



And so there are bound to be glitzy malls at such places. And an equal abundance of the most exquisite and irresistible tribal handicrafts flooding the traditional bazaars. How stupid of me! No matter however much I may say, a shop is a shop, a mall is a mall, and a woman anywhere in the world will remain a woman. Take the shops away from a place, I am happy. I won't miss them. But place one even in Paradise and expect me to go looking for God, tut tut, that's an unconvincing take on 'Ripley's Believe It Or Not'.

I look at the dazzling plazas and the local markets next to the hotel and my head spins. The Hubby casually reminds me of the tall statements I had made back in Dhaka, and complains that I've changed since the days when material possessions didn't move me. Piqued at the bluntness (but also some truth, may be) of his statement, with tens of tonnes of weight on my heart, I resolve not to step into any of these this time. I have to make him take back his words. But that does also spell the death knell for any happy moment I have during the rest of my stay there! After which, there's not much else to do but to be dragged along with The Hubby and the child, as I sulk. I sulk within, I sulk openly. When The Hubby realises what's happening, he tries to coax me to visit the malls (and justifiably so, because my sullen mood does, after all, affect them all), but no devil can tempt me now that the mind's made up. I say some unkind words to him, we fight, and that's the end of any happy moment he has during the rest of the trip.

The child takes fancy to two croc statues (about ten minutes away from the hotel) and decides to bare his heart out to them three times a day. That done, he wants only his candy flosses by the dozen, boat rides down the river, tram bus rides, and trips up and down the hotel elevator that 'speaks', and 'green man' road crossings at every traffic light in sight. Children, in unfamiliar surroundings, become unmanageable, as any parent will know, and annoying as they get, you can't disown them, can you? On the second day of our stay, he experiments trying to cross the road when the 'red man' is still there, shoots across the road, and avoids being squashed only because the car coming his way is being driven by an elderly gentleman who has seen enough in his lifetime to trust a hugely pregnant woman with a fidgety brat at the road side. The formalities at the doctor's over, the child is made to stay indoors for the rest of the stay. The end of his happy moments!

On our way to the airport on our return journey, I look back at the big banners floating around the city, "Sarawak. A place like no other. Come here for the holiday of a lifetime." The Hubby and I look at each other and burst out laughing. The first time we've looked at each other with some affection during the last four days! At least we are able to leave our differences behind. A pleasant enough 'The End', finally.