

The Secret

by Jake Barnes

"You want to sit down and tell me about it?" She sat. We were in the little den of our townhouse. She sat down on the love seat, her knees primly together, and told me she had a lover. "I'm not going to give him up," she said.

She moved out and into an apartment in San Francisco. Her new friend was a speech professor at the state college in San Luis Obispo. Her parents lived in San Luis also. So *that's* why she had made all those trips down there of late!

So she moved out. I helped her move her stuff. No use pining for the fjords, one of my AA friends told me. Your check is in the other guy's bank. There's no way you are going to get your money back.

So I went on a drinking spree and I ended up in rehab again. One of the counselors up there gave me some good advice. "Write her a letter," she said. "Wish her well. Wish her the best of everything."

"You got to be kidding," I said.

I did what she told me to do, and a miracle happened. The gloom and doom went away. When I went back to civilization, I was happy, joyous, and free.

Of course then I did it all over again. Got married, that is. Fortunately, this one worked out. I think the secret is that we had both been married before. No, we don't get along all the time. We fight like cats and dogs. My wife has packed her bags a couple of times. But after twenty years we're still together.

The secret? There isn't any. Just do the best you can and hold on. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

