

No Exit

by Jake Barnes

On the way back to Doc's house, they stopped in a bar on Franklin Avenue. The bartender kept looking at himself in the mirror behind the bar. "Everyone in Hollywood is an actor," Doc said.

The bar was packed. Fascinated, Tom watched the shenanigans going on around him. Funny, he thought. He woke up that morning thinking that life was a tragedy, and now it seemed like a comedy. People were an endless source of amusement.

At the table next to theirs, a slender man in a suit and tie was commiserating with a balding man with a walrus mustache. "I mean, I knew she was bisexual," said the mustachioed man. "She told me that a long time ago. But I thought that was all over."

At the bar, a man with a ponytail had his arm around a whey-faced blonde. "Hey, Jack," he shouted over his shoulder, pawing the air with his hand. "Come over here! I want you to meet the next Mia Farrow!"

A wrangler in a cowboy hat was sitting at a table by himself. A young woman got down from a bar stool and sat down across from the cowboy. The cowboy leaned across the table and whispered something in her ear. She giggled. "Oh, no," she said. "He's just being supportive. I'd never sleep with someone just to get ahead."

Tom and Doc sat in the bar until the conversation around them didn't sound strange anymore. After an hour or so, Tom looked at his watch and said they'd better get going.

