

THE GAMBLER

Written by Don Schlitz in 1976
Recorded by Kenny Rogers in 1978

Intro: Vamp on [D]

On a [D] warm summer's evenin', on a [G] train bound for [D] nowhere
I [G] met up with the [D] gambler, we were both too tired to [A7] sleep
So [D] we took turns a-starin', out the [G] window at the [D] darkness
'Till [G] boredom over-[D]-took us, and [A] he began to [D] speak

He said, [D] "Son, I've made a life, out of [G] readin' people's [D] faces
And [G] knowin' what the [D] cards were, by the way they held their [A7] eyes
So if [D] you don't mind my sayin', I can [G] see you're out of [D] aces
For a [G] taste of your [D] whiskey, I'll [A] give you some ad-[D]-vice"

So I [D] handed him my bottle, and he [G] drank down my last [D] swallow
[G] Then he bummed a [D] cigarette, and asked me for a [A7] light
And the [D] night got deathly quiet, and his [G] face lost all ex-[D]-pression
Said, "If you're [G] gonna play the [D] game, boy
You gotta [A] learn to play it [D] right"

You've got to [D] know when to hold 'em, [G] know when to [D] fold 'em
[G] Know when to [D] walk away, and know when to [A] run
You never [D] count [G] your [D] money, when you're [G] sittin' at the [D] table
There'll be [D] time e-[G]-nough for [D] countin', [A] when the dealin's [D] done

[D] Every gambler knows, that the [G] secret to sur-[D]-vivin'
Is [G] knowin' what to [D] throw away, and knowin' what to [A7] keep
'Cause [D] every hand's a winner, and [G] every hand's a [D] loser
And the [G] best that you can [D] hope for is to [A] die in your [D] sleep

And [D] when he finished speakin', he [G] turned back toward the [D] window
[G] Crushed out his [D] cigarette, and faded off to [A7] sleep
And [D↓] somewhere in the darkness, the [G↓] gambler he broke [D↓] even
But [G↓] in his final [D↓] words I found an [A↓] ace that I could [D↓] keep

[Chorus 3x, second time acapella]

↓ = one strum