

The Babe and The Skeleton

Coney Island's a swell place. Coney Island's a place where a guy can have himself a hell of a lot of fun, all the time. Coney Island, I kept telling myself is one place in all these United States that's just plain built for a guy—a lot of guys—having all the fun there is without going to bed.

And all the time I was answering back telling myself what a hell of a liar I was. Because I wasn't having any fun. Any fun at all.

I'd gone down there with a couple of the boys who used to work on the old *Saturn* with me when I used to push pencils across paper for a living. There had been four of us to start off. Four guys sitting in their shirt sleeves in a hot New York apartment—mine—pouring iced liquor down their throats in accordance with the grand old superstition that says when a guy drinks iced alcohol he's cooling himself off. We'd been playing poker, of a kind.

The trouble was that I'm pretty well fixed these days. Enough of the green bananas to give the wolf at the front door a pain in