

How to Win a Game You've Already Lost

Verse 1

Why is it lately you've been acting crazy?
You're driving me up the wall like you wanna risk it all
Now home's a casino, you're in with the dealer
the deck's always royal, you're changing now I know

aces are high for highs, to fold would just make you low
I know you'd bet your life if it was all that you had to show
Now I just feel half as tall and I just want it stop
but cards on the table, don't know if you're able

When you start gamble it's too much to handle
You laugh when you loose, think that i'm losing you
When your life gets too boring you start looking for it
like you're go through withdrawal, now I don't get you at all

Chorus

Pull out that gold deck of cards, it's a showdown written in the stars
I know you'll go all in; you know that i'll call it

I've got the queen of hearts in a hand that's filled with high cards,
you say that i'm bluffing and I say we go all in

Verse 2

Come any closer and your luck runs out today
Cause the cards are on the table and there's nothing left to say
Now you're looking nervous and I see you start to pray
You've racked up quite the debt, you know i'm gonna make you pay

What is left to wager? I don't think I can raise
but if I win this game I hope i'll see you fall from grace
Now you can up the ante, got an ace up both my sleeves
'cause fifty chips is nothing when you're playing games with me

it's a 52 card shuffle, jokers don't show up in spades
I need two of them to match like us, being the same is what makes it fun
If there's nothing I can do then I don't have to care
I think i'd rather lose this game to you then just play solitaire

(Chorus Again)

Outro

You just love to raise the stakes and play the house in fixed games
When the time comes to collect you'll take my head as the debt
You wanna play Russian roulette with a gun that's fully loaded
Bullet holes might mask the headache you give me, so I'll play anyways

The song ended a year ago; It played like a record on repeat as that decrepit old film camera spun through my mind. The movie was slow and the pictures barely moved anymore. I sat in my room with the lights off, staring at the ceiling until I started to see a slideshow:

a near death experience, a new home, a tear in the film, a black frame, the inside of your room, the fan I always kicked over, my feet dangling off the edge of your bed--
--I sat on the bus; you cried, begging me to come home, in the fall you wore a red dress, there was something you forgot to tell me, getting in trouble because you wanted to sage the room, asking me to light the match because you were too scared to do it yourself. I went to play mini golf alone, we watched a movie about a bank heist, you begged me for more than I could give to you, desperate for all that I had left; I spoke to my dearest friend again; you followed.

Over, and over again, that feeling washed over me, like a hand delicately creeping its way up my spinal cord, dragging its cold tendrils along the back of my neck. It dug its nails into my side and pulled at my flesh, the warmth of it whispering something sweet into my ears and the venom coursing through my veins. Always haunting me. The sun disappeared, so I sat on the bed, drowning in the shower; hunched over a desk in the classroom, pulling my hair out over the monotony of scribbling down thousands of characters, a tornado kick, Kata 4, wet cement, Stature of the Crane, the SAT, the ACT, shin splints and 20 or-so laps around the track, midfielding, music to cry to, excess, and, the ability to perform.

Yet still, the feeling blinded me; It was a dense fog that furled across my vision like smoke, lingering for hours; for days; for weeks; for months. It lingered until my jaw became tense and my fists began to ball. I will not let you have me. I will not let you have anything. I will never, *ever*, let you win again. Suddenly, I am held in high regard; *I will destroy you.*

The film speeds up again, faster, faster; fleeting memories mean nothing to me now; I begin to grow holes; the film burns from the inside out. I hunger over the flames now. The song ended a year ago, but the game has just begun.

Shovel over the weapon, an old photograph, a moment of weakness. Sunglasses, fabrication, a white lie here and there, a trip to Mexico and an hour spent for a shell on the beach, a vague fortune, a visit to my home, a trip to Italy or Spain or France, begging for directions, another red dress at prom.

...Or maybe it was pink? By then I couldn't remember: it was all just part of the game now.

I am held in high regard, or, so I am told... Truthfully, everything changed so quickly once I decided I was worth far more than a fickle affliction such as yourself. For the longest time I wondered if people's new-found appreciation for me was material; the haircut, the excessive eyeliner, or the clothes, as there was never really a change in behavior except for the distant coldness I began to enjoy wearing. I know now though that it was never really any of those things; It was something harder to explain; perhaps, something like a shift in energy, or of the strength of my aura. Either way, I am different now. I'm not the same person who was so desperate to wipe your tears away, or toil in the hellscape of what you're thinking, or cower at your every move, or let you string me along for the better part of three years. That person is as dead to me as you are.

I will use this pen you gave me as a weapon, scratching at the pages until they run crimson. I will make you wish you'd never made me. I am the story you wrote, a tragic accident, I am cold, and heartless, and evil; and, I am your masterpiece.

...

I must thank you for all you've done to me. Your despair fits me so delicately. I feel more than I ever have before; I feel nothing. It makes me so much stronger than longing for you ever did. In your despair, I am indestructible, and you are nothing to me.