

THE GAMBLER

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DON SCHLITZ 1978

(AS SUNG BY KENNY RODGERS)

Sung by

[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 out the window at the darkness
'Til boredom overtook us and he began to speak

He said, "Son, I've made a life out of readin' 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
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 and 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

CHORUS

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 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

CHORUS

You got to know when to hold 'em (when to hold 'em)
Know when to fold 'em (when to fold 'em)
Know when to walk away
And 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

CHORUS