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In this chapter, the narrator reflects on his evening after leaving a skating rink, feeling hungry. He visits a drugstore for a Swiss cheese sandwich and a malted drink while contemplating calling Jane, whom he has shown interest in, with hopes of inviting her out. His memories of Jane reveal a complex relationship with her former boyfriend, Al Pike, whom he considers a show-off, but Jane defends by saying he has an inferiority complex. This leads the narrator to ponder the paradoxical nature of how girls perceive boys, suggesting that they often misinterpret behavior based on their feelings.

When Jane doesn't answer his call, the narrator explores alternative companionship options in his thin address book, which only has a few names—Jane, a former teacher named Mr. Antolini, and his father's office. Finally, he decides to contact Carl Luce, an intellectual from his past, hoping to engage in stimulating conversation. Luce is busy but agrees to meet for a drink later.

To pass time before their meeting at the Wicker Bar, the narrator heads to a movie theater. He finds the stage show mediocre, particularly criticizing the strangeness of performers like the Rockettes and roller-skating comics. The main film he watches follows a war veteran experiencing memory loss and falling in love with a girl who appreciates literature. The narrator is disgusted by the unrealistic plot and predictable happy ending, feeling that such movies elicit insincere emotions from audiences.

He observes a woman nearby who cries during the film, noting a disconnection between her tears and her lack of kindness towards her bored child. This leads him to a broader reflection on the nature of compassion and the authenticity of emotional responses in people who often engage with insincere narratives.

Finally, the narrator muses on war and his brother D.B.'s experiences in it, expressing a deep-seated aversion to military life and the potential horrors of combat. He contrasts his own loathing of military culture with a puzzlement over why D.B. could praise war literature such as "A Farewell to Arms," which ultimately leads him to question the sincerity of the messages conveyed in such works. His feelings resonate with a desire to rebel against imposed narratives and conformist expectations.