

# A Time for Peace

by Jack Swenson

Our friends from Southern California are in the vicinity, so we decide to join them for a night on the town. We book a room at their hotel, and meet them in the lobby. We have a drink at a bar in the hotel, then walk up the hill to Broadway.

We hit a couple of bars there, too, then take in the show at Carol's where the one and only attraction is Carol herself, one of the Seven Wonders, a woman with 44D hooters, a civic treasure. Doc and I are impressed.

After the show we stand out in front of the ecdysiast's club and shoot the breeze with the famous lady herself. She's a tiny woman; from floor to ceiling, she's barely five feet tall. But she's smart and funny and pleasant. Doc and I are charmed, our wives less so. When it's time to go, Doc bows from the waist and kisses the lady's hand. "Go easy on the booze, boys," she says.

Next we go to the club where the women entertainers are really men. The "gals" are gorgeous. Outside of the club we argue about where to go next. Doc and I want to drink and listen to music. The women want to take a cab across town to see a replica of 221 B Baker St., the residence of Sherlock Holmes. We end of having a nightcap at the hotel and then going to our rooms. As soon as the door is closed, my wife starts in on me. Yak, yak, yak. I get mad and leave. I liberate my car from the parking garage and drive home.

I sit in the den and drink bourbon and listen to jazz. Then I pick up the phone and call a woman I know, new gal at school. She teaches economics or something. I ask her if she would like some company, and she says sure, come on over.

When she opens the door, I say hi and introduce her to my friend, a bottle of J.T.S. Brown. She laughs and tells me to come on in before I fall down.

She gets two glasses and a bowl of ice and sits down on the sofa. She pats the cushion next to her. I sit down. I tell her she looks lovely.

We drink and talk and talk and drink for the better part of an hour. Then I put my glass down on the coffee table and take her glass from her hand and put that down, too.

She lies on the couch on her back, and I lie next to her. We kiss. I want to feel her flesh, but she won't let me. I keep trying, but the woman is strong. I sit up. "You're no fun," I complain. She laughs. She tells me I had better go. She has a class in the morning at nine o'clock. She has to get some sleep.

While I finish my drink, my friend goes into the bathroom, and when she returns she is wearing a bathrobe. At the door, I kiss her again. I try to undo the belt on her robe, but she has tied a knot that is too much for me. With a chuckle, she pushes me out the door.

"Call me when the divorce is final," she says. "What divorce?" I think. Then I remember. I had said something when I first got there. I guess she just assumed.... Or did I...? I can't remember. I get into my car and drive home.

The next day Doc and Martha give my Mrs. a ride home. After our friends leave, my wife sits in my lap in our den, her head on my shoulder, reading over and over the "I'm Sorry" card I got for her. There is a single yellow rose in a glass vase, too. Yellow roses are her favorite.

