

The Gambler

Words & Music:
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-staring at the window at the darkness,
The boredom overtook us, and he began to speak.

He said, "Son, I've made a life out of reading people's faces,
Knowing what the cards were by the way they held their eyes.
So if you don't mind my saying, 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.
The night got deathly quiet, & his face lost all expression.
Said, "If you're gonna play the game, boy, you gotta learn to play it right."

CHORUS:

"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 sitting at the table,
There'll be time enough for counting when the dealing's done."

"Every gambler knows that the secret to surviving
Is knowing what to throw away, knowing 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 speaking, he turned back toward the window,
Crushed out his cigarette, faded off to sleep.
And somewhere in the darkness, the gambler he broke even,
But in his final words I found an ace that I could keep.

CHORUS: