able to laugh at themselves finding attraction in each other's flaws. As they walked along the suburban high street nearing their destination, as the shops locked up ensuring they were protected for the night ahead - the staff leaving making their way home for the night, the pair were completely unaware to the fact they were being followed.

The young man glanced quickly at his expensive watch, the diamonds which framed the face could have been stars taken from the night sky. He muttered something quickly to the girl and she smiled back at him. The young couple quickened their pace, their footsteps now echoing in the empty streets - still unaware to the man pursuing them, the followers footsteps lost in the echoes of their own... As they turned into the estate, the young girl caught a glimpse of a hooded figure, her sub-urban dream now destroyed by reality.

The figure wearing all black the figure seemed to fall into the shadows. But as the silhouette came under one of the city street lamps, his face was suddenly revealed. She recognised his dark face. The eyes were a dark menacing brown. The sneer was evil and intimidating. The nostrils flared in anger. She recognised his walk, the self-confident swagger. A shrill scream, left her soft lips, cracking the air around her. She broke into a sprint... Her partner bemused, but his loyalty and fear caused him to follow.

The stalker eager to catch the couple broke into a wild, animalistic sprint. As he reached the heart of the estate the couple were gone, he continued through an alley way, his own heart fuelled with adrenalin... And finally he saw his target - the girl tripped over a crack in the pavement and tumbled to the floor. The young man tried to pull her to her feet as the stalker, who now swaggered towards the couple. Staring into the eyes of the young man, the stalker reached into the waist band of his trousers and a blade caught the light...

The blood rushed from the face of the young man leaving his light brown skin pale. His eyes widened - the stalker's gaze still locked into the eyes of the young man. They were now eye to eye, the girl pleaded for the follower to go. The blade had now been retracted from the waist band of the trousers - the followers arm pulled back and then, a scream. A pool of blood poured from the young man and the stalker fled. The couple left together in the heart of the estate whilst the young mans heart with every pulse, bled him closer to his death.