

# Johnny Cash, The Gambler

About twenty years ago  
On a train bound for nowhere  
I met up with The Gambler  
We were both too tired to sleep  
So we took turns a starin'  
Through the window at the darkness  
'Til boredom overtook us  
And he commenced to speak

He said, 'Son, I've made a life  
Out of readin' people's faces  
And knowin' what their cards were  
By the way they held their eyes  
And if you don't mind my sayin'  
I would say you're out of aces  
And for one taste of your whiskey  
I will give you some advice'

So I handed him my bottle  
And he drank down my last swallow  
Then he bummed a cigarette  
Then he bummed a light  
The night got deathly quiet  
And his face lost all expression  
He said, 'If you're gonna play the game, boy  
You better learn to play it right'

'Cause ev'ry gambler knows  
That the secret to survival  
Is knowin' what to throw away  
And knowin' what to keep  
And ev'ry hand's a winner  
Just like ev'ry hand's a loser  
And the best that you can hope for  
Is to die in your sleep.

You got to know when to hold 'em  
Know when to fold 'em  
Know when to walk away  
Know when to run  
You don't ever count your money  
While you're sittin' at the table  
There'll be time enough for countin'  
When the dealin' is done

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And when he finished speakin'  
He turned back t'ward the window  
Put 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

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