

Kenny Rogers, The Gambler

On a warm summer's evenin',
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'
Out the window at the darkness.
When boredom overtook us,
He began to speak.

He said, "Son, I've made my life
Out of readin' people's faces.
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.
He said, "If
You're gonna play the game, boy,
You gotta learn to play it right."

You've 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 dealin's done.

Now every gambler knows
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 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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