

Quitting

by Jake Barnes

I was trying to quit smoking, and I was having a bad time of it. My wife was sympathetic, but she was a smoker, and she had no intention of quitting. No way, she said.

I would smoke, quit, smoke, quit. I just couldn't break the habit. One day, I guess in an attempt to distract me, my wife suggested we go to a local bar where they had a belly dancer. She knew that sort of thing would appeal to me.

So we went. The bar was in a strip mall. Being in a bar didn't bother me. I had quit drinking years before. As for the smokers in the bar, my wife knew the dancer would occupy my attention.

The dancer was a little chubby, but I didn't mind. It gave her more to shake. I was fascinated. I watched her every move. When she finished her dance, she walked around the interior of the bar, table to table, accepting tips, which by tradition the patrons tucked into the fabric of her costume at the waist. A little lower, actually.

When we got home my wife asked how I liked the show. I had a good time, I said. We went to bed, and an hour or so later I woke up dying for a smoke.

