

Coward Of The County

Kenny Rogers

capo III

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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'.

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

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.