

Coward of the County

Kenny Rogers

Everyone considered him the coward of the county
He'd never stood one single time to prove the county wrong.
His mama named him Tommy, but folks just called him yellow,
Something always told me they were reading Tommy wrong. He was only ten years old when
his daddy died in prison;
I took care of Tommy, 'cause he was my brother's son.
I still recall the final words my brother said to Tommy,
"Son my life is over, but yours has just begun". "Promise me, son, not to do the things I've done
Walk away from trouble if you can.
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek
I hope you're old enough to understand,
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man."
There's someone for everyone, and Tommy's love was Becky.
In her arms he didn't have to prove he was a man.
One day while he was working, the Gatlin boys came calling
They took turns at Becky, (and there was three of them). Tommy opened up the door, and saw
Becky crying.
The torn dress, the shattered look was more than he could stand.
He reached above the fireplace, and took down his daddy's picture.
As the tears fell on his daddy's face, he heard these words again: "Promise me, son, not to do the
things I've done
Walk away from trouble if you can.
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek
I hope you're old enough to understand,
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man. The Gatlin boys just laughed at him when he walked
into the barroom;
One of them got up and met him half way cross the floor.
When Tommy turned around they said, "Hey look! old yeller's leaving,"
But you could've heard a pin drop when Tommy stopped and locked the door.
Twenty years of crawling were bottled up inside him.
He wasn't holding nothing back -- he let 'em have it all.
When Tommy left the bar room, not a Gatlin boy was standing.
He said, "This one's for Becky, as he watched the last one fall. (And I heard him say,)" "I
promised you, Dad, not to do the things you've done
I walk away from trouble when I can
Now please don't think I'm weak, I didn't turn the other cheek,
And papa, I should hope you understand
Sometimes you gotta fight when you're a man". Everyone considered him the coward of the
county.

