

Carnal Knowledge

by Jake Barnes

1

His work buddy is married. He gives the youngster some good advice. "Do it slow," he says. "Go in and out, side to side. Woman like that."

Later that summer he corners Janice Larson in the back seat of his father's car. It is his first time. He remembers his friend's advice. Slowly in and out. Janice thrashes around, cries out. "Faster! Faster!"

2

A wind storm downs a bunch of trees and power poles in a little community not far away. The city crew spends all day there helping out. At the end of the hot summer day, they are all tired and thirsty. On the way back they stop at a roadhouse and take refuge in the dark interior out of the sun.

The waitress comes over to their table and asks them one by one what they want. Some of the men want a Grain Belt, some order a Bud. When she gets to the boy, she asks what he wants. He says he'll have a Bud, too. The woman taps her pencil on her pad, looks at the kid and says, "When?"

3

A college boy takes his date downstairs to the basement of the old mansion where he and his buddies live. The cavernous, low-ceilinged room is crowded with a mish-mash of ancient furniture: tables, chairs, armoires, four-poster beds.

He leads her by the hand through the maze. They climb atop one of four-posters. He removes her clothes, removes his. Then she stops him. She starts to cry. "No, no," she says. It's her first time. She wants to do it in some nice place on a bed with clean sheets.

