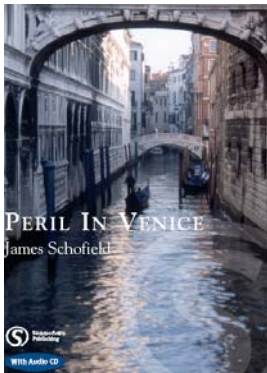




**About** two hours later a sound woke him. It came from the direction of the bathroom. He could hear little noises from there, little scratching noises which stopped and started. He lay for a moment feeling the panic inside him. Should he wake Elizabeth? She was always a good sleeper and after the long flight she was exhausted; she hadn't heard anything. Anyway, he couldn't send her in there; he'd have to look himself. Once more he got out of bed, but this time picked up a newspaper, folded it and went to the bathroom door. He listened again. Yes, something was moving in there. He took a deep breath, opened the door, turned on the light and put his head around the door. Straight away he pulled his head back, shut the door quietly, put the newspaper in his mouth and bit it very, very hard.



**Dotty** tipped the contents of her handbag out onto the table and handed her a packet of Tarot cards, then started putting the pile back in her bag again. To Emily's great surprise the last item was a tiny revolver. "Dotty, what on earth is that?" she asked in shock. Dotty looked at her. "It's called a mousegun. Cute isn't it? I've gotten used to carrying it with me in New York. Only self-defense, but you know what Al Capone said: 'You can get much further with a kind word and a gun, than you can with a kind word alone.' You don't have to worry, I go and practice shooting once a week at home."



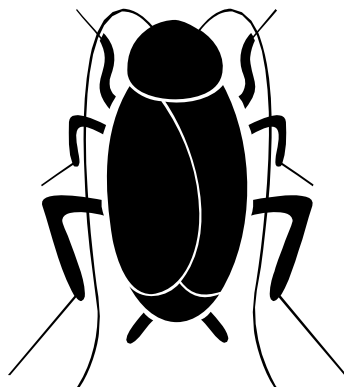
**At** about midday they reached a town on the edge of the desert. There was a small garrison of policemen with an overweight and irritable captain. Initially he was inclined to be suspicious and unhelpful, but after he had examined Kirill's passport and taken the €50 note out of it that Kirill had thoughtfully placed there in advance, he was all smiles and hospitality. He confirmed what Irina had thought, that the Kerkomen were currently at the Tuv oasis. "They passed through here the day before yesterday – a bunch of thieves if you ask me. Several chickens went missing from the town. Why does a pretty girl like you want to visit a load of crooks, hmm?" Irina opened her eyes wide and smiled innocently back. "Oh, I don't Captain. That's why we'll be leaving here as soon as we have bought some petrol." He was still scratching his head trying to work out what she meant as they left the town behind.

## Room Service – “Brooke’s Hotel”

### Chapter 1

#### Listen and check:

- where Richard and Elizabeth have landed.
- what Richard’s problem is.
- which hotel they choose.



## **Room Service – “Brooke’s Hotel”**

### **Chapter 1**

**Skim read the chapter once. Check:**

- where Richard and Elizabeth have landed.
- what Richard’s problem is.
- which hotel they choose.

Richard and Elizabeth stood and stared at the hotel list while the rest of the airport arrivals hurried off to their sensibly pre-booked destinations.

“Hilary said it was the best way to get a cheap hotel room. See what’s on the airport hotel list when we arrive and give them a call” said Elizabeth.

This idea had sounded good in London but now ten hours later in Kuching airport on the east Malaysian island of Borneo, Richard Villas was tired, hungry, and wanted to know where he and his wife Elizabeth were going to sleep that night.

“Hotel Luk Kwong?” he suggested. “Or how about the Hotel Oriental Garden?”

“Hmm ...” Elizabeth shook her head. “I’m not sure.”

They were on a business holiday. A holiday because it was February in London and both of them needed some sunshine and business because Elizabeth was going to have an interview at the University of Kuching.

“Look!” she said. “Brooke’s Hotel!”

“Brooke’s Hotel? That famous place? Isn’t it expensive?”

They had to be careful with money. Neither Elizabeth’s job in the anthropology department of the University of London, nor Richard’s at an advertising agency were well paid. Two years before he thought he would be able to stop work when his first novel was published. But although the newspaper critics loved it, the public didn’t. So he stayed at the advertising agency and started work on novel number two.

“No, no, look at the price. That’s not too bad!”

“It’s still twice as expensive as the other hotels.”

“Yes, but Brooke’s Hotel! It’s not often you get the chance to stay somewhere like that, is it? And we’ll be safe there, don’t you think?”

This was an important point because Richard had a problem, more serious than not having much money. Cockroaches. It wasn’t rational he knew. They were smaller than him, they didn’t bite and they ran away when you turned on the light, but Richard was terrified of cockroaches.

And the cockroaches knew he was afraid of them. Every time he had to go on a business trip somewhere hot they came out to greet him. Even Singapore – where every other form of life whether it had two, four, six, eight or zero legs was carefully organized into its own tidy corner – the cockroaches came to look for Richard. He found one sunbathing on the centre of his towel next to the hotel swimming pool. When Richard saw it he jumped backwards and pushed a passing waiter into the swimming pool. A second went to sleep early one morning in his shoe. He only found it in the evening. The hotel doctor had to give him a tranquillizer.

But this time he wasn’t going to let them chase him away. Elizabeth’s interview meant too much. A three-year grant from the anthropology department of the University of Kuching for her to study the Kokketti, a tribe of practically stone-age people in the interior of Borneo with enough money so that he could give up his job and finish his second novel. The plan was that during the week she would study the Kokketti in their village and come back at the weekend to the house on the university campus. She had to get the job and he had to learn to live with the cockroaches. But it would be difficult, so it was important that they stayed in a good hotel that was unlikely to have very many.

“Richard, we’ll take a bus into town instead of a taxi. That’ll save some money.”

She telephoned the hotel, booked three nights in the most expensive (even with an extremely good discount) hotel in Kuching and then asked the hotel receptionist for bus directions from the airport. She finished and turned to him.

“Come on, it’s just twenty minutes on the bus. He told me it leaves in ten minutes!”

As they stepped outside the air-conditioned airport building, the tropical heat fell on them like a blanket, so by the time they reached the airport bus fifty metres away Richard could feel lines of sweat running down his back and their suitcases felt twenty kilos heavier. He looked down the inside of the bus carefully, his eyes going from side to side. Elizabeth looked over her shoulder at him. “Have you seen something?” she asked after a moment.

“No ... no. I’m just making sure.” He went and sat next to her. She took his arm.

“Remember what Hilary said. She didn’t see any cockroaches in five years in Kuching. We’ll be fine.”

**90 minutes +**  
**Extensive reading and the business English student**

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Richard nodded, but didn't feel much happier. Elizabeth's friend Hilary wore glasses thick enough to bullet-proof a window. But she still had problems finding her own bicycle if there were too many parked closely together at the university. The bus set off. On both sides of the road was thick jungle. The leaves were emerald green and just washed by the afternoon rain so everything shone. As they stopped to pick up some more passengers, Richard saw three monkeys jumping from one tree to another. Sometimes there were little houses near the road with children and chickens running around outside while mothers and grandmothers sat on the steps dressed in beautiful blue, green, red and yellow batik dresses. After the grey skies, streets and offices of London, Richard felt as if he was able to see in colour again. He started to relax. If Brooke's Hotel was clean and cockroach-free, this was going to work.

**Chapter 1 – “Brooke's Hotel”**

**1 Scanning**

Read the chapter carefully. Answer these questions:

- a Why is Elizabeth flying to Kuching?
- b Who does Richard work for?
- c How do Elizabeth and Richard travel to Brooke's Hotel from the airport?

**2 Key vocabulary**

Match the words to their explanation.

1 pre-booked	a very afraid
2 critic	b a drug to make somebody calm and quiet
3 advertising	c arranged in advance
4 cockroach	d woollen cloth to keep you warm in bed
5 rational	e somebody whose job is to judge good and bad qualities of books, films etc.
6 terrified	f to look bright and shiny
7 tranquilizer	g the business of telling people about products so they buy them
8 grant	h brown/black insect which usually lives in buildings, especially in warmer countries
9 blanket	i sensible, something based on reason
10 shine	j a sum of money from an organisation

**3 Word partners**

Join the word partners in the columns below together. There might be more than one possibility.

1 advertising	a proof
2 run	b off
3 business	c agency
4 good	d heat
5 air	e trip
6 tropical	f to another
7 bullet	g conditioned
8 set	h away
9 one	i discount

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### 4 Practice

The letters in the words and word partners in italics are in alphabetical order. Rewrite them so they make sense. They are all from exercises 2 and 3.

a The whole department is deefiirt of the possibility of job cuts.

b He applied for a agnrt to study in Belorussia.

c Did you know Richard Villas worked in adegiinrstv before he became a famous author?

d After the accident the doctor gave me a aeiillnrutuqz to calm me down.

e I'm not buying this unless you give me a dgoocdinostu.

f The staff were eghiinprsw one to ahnrort about me as I came in to the office.

g I've just bought the latest novel from Richard Villas. The cciiirts say it's really good.

### 5 Summary

Read through the chapter one more time and complete the summary.

Richard and Elizabeth Villas arrived in Kuching, Malaysia and went to stay at Brooke's Hotel. They were there because Elizabeth had an **a** \_\_\_\_\_ at the anthropology **b** \_\_\_\_\_ of the university. She hoped to get a three year **c** \_\_\_\_\_ to study a **d** \_\_\_\_\_ people on the island called the Kokketti. There would be enough money for Richard to give up his job at an **e** \_\_\_\_\_ agency and finish his second novel. They would live in a house on the university **f** \_\_\_\_\_ in Kuching

But there was a problem; Richard was terrified of **g** \_\_\_\_\_ and so they needed to stay in a good hotel where they hoped there would not be too many. Because they didn't have too much money they were pleased to get a good **h** \_\_\_\_\_ on the price of the room.

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