

Bombay's Scenarios

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It's a calm winter noon. The weather is quite smooth and warm for the time. You sit in the 'Coral', old 'Achillion' or 'Rhapsody': it is of no importance. At some point you observe four or five speedboats on the Thermaikos' horizon. It seems a little odd, but you don't bother. The gulf of Thermaikos remains sordid as ever, despite the fabled biological cleaning system and the occasional use of small old ships for the collection of floating garbage and lingering sewage pumped into the sea. Anyone can take a walk, you think, as long as he boldly accepts the risk of a free-fall. The speedboats approach closer and closer the shore towards the White Tower. You notice that all speedboats are crowded and suspect that this may be part of a novel tourist attraction of the inventive mayor or prefect, who govern this 'erotic' city.

Shortly, forty to fifty people land to the White Tower, each of them holding two or three big travel bags. You wonder if the White Tower could ever be transformed overnight - after the necessary interior modifications- into a peculiar pension for notable foreign guests and you cannot exclude with certainty this possibility, although you haven't heard anything , since it is well known that 'we live in Greece'.

Being already extremely curious, you gaze at the White Tower. You observe that most of them remain in the seaside to open their bags, while four of them go inside the White Tower at once. Few seconds pass and suddenly you notice that they have closed again their bags and they are now holding black long objects. "Could they be replica weapons?" you wonder and remember listening to the radio last week about a mini show with thirty round-headed people walking along the shore.

You don't have time to answer the question.

You see an old woman, who strolls with a baby carriage in the seaside, a bit far from the group of newcomers, collapsing and the carriage being shattered by bullets.

You don't manage to feel any sorrow. You're dominated by fear and stay totally still like a pillar of salt. You don't know which is the advisable reaction, if there are other armed people who have

disembarked in the port or some other place and are already in the town center. You sit in the 'Coral', old 'Achillion' or 'Rhapsody': it is of no importance. You feel weak.

Meanwhile, you realise that the gunfire continues incessantly. A group of about ten people is walking towards the Great Alexander's statue in the direction of the 'Macedonia Pallas' hotel and on their way they give away death to a hugging couple sitting in a bench, a fanatical cyclist, member of the 'Cyclists Fans of Thessaloniki', three young men, would-be skateboard champions, a stray dog, seven to eight other passers-by.

At the same time, a second group is already moving towards Pavlou Mela street, probably to the town center, while a third one is moving across in order to visit all the cafeterias of Leoforos Nikis street and get acquainted with all insouciant frequenters of the idyllic Thermaikos. You sit in the 'Coral', old 'Achillion' or 'Rhapsody' and this is now of some importance.

You pull your chair and are about to leave. When you were young you used to exercise, a few years ago you were occasionally visiting your neighborhood gym and you might still be quite fast to save yourself. But as you stand up your eyes focus on a White Tower's battlement. It seems like someone is also staring at you.

You don't recollect and can't think of anything else afterwards. At the last fractions of a second the sixteen year-old Alexis crosses your mind, who was murdered even according to the official version of events (see prosecutor's indictment) in Exarhia district (Athens), the new building of School of Philosophy of Aristotle University which was endangered by flames, the destroyed cars and the burned stores of innocent people in Athens, Thessaloniki, Heraklion, Patra and other big cities, the flamed garbage bins at daylight in Egnatia street, the Arch of Galerius, the Roman market of Navarinou and other places.

You bring to mind the philosopher Herbert Marshall McLuhan, who had bluntly stated in the 1960's, that one is more astounded by the news of his neighbours' loss after a car accident than the death of two hundred Indian soldiers due to an avalanche.

Eventually, you wake up (?) happy and relieved that you are not in Bombay (or Palestine).