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KALEIDOSCOPIIC MEMORIES

by

Sybil Ory Morris

June 14

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June 15

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stage. Who was more embarrassed -- Ellen, Menotti or I? Ellen's host family for the year, Eli and Delia Clyne, hosted a dinner party in Parioli that evening.

June 16

The Hassler Medici Hotel is high above the Spanish steps. Clif and I had a room with an open terrace. The view from there was one captured often on a postcard -- the whole panorama of Rome, the Vatican, the hills, ancient sites. Father Mahowald had lunch with us in the patio. Clif and I later visited the Terme and Etruscan Museums. That evening we rode on a bus with Ellen to Piazza Navona for dinner at Tres Scalini.

June 17

Before we left for Spain we went back to the Vatican to renew our exquisite memory of our wedding the year before. Ellen took our picture in front of the iron-grill gate of the Capella de Sepulchre de San Pietro. In Madrid that evening we visited La Zambra to see flamenco dancing. But Rosa Duran was not dancing. I loved her first in New York at the Spanish Pavilion of the World's Fair and once later in Madrid. We later dined at Club 31.

June 18

By car we drove to have a "View of Toledo". We toured the town thoroughly and filled up on El Greco's. Back in Madrid that evening we had dinner at Horcher's.

June 19

One of my favorite saints is St. Teresa of Avila. It was a moving experience to visit her place of birth -- the beautiful old city of Avila with a medieval-style wall wrapped around it. We sat in the garden of her family home where her own childhood motivations took life. On the way we stopped at Segovia, El Escorial and the "Valley of the Dead".

June 20

Three "musts" in Madrid are visits to the Prado Museum, to the Palace and to shop for suede clothes. We accomplished them before we left for Malaga. From there we went to Torremolinos and settled at the Hotel Pey Espada.

June 21

Torremolinos -- and we missed our tour bus! At 9:00 A.M. a taxi driver frantically drove us to Malaga where we rushed aboard the ship to begin our Moroccan holiday. The crossing from Malaga to Tangier through the Straits of Gibraltar took 5 hours. We had breakfast on board, sunned on the deck, listened to Spanish music, had lunch and passed so near the Rock of Gibraltar we nearly touched it.

From Tangier we drove to Fez through the Rif Mountains and miles and miles of plains. Simple Berber people farm for a living. Brightly colored skirts and caftans mingled with dark colors, bright signs, and waving hands of friendly people. Saw a safari village and a salt bed.

Our tour guide told us that "eucalyptus trees are cut for paper value to grow back in a year and that cork trees are cut and grow back in 7 years". As we went through Asilah and Larache we saw small Roman ruins and passed through other towns with beautiful names like Ksar-el-Kebir and Sidi Kacem. Near there is a small oil refinery where oil is imported from other Arab countries. There were trucks of sugar beets and communities of mud houses. Fig trees and olive groves mingled with cactus plants and flowers.

We reached Fez -- the oldest of the Imperial Cities (808 A.D.) and stayed at the Merinides Hotel. Images of Fez -- its souks, mosques and kissarias -- flick around in my mind like bits of glass in a kaleidoscope. As long ago as the 9th century Fez was an intellectual center. The college of Bou Inania (built in the 14th century) has a courtyard paved with marble and onyx.

June 22

On the way from Fez to Meknes we passed through Moulay Idriss. The founder of Fez, Idriss II, is buried there. Roman ruins at Volubulis are of the neolithic era. It became capital of Roman Mauritania under Juba II. The film "Patton" was shot here at the handsome ruins. In the movie there is a striking scene taken under the "Arch of Triumph", Caracalla's Arch.

Meknes was founded by a Berber tribe, the Meknassa, who made the spot their commercial center. It still is an

important center for commerce but in the medina the monumental gates of Bab Mansour and Bab Djema En Nouar are testimony to the building accomplishments of Moulay Ismail. The place was surrounded by three rings of solid walls.

June 23

Early in the morning we left Fez and paralleled the Middle Atlas mountain range. There are beautiful cedars and pines along the way to Immouzer du Kandar and Ifrane. We saw a king's chalet and a small airport. Berber people with smiling faces at Azrou share salt and bread. Groves of wild pink oleanders were home to sheep and goats.

June 24

We arrived at exotic Marrakech and pulled up in front of a Holiday Inn. I resisted the idea of being in Marrakech and having dinner at a Holiday Inn. Clif and I had our first argument! The Mamounia Hotel was glamorous and that glamour was important to me. I had read volumes about it. I insisted; Clif resisted, so Ellen and I took off. The hotel has a magnificent courtyard and pool and an Adolpho de Valasco boutique. That evening I bought a navy blue caftan with orange embroidery. Toward evening as Ellen and I sat in the courtyard I looked up and there was Clif! My happiness was complete! Dinner at the Mamounia that evening was couscous, pigeon pie, tagin and a drink called Jus d'or. We met a couple who had a car and we drove all around town with them.

June 25

I thought about Fatima most of the way to Casablanca. I think of her often today. We met the girl at the Medina in Marrakech and she said she was 14. Obviously her head and her body itched because she scratched incessantly. She stood out from the rest. It wasn't because of her beauty because she wasn't even pretty. But she asserted a special air of authority as she insisted on being our guide through the labyrinthical souk. There was no doubt who was in charge as she clapped her hands from time to time and said, "Come". Her strong will, her self-confidence and her individuality were clearly manifested as she tried to sell the 10 beaded necklaces she held in her hand. The word "no" was not in her vocabulary as she insisted. She pushed -- she shoved her personality at me. This young Moroccan entrepreneur continued. "But, lady, I make this with a needle. Look. This clasp. I make this." My heart turned over as I caught the fire in her eyes. A vision of 4 other little girls (mine) who might have been pushing beads floated before me. I bought her supply, of course, and from then on we were simpatico.

"My friend", she called me. For a number of reasons it pleased me immeasurably to be considered her friend. It added to the mystery of the moment when she told me that her name was Fatima and I told her about Our Lady's Fatima.

"Yes, I know the story," she told me . . .

Casablanca is not as exotic as Fez or Marrakech. It is a modern city though it has a medina (old part) with a mellah (Jewish Quarter). Its kasbah (citadel) is interesting. We watched crowds shop at the huge market-place. Our hotel is the "El Mansour".

June 26

So long, Humphrey Bogart. We left Casablanca for Rabat and Tangier. Rabat is to Casablanca as Washington is to New York, "the capital as opposed to the big city". Lunch in Rabat was typically Moroccan -- couscous, lamb, harira (soup), mint tea -- and we ate couscous with our fingers. Hotel Les Almohades is on the bay (Atlantic Ocean-Mediterranean Sea) at Tangier. That evening we walked the beach. When we returned to the hotel we discovered a wedding reception in progress. Someone offered us a drink, we chatted, we mingled and no one suspected that we were uninvited guests!

June 27

Back to the ferry and the ride back across the straits to Spain. Our memorable Moroccan adventure was over but there were adventures ahead! Back to Torremolinos and Hotel Pey Espada.

June 28

Early in the morning we left with our driver Jose Manuel for Granada -- an all-day trip through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Toward evening we visited a gypsy conclave where vivacious girls danced flamenco in a cave. Several of them

chose Clif as a partner and his gypsy blood ran wild! The setting, the cast and the music -- entirely authentic -- could have played on Broadway. After sherry, cokes and beer we drove back to Malaga and Torremolinos.

June 29

At the Pey Espada we rested on the beach under straw umbrellas and enjoyed the wonderful pool.

June 30

We left Torremolinos with Jose for Seville to continue our Spanish holiday. Along the Costa del Sol we drove through Marbella and Tarifa. We had lunch at Cadiz, toured the Giralda Tower and had sherry at Jerez. Seville is a special Spanish city -- it has unique beauty, charm, and style. Hotel Alphonso XIII is palatial and offered us unusual pleasure. Jose showed us the Alcazar, the Cathedral, the Museum and park. We peeked in at private patios and admired Seville's special tile-work. Bizet's "Carmen" was remembered when we walked past the cigarette factory which is now a school.

July 1

At Ayamonte (Spain) we crossed the ferry en route to Lisbon and drove along Portugal's coastline. In Lisbon we called my dear friend Francisca Perreira, whom I'd met in 1965. Her birthday was today so we celebrated it in Lisbon Antigua where we heard the celebrated Amalia Rodriguez sing the plaintive Fado music.

July 2 - 3

Francisca drove with us on a tour of Lisbon and throughout the neighboring towns of Estoril, Fatima and Nazare (the fishing village where women dress in all-black to await their fisherman husbands). The deep devotion of the faithful to Mary, the Blessed Mother, is quite moving. Here "Our Lady of Fatima" called loudly for world peace.

July 4

There were no fireworks this fourth of July, but Clif and I celebrated mightily on the beach at Estoril. We rented a private Cabana with its own bit of sand while our driver went below to sun at the real beach. Ellen had gone off with George Cadima (a friend from the Overseas School) to visit nearby castles. What fun it was to continue our celebration that evening at Machado's with them, Francisca and Alberto -- and to bid adieus.



