



The Gambler

written by Don Schlitz

made famous by Kenny Rogers in 1978

The song lyrics

On a warm summer's eve
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
The boredom overtook us,
And he began to speak

He said, "Son, I've made a 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 me 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
And know when to run
You never count your money
When you're sittin' at the table
There'll be time enough for counting
When the dealin'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
But in his final words
I found an ace that I could keep

You've 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 dealin's done