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APPENDIX

Synopsis of *The Time of Your Life*

The play opens in Nick's Pacific Street saloon, a restaurant and bar near the San Francisco waterfront. It is the late afternoon and a group of regular patrons are sitting around the room. Nick, the owner, is behind the bar. Joe and the Arab look at the newspaper headlines and react with typical disgust. Willie, a young man who enjoys playing the marble game in the bar, enters and gets a beer from Nick. He wants to resist playing the game just this once but finally gives in. Joe begins angrily calling out for Tom, who is not in the bar.

Tom enters the bar in a rush, and he and Joe begin an exchange indicating that, at one time in the past, Joe saved Tom's life by getting him to eat when he was very ill. Because of this, Tom is forever indebted to Joe and runs errands for him—however strange or nonsensical. Joe gives Tom money and asks him to buy a couple of dollars' worth of toys.

Kitty Duval walks in and gets a beer. Tom is enchanted by her, but Joe sends him on his errand. Kitty claims to have been a famous actress in a burlesque show in the past, but Nick does not believe her, knowing that she now works as a prostitute. Joe is easier on her. Dudley R. Bostwick enters the bar and frantically dials the phone, looking for Elsie Mandelspiegel, his girlfriend. Moments later, Harry comes into the bar looking for a job as a comedian, and Wesley, a young black man, enters the bar looking for any kind of work. Joe shares his champagne with Kitty and begins asking her about her dreams. She responds by revealing that

her real name is Katerina Koranovsky, that she is originally from Poland, and that all she really wants is a nice home.

Wesley begins playing the piano. Harry starts to dance, but Nick suggests that he find a job in sales. People in the bar realize that Wesley is a wonderful piano player. Kitty begs Joe to dance with her, but he refuses, saying that he cannot dance. Kitty dances by herself. Tom returns with the toys, sees Kitty dancing, and begs Joe for some spending money. Tom is obviously in love with Kitty, and Joe encourages him. Tom expresses his love to Kitty, and she asks him if he has two dollars. Tom does not understand that she is a prostitute, but they leave the bar together.

The atmosphere at the bar is comfortable until Blick, a vice cop, walks in. He warns Nick that he knows that "street-walkers are working out of this bar" and threatens to close the place. Nick despises Blick and lets him know it; Blick leaves. Nick hires Wesley to play the piano and Harry to dance. Mary L. walks in.

An hour later, everyone is still at Nick's bar. Joe and Mary L., somewhat drunk, are discussing such things as their names and Joe's background— he once fell in love with a woman named Mary in Mexico City, and he enjoys drinking. Joe claims that he drinks because "Out of the twenty-four hours at least twenty-three and a half are ... dull, dead, boring, empty, and murderous." Mary seems captivated by him and what he is saying. They flirt with each other, and when Mary leaves the bar, Joe becomes depressed.

McCarthy and Krupp enter the bar. They are friends. They enter, having a conversation about the fact that Krupp, a policeman, might be forced to hit McCarthy, a longshoreman, over the head with a club during a protest on the

waterfront. The phone rings, and it is Elsie calling for Dudley. She agrees to meet him at the bar. McCarthy has been watching Harry dance and is impressed, stating that his dance is a "satisfying demonstration of the present state of the American body and soul." He calls Harry a genius. Harry performs a comedy sketch for McCarthy about current politics, which further impresses McCarthy. McCarthy and Krupp leave the bar.

Tom rushes into the bar, concerned because Kitty is crying in her hotel room and won't stop. Joe tells Tom to go out and buy him a large map of Europe, a revolver, and cartridges. He also gives Tom the toys he bought earlier and tells him to give one to Kitty to make her stop crying. Tom leaves. A man who looks like "he might have been Kit Carson at one time" walks into the bar. He claims his name is Murphy, and he begins drinking beers and telling outlandish stories about his travels and adventures. Tom returns with the revolver and the map and reports that giving Kitty the toys simply made her cry harder. Tom and Joe leave the bar to see Kitty, with Tom helping Joe walk.

Kitty is crying in her room at the New York Hotel. Tom and Joe knock and enter, Joe carrying a large toy carousel. Tom tells Kitty that Joe "got up from his chair at Nick's just to get you a toy and come here." Tom and Kitty look at each other, and it is apparent that they truly love each other. Voices in the hallway outside Kitty's room indicate that a young sailor is looking for her, but another woman tries to attract him to her bedroom. He insists on Kitty and enters her room, where he finds Joe and Tom. He is apologetic, but Tom threatens him and he leaves. Joe says

he will return with a car to take them to Half Moon Bay, where the three of them will have a nice meal.

A little later at Nick's, the phone rings. Nick announces that the phone call was a warning that Blick will probably show up again tonight. Elsie enters the bar and finds Dudley, who is almost in a trance at seeing her. They discuss their relationship. She does not believe that love can exist in such a harsh world as this one, but Dudley argues that their love is possible. Eventually, she agrees; they leave the bar together. Krupp walks in and talks with Nick about how crazy the world is.

It is late in the evening. Willie is still playing his marble game, while Kit Carson watches him, Nick is behind the bar, Joe is studying his map of Europe, and Tom is dreaming of Kitty. When Tom asks Joe where he gets his money, Joe delivers a monologue about how corrupting and hurtful earning money can be. He indicates that he has earned money in the past but does not work because "There isn't anything I can do that won't make me feel embarrassed."

Joe gives Tom another errand: he wants Tom to give the revolver to anyone on the street. He also asks Tom to get him chewing gum, jellybeans, magazines, and the longest panatela cigar he can find. As well, he asks Tom to give a dollar to any old man he sees and to the Salvation Army band outside the bar so they will sing a requested hymn.

Joe shows his revolver to Kit Carson, who teaches Joe how to load and unload the gun. Meanwhile, Willie finally wins at the marble game; the game rewards him with a patriotic song and waving flags. He leaves. Tom returns with all the things Joe requested. He asks Joe why he paid for Kitty to move into a nice

room at the St. Francis Hotel. Joe answers that Kitty is actually a good woman and that she and Tom deserve to be together. Tom is still concerned about earning enough money to marry Kitty, so Joe suggests that he become a truck driver. Joe calls up a trucking company and gets a job for Tom. Tom leaves to start his job.

Harry and Wesley return and report that there has been fighting at the waterfront between the police and strikers. Nick is worried about what is going on and asks Harry to tend bar while he walks over to the pier. Kitty arrives wearing new clothes, looking very beautiful. She talks with Joe about Tom and says that she has told Tom she will marry him. Joe gets up on his own and leaves to find a book for Kitty, remembering that she once expressed an interest in poetry.

Blick walks in looking for Nick and tells Wesley and Harry to stop playing the piano and dancing. When he sees Kitty, he assumes that he has caught a prostitute and begins treating her like a criminal. Kit Carson tries to stand up to Blick, to protect Kitty, but Blick takes him outside and beats him. Blick forces Kitty up on the stage and demands that she removes her clothes, as if she were a stripper. Joe walks in with the books and, amazed at the scene, grabs Kitty from the stage. Wesley stands up to Blick, but Blick begins beating him up. Tom walks in and is angry at what he sees. Joe does not want Tom to fight Blick, so he shoves some money into Tom's hands and tells him to take Kitty out to his truck; they leave for San Diego to get married.

Joe pulls out the revolver, points it at Blick, and pulls the trigger, but it does not fire. Nick sees this just as he re-enters his bar and grabs the gun from Joe. Nick shoves Blick out the door, telling Blick that he will murder him with his own hands

if he ever comes into his bar again. Nick runs out but comes back almost immediately with the news that Blick has been shot dead by an unknown assailant. He picks up the gun that Joe tried to use and says, "Joe, you wanted to kill that guy! I'm going to buy you a bottle of champagne." Joe gets up and begins to leave the bar.

Kit Carson enters, and he and Joe look at each other "knowingly." Kit Carson starts one of his stories that begins with how he shot a man named "Blick or Glick or something like that." Everyone at the bar except Joe gathers around Kit Carson. Joe hands his gun to Kit and looks at him "with great admiration." Joe leaves, and everyone waves while the marble game plays patriotic songs and waves its flags.

Source: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/time-your-life>

Biography of William Saroyan

William Saroyan was born in Fresno, California, on August 31, 1908, the son of Armenian immigrants. After his father's death in 1911, William spent four years in an orphanage. Selling newspapers at the age of eight, he attended public schools in Fresno until, as he said, "I had been kicked out of school so many times that I finally left for good when I was fifteen."

In 1928 Saroyan decided to become a writer, but it was 1934 before his short stories began appearing consistently in major magazines. His first book was *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze and Other Stories* (1934). At this time, he concentrated on short stories. Seven collections appeared, from *Inhale and Exhale* (1936) to *My Name Is Aram* (1940). The works centered on memories of San Francisco and Fresno and show his joy in living. *My Name Is Aram* was particularly lyrical.

From 1939 through 1943 Saroyan was among America's most active playwrights. *In My Heart's in the Highlands* (1939) he departed from the current dramatic practice, for he believed that "it is folly for emotionality to be prolonged as a means by which to achieve drama." Completely episodic, bonded by a tenuous mood deriving from free spirits, the play was distinctive. He created a similar piece in *The Time of Your Life* (1939). Awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the Drama Critics' Circle Award for this play, Saroyan rejected the former. *Love's Old Sweet Song* (1940) was less effective, but his firm grip was evident again in *The Beautiful People* (1941). *Hello Out There* (1942), atypical of Saroyan, was an effective

realistic one-act play of human isolation. Another dark play, *Get Away Old Man* (1943), failed, but his film *The Human Comedy* (1943) won an Academy Award.

During World War II Saroyan served in the Army. In 1943 he married Carol Marcus. Divorced in 1949, they remarried in 1951 and were again divorced in 1952. Although he continued to write plays, his work was mainly novels, autobiographies, film and television scripts, short stories, and even songs. His most praised novels are *The Human Comedy* (1943), *The Assyrian* (1950), *Tracy's Tiger* (1951), *The Laughing Matter* (1953), and *Mama I Love You* (1956). He also wrote *I Used to Believe I Had Forever, Now I'm Not So Sure* (1968), *Escape to the Moon* (1970), and *The Tooth and My Father* (1974). He died on May 18, 1981 in Fresno, California.

Source: <https://biography.yourdictionary.com/william-saroyan>