

# Coward Of The County

Kenny Rogers

capo III

**A** **D** **A**  
Ev'ryone considered him the coward of the county.

**E**  
He'd never stood one single time to prove the county wrong.

**A** **D** **A**  
His mama named him Tommy, the folks just called him yellow,  
**E** **A**  
but something always told me they were reading Tommy wrong.

**A** **D** **A**  
He was only ten years old when his daddy died in prison.

**E**  
I looked after Tommy 'cause he was my brother's son.

**A** **D** **A**  
I still recall the final words my brother said to Tommy:

**E** **A**  
"Son, my life is over, but yours is just begun.

**A** **E** **A**  
Promise me, son, not to do the things I've done.

**D** **A** **E**  
Walk away from trouble if you can.

**A** **D** **A**  
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek.

**D** **E**  
I hope you're old enough to understand:

**E7** **A**  
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man."

**A** **D** **A**  
There's someone for ev'ryone and Tommy's love was Becky.

**E**  
In her arms he didn't have to prove he was a man.

**A** **D** **A**  
One day while he was workin' the Gatlin boys came callin'.

Spoken  
**E A**  
They took turns at Becky.... There was three of them!

**A** **D** **A**  
Tommy opened up the door and saw his Becky cryin'.

**E**  
The torn dress, the shattered look was more than he could stand.

**A** **D** **A**  
He reached above the fireplace and took down his daddy's picture.

**E** **A**  
As his tears fell on his daddy's face, he heard these words again:

**A** **E** **A**  
"Promise me, son, not to do the things I've done.

**D** **A** **E**  
Walk away from trouble if you can.

**A** **D** **A**  
It won't mean you're weak if you turn the other cheek.

**D** **E**

I hope you're old enough to understand:

**E7** **A**  
Son, you don't have to fight to be a man."

**A** **D** **A**  
The Gatlin boys just laughed at him when he walked into the barroom.

**E**  
One of them got up and met him halfway 'cross the floor.

**A** **D** **A**  
When Tommy turned around they said, "Hey look! ol' yellow's leavin'."  
Whole line spoken **E A**

But you coulda heard a pin drop when Tommy stopped and blocked the door.

**A** **D** **A**  
Twenty years of crawlin' was bottled up inside him.

**E**  
He wasn't holdin' nothin' back; he let 'em have it all.

**A** **D** **A**  
When Tommy left the barroom not a Gatlin boy was standin'.

**E** **A**  
He said, "This one's for Becky," as he watched the last one fall.  
Spoken

And I heard him say,

**A** **D** **A**  
"I promised you, Dad, not to do the things you done.

**E**  
I walk away from trouble when I can.

**A** **D** **A**  
Now please don't think I'm weak, I didn't turn the other cheek,

**D** **E**  
and Papa, I sure hope you understand:

**E7** **A**  
Sometimes you gotta fight when you're a man."

**A** **D** **A**  
Ev'ryone considered him the coward of the county.