

The Gambler

Kenny Rogers

On a warm summer's evening, on a train bound for nowhere
I met up with a gambler, we were both too tired to sleep
So we took turns a-starin' out the window at the darkness
The boredom overtook us and he began to speak

He said, "Son, I've made a life out of readin' people's faces
And knowin' what the cards were by the way they held their eyes.
So if you don't mind my sayin' I can see you're out of aces
For a taste of your whiskey I'll give you some advice."

So I handed him my bottle, and he drank down my last swallow
Then he bummed a cigarette and asked me for a light
And the night got deathly quiet and his face lost all expression
Said, "If you're gonna play the game, boy, you gotta learn to play it right.

You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em,
Know when to walk away, know when to run.
You never count your money when you're sittin' at the table.
There'll be time enough for countin' when the dealing's done.

Every gambler knows that the secret to survivin'
Is knowin' what to throw away and knowin' what to keep.
'Cause every hand's a winner, and every hand's a loser,
And the best that you can hope for is to die in your sleep."

And when he finished speakin' he turned back toward the window
Crushed out his cigarette and faded off to sleep
And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even
And in his final words I found an ace that I could keep

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(Repeat chorus twice more, softer each time)