

Ankles

by Jake Barnes

The girls are upstairs in the cafeteria on their break. A couple of the guys sit down at their table. The girls want to know what men notice first when they look at girls. "Tits," says Al. The girls boo. "Ass," says Bob. More boos. The girls' eyes swivel to Jake. "Well?" says fat Cindy. Jake blushes and ducks his head. "Ankles," he says. "Ankles?" says tall and skinny Lulu. Jake shrugs. "That's what I notice first," he says. He smiles.

At five o'clock Jake joins the crowd at the back door, walks through the slush to the parking lot with Betty Boop. Betty is one of the secretaries. She is broad where a broad should be broad. She's everybody's dream girl. And she has nice, trim ankles.

Jake screws his courage to the sticking point and asks her if she wants to join him at the court bar for a drink. "Don't mind if I do," Betty says. They stand by Jake's car sizing each other up. Bombs burst in the air. The smile on Jake's face lights up the world.

