

Quail

by Jake Barnes

We are being good. No booze until five o'clock. We drop by a bar in town about 4:55. Belly up to the bar. At five we both order a Budweiser. We order another 5:05.

There are a cluster of ladies at the far end of the bar. I can't take my eyes off a tall blonde with green eyes. I catch her eye. She looks at me long and hard. I take off my Resistol and put it on the bar top. I comb back my hair with my hands. The blonde looks away. Her cheeks are red. Steam is coming out of my ears.

I get off my stool, hitch up my jeans. "Where you going?" Bob asks. "John," I tell him. I mosey on to the back of the barroom, glance at the blonde, walk through a door labeled "Men."

Inside I take a piss, wash my hands, splash water on my face, comb my hair with my fingers again, take a deep breath, and push open the door.

The girls are gone. The only women in the place are a middle aged pair sitting at a table. One looks like an old Nancy Reagan, the other like Eleanor Roosevelt.

