

The City of Lights

by Jake Barnes

Paris is a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there. They don't speak English. I don't know why. In all the other great European cities they speak English. I spent a month in Paris in 1960. It was April, too. I met my first wife there. She was an American girl, a Goody Two-Shoes. A no no Nanette. I wanted to bed her, but she was determined to remain a virgin.

I don't know why we kept company. All we did was argue. We went someplace together each and every day. We met in the Louvre. In front of a painting titled *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte*. Later we went to a small café; I had a beer, and she drank wine.

My room was near the Opera, a fourth-floor room in an old hotel. The elevator wasn't working, so I had to walk up and down four flights of steps to get to my room. And you wonder why I was cranky?

I remember one of our fights. We had gone to see a movie, and there were no subtitles. I didn't speak French and she did. Afterwards she asked me how I liked the movie, and I said it was simply marvelous. She knew I was being sarcastic, and she didn't speak to me the rest of the night. I had to walk home, too, because the Metro had shut down for the night.

I did enjoy my stay in Paris nevertheless. It is a beautiful city. The next city I visited in Europe was Wolfsburg, Germany, where I went to pick up my car. There wasn't much to see in Wolfsburg. Just Volkswagens.

