

'Farewell, My Lovely'

A tribute to Raymond Chandler

By Michael Rome & Zeke Flatten



Raymond Chandler is one of the writers associated with the hard-boiled detective movies from the 1940s known as "film noir." Examples are The Big Sleep and Double Indemnity. Chandler created a unique writing style by using sharp, lyrical similes. "He looked as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food." The italicized phrases below represent quotes from his works.

She was a blonde; *a blonde to make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window.* I had seen her on television, and she was even more breathtaking in person... the Miss America of sharks. *She gave me a smile I could feel in my hip pocket.* It was the type of look that made me happy to lay down and submit. Why did she have to be at my first final table? I'll tell you, pal, I felt like chum.

It was the LA Poker Shootout and I was one of only two amateurs who had made it to the last six seats. *I belonged here like a pearl onion on a banana split.* The other lucky sucker was sitting straight-up, sweating under the lights and cameras. As opposed to Miss America, *his smile was as stiff as a frozen fish.*

Despite conventional advice about drinking and playing, I was relaxed from several shots of Irish single-malt whiskey. Even though I'm only *an occasional drinker (the kind of guy who goes out for a beer and wakes up in Singapore with a full beard)*, I figured it was better than being petrified like "Mr. Fish Lips."

As the final table progressed, Miss America went on a feeding frenzy. She made quick work of Fish Lips and two of her fellow pros. When you thought she was bluffing, she had the goods; and when you folded, she showed a bluff. I stayed out of the way and ordered another shot. The whole table was on tilt, but all I could think about was that *she smelled the way the Taj Mahal looks by moonlight.*

It came down to three of us: the blonde, another pro named Cozy Cole, and me. Cozy was a retiree from Florida who eventually decided to hit the tournament circuit. He had gotten bored playing 1/2 NL at the St. Petersburg dog track and figured life was too short... especially for him. Nonetheless, he was very wily and not to be underestimated.

I was dealt Big Slick suited and lead out strong. Miss America folded, but Cozy had no problem calling. Even though the flop came all rags, he made a large bet. What does this old coot have? He sat there motionless as if carved of stone. I expected pigeons to alight on his shoulders. Maybe I should check his pulse and call 911? If I make a move here, I could be the dead one, and *dead men are heavier than broken hearts.* I decided to lay it down, never knowing if he had me.

Several hands later I was dealt pocket rockets. I slowly looked up, and Miss America's nostrils were slightly flaring. I had noticed her doing this before when she was getting ready to move a lot of chips. Perfect, she probably has a good hand! I limped in and she made her big raise. I calmly called. Down came the flop, and when seeing it I leaned forward slightly. It was 10-Q-A. Unless she was holding K-J, I was in great shape. When I looked up, she was staring at me and I began to sweat like a piece of banana cream pie at a weight loss convention.

She bet big and John Philip Sousa marching tunes started to go off in my head. If she has A-K I am going to bust her. I smoothly called again. The turn was another queen. I now had a full house of aces over queens. She checked and I went all in. There was no hesitation... she called immediately and turned over pocket queens. My only hope was an ace on the river, which never came.

When I busted out in third place I felt like *I was the page from yesterday's calendar, crumpled at the bottom of the waste basket.* Remember that sometimes the only thing worse than not getting cards is getting cards. To the Miss America of sharks, all I could say was "Farewell, My Lovely."

Michael Rome can be found on his poker philosophy website at www.romepoker.net. Zeke Flatten is a screenwriter and producer whose credits include the recent poker murder mystery entitled Misdeal. For more information, go to www.misdealmovie.com. ♣