

A Place in the Sun

by Jake Barnes

My lady friend's brother had bad luck. Come to think of it, so did my friend. She divorced her first husband, her second one died, and her third was a red-faced wine salesman from Clovis. Husband number three's name was Edsel, I swear to God.

Her brother was a tall, blonde, good looking youngster who made the mistake of diving off a dock into shallow water. He spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair. I don't know why it is, but my experience is that handicapped people are either really good people, or they are assholes. Darlene's brother was an asshole.

He was sarcastic and snide. He picked fights. Arguments, I should say. Whatever you said, he took the other side. Of course some of the venom he reserved for me was possibly because I was dating his sister. Maybe he was just being protective.

He died young, and that was no shock. What grabbed the mind when you heard about it was the way he did it. What he did was drive to Palm Springs one summer day, drive into the desert, and sit in his wheelchair facing the sun. He was piece of charcoal by the time they found him.

