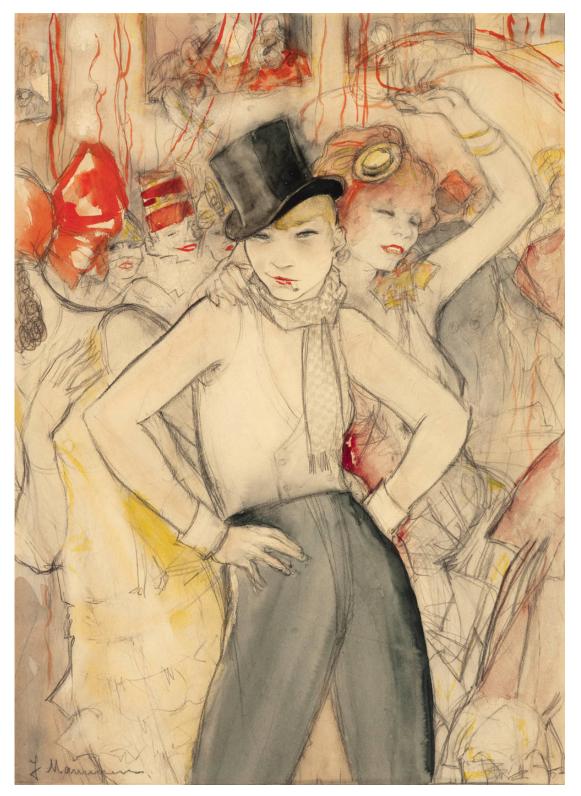
Lessons Learned in Las Vegas

by <u>Shai Afsai</u> (June 2021)



She Represents, Jeanne Mammen, 1928

Lesson 1

When you arrive at your hotel room hungry and thirsty after a long flight from the east coast and from traveling to and from airports and are delighted to find after checking in that there is an array of snacks and bottled water waiting for you next to the big flat screen TVwhich you turn on to a mixed martial arts fight on ESPNand lie back on the couch and eat a packet of chocolate peanut candies, chocolate raisins, epicurean snack mix, pretzel nibs, Pringles, Mars Mix, and roasted cashews, and wash all that down with four FIJI Water bottles and think to yourself, Wow. This is some hotel. I wonder if tomorrow they'll refill the complimentary snacks too or just the water then you'll discover upon checking out that you've actually been charged over \$200 for minibar expensesand you can buy a lot more chocolate raisins, Pringles, and bottles of water in a store for \$200 than you ate and drank in fifteen impatient, gluttonous minutes

while laying back on the couch, watching mixed martial arts on the big flat screen TV in your hotel room Lesson 2 When you're taking an evening stroll up and down the Vegas Strip alone in sneakers and exercise pants and an absolutely gorgeous young woman in salacious attire approaches you and gives you a friendly smile and asks how your evening is going and you think to yourself, Wow. This is some city. An absolutely gorgeous young woman in salacious attire wouldn't be approaching me and asking how my evening is going if I were taking an evening stroll in sneakers and exercise pants back home and then you follow up that thought with, Wait. I wonder if she's a prostitute but then before you can think that thought through fully the woman asks where you're staying and you tell her and she says she's heard that's a very nice hotel and you say, "It sure is. They even have snacks and FIJI Water waiting for you when you check in" and she says she'd love to see what your room looks like and you can't possibly say no to that and so you both head to the hotel and up to your room and she goes into the bathroom to freshen up

and while she's in there you quickly throw out all of the chocolate peanut candies, chocolate raisins, epicurean snack mix, pretzel nibs, Pringles, Mars Mix, and roasted cashews wrappers and empty water bottles that you left strewn about the couch before taking your evening stroll and then she comes out of the bathroom in nothing but a red bra and panties and offers you a condom and you have sex and then when it's over she says, "That will be \$600" and you give her \$700 because Vegas is all about tipping and you should never give less than 15% then, yes, the woman was a prostitute and you've paid for sexbut a few days later when you check out of the hotel and discover that you've been charged over \$200 for chocolate raisins, Pringles, and bottled water you'll conclude that in comparison \$700 was a fair deal for what the woman provided, and as prostitution is legal in Nevada the only actual crime is the hotel minibar prices

Lesson 3

When you put down \$100 at the Free Bet Blackjack table and a few hours later find you have \$4,300 in chips piled in front of you and your friend comes back from the restroom and is relieved to see your pile continued to grow while he was away taking a leak and he says to you, "I think now's a good time to guit, while you're this far ahead. You've already made enough to cover the whole vacation, and you don't even know how to gamble" and you say that you can't possibly stop now, not while you're this hot, and your friend tries a different angle and says, "We've been at the tables for a few hours already and I'm hungry. Just now, coming back from the restroom, I met two absolutely gorgeous women and they asked if we were staying here and they said they wanted to check out our rooms. You should see what they're wearing. Salacious!" and your mind is on the next bet, so you barely hear him, but your friend keeps trying and says, "Let's go up to my room with the women. I still haven't touched any of the snacks or water there. Come on" but you ignore his suggestion

and within an hour lose all of the \$4,200 you'd won and the \$100 you initially bet and the additional \$400 you hastily withdrew from the ATM by the restroom near where your friend met the two women he has taken up to his room—

you'll appreciate that your friend never once later blurts out, "I told you so" not during the rest of your stay in Vegas and not after the trip is over and you're back on the east coast even though you know that's exactly what he's thinking

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Shai Afsai's articles, short stories, poems, book reviews, and photographs have been published in Anthropology Today, Haaretz, The Jerusalem Post, Journal of the American Revolution, New English Review, The Providence Journal, Reading Religion, Review of Rabbinic Judaism, Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies, and Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review. See more <u>here</u>.