

TUNE INTO ENGLISH

Lady Gaga's Poker Face



Il testo di questa canzone, ricco di allusioni audaci e di doppi sensi, ha fatto sì che la cantante e attrice statunitense di origini italiane divenisse di colpo una star, diva della musica pop, e icona del movimento LGBTQ. L'artista più trasgressiva dai tempi di Madonna.

LOWER INTERMEDIATE B1

ON CD 20

GLOSSARY

- 1 **worldwide hit:** successo mondiale
- 2 **to hide:** nascondere
- 3 **to ensure:** garantire
- 4 **opponents:** avversari
- 5 **gambling:** scommesse
- 6 **guys:** uomini
- 7 **to hook:** agganciare, rimorchiare
- 8 **to feature:** presentare
- 9 **bridge:** ponte, bridge
- 10 **therefore:** quindi
- 11 **chorus:** ritornello
- 12 **backing singers:** coristi
- 13 **bet:** scommessa
- 14 **suits:** semi (delle carte da gioco)
- 15 **spades:** spade
- 16 **clubs:** bastoni
- 17 **hook:** amo (da pesca)
- 18 **to arouse:** eccitare (sessualmente)
- 19 **rough:** duro
- 20 **double entendre:** doppio senso
- 21 **to roll a dice:** lanciare un dado
- 22 **game of chance:** gioco di fortuna
- 23 **to shoot:** sparare
- 24 **bullet:** pallottola
- 25 **to hug:** abbracciare

Poker Face was the second single from Lady Gaga's 2008 debut album *The Fame* and was a massive worldwide hit¹. The title refers to the expression poker players have while playing, where they must hide² their emotions to ensure³ opponents⁴ do not know what is in their hand. Gaga described the song as about sex and gambling⁵, saying it was about her playing with guys⁶ as if she were in a poker game. Lyrically the song begins with the nonsense phrase "Mum-mum-mum-mah", which is copied from the 1977 Boney M disco hit *Ma Baker*. Lady Gaga then

describes through poker metaphors how she would like to "hook⁷", or catch, a man. The song features⁸ some explicit sexual references, with the word 'muffin' in the bridge⁹ being a reference to Gaga's private parts.

In 2011 during a concert in California, Lady Gaga revealed the true meaning of the song, telling fans it was about her personal experience with bisexuality. She said it was about being with a man but fantasising about a woman, and therefore¹⁰ had to ensure he did not understand this. In fact in the chorus¹¹ she uses the male pronoun, "he can't read my poker face", while the backing singers¹² use the female pronoun, "she's got me like nobody". ☹



hold 'em: Texas Hold 'Em is a type of poker game.

Fold 'em, let 'em hit me, raise it: this is poker terminology, meaning abandon your hand, to get a new card, and to increase the bet¹³.

spades: there are four suits¹⁴ in a pack of cards: hearts, spades¹⁵, clubs¹⁶ and diamonds.

hooked: a hook¹⁷ is used for fishing, so to hook someone means to catch them.

I'll get him hot: to get someone hot means to turn them on or arouse¹⁸ them sexually. If someone is hot they are sexually attractive.

P-p-p-poker face: if you listen closely, the second "p-p-p-poker face" in each line is sung "f-f-fuck her face".

to roll: this is a double entendre²⁰, when gambling you roll a dice²¹, but to roll with someone can mean to have sex.

hard pair: this is a reference to a dice game called Craps.

Russian roulette: this is a lethal game of chance²² where players shoot²³ themselves with a revolver containing one bullet²⁴.

bluffin' with my muffin/love-glue-gunnin': Lady Gaga told these were metaphors for her private parts. A muffin is also often slang for stomach fat when someone wears tight trousers²⁸.

chick: another word for a girl, generally considered derogatory³⁰.

Mum-mum-mum-mah
Mum-mum-mum-mah
Mum-mum-mum-mah
Mum-mum-mum-mah
Mum-mum-mum-mah
I wanna **hold 'em** like they do in Texas, please
Fold 'em, let 'em hit me, raise it, baby, stay with me (I love it)
Love game intuition, play the cards with **spades** to start

And after he's been **hooked**, I'll play the one that's on his heart
Oh, whoa, oh, oh
Oh, oh oh
I'll get him hot, show him what I've got
Oh, whoa, oh, oh
Oh, oh oh

I'll get him hot, show him what I've got
Can't read my, can't read my
No, he can't read my poker face (She's got me like nobody)
Can't read my, can't read my
No, he can't read my poker face (She's got me like nobody)
P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (mum-mum-mum-mah)
P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (mum-mum-mum-mah)

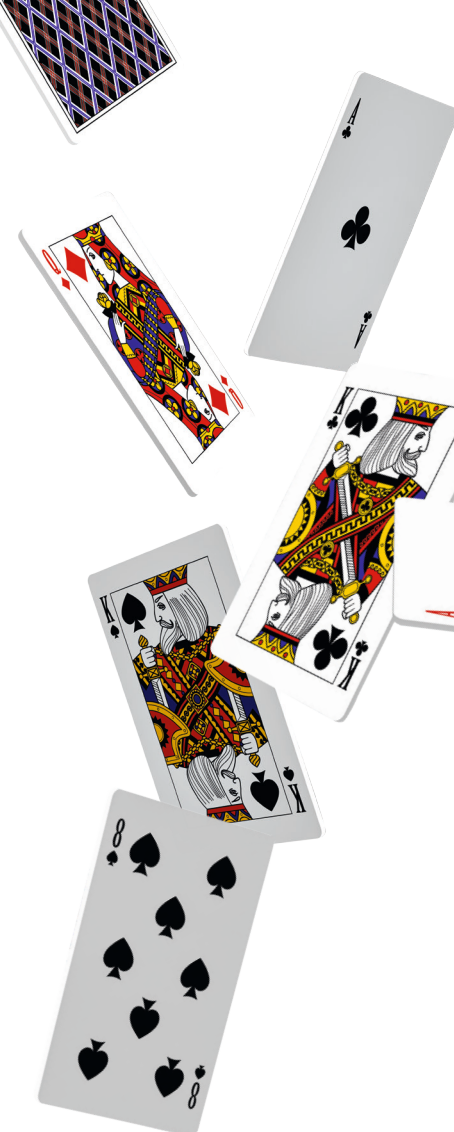
I wanna **roll** with him, a **hard pair** we will be
A little gamblin' is fun when you're with me (I love it)
Russian roulette is not the same without a gun
And baby, when it's love, if it's not **rough**¹⁹, it isn't fun (fun)
Oh, whoa, oh, oh
Oh, oh oh

I'll get him hot, show him what I've got
Oh, whoa, oh, oh
Oh, oh oh
I'll get him hot, show him what I've got
Can't read my, can't read my
No, he can't read my poker face (She's got me like nobody)
Can't read my, can't read my
No, he can't read my poker face (She's got me like nobody)
P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (mum-mum-mum-mah)
P-p-p-poker face, p-p-poker face (mum-mum-mum-mah)

(Mum-mum-mum-mah)
(Mum-mum-mum-mah)
I won't tell you that I love you, kiss or **hug**²⁵ you
'Cause I'm bluffin'²⁶ with my muffin
I'm not lying, I'm just **stunnin'**²⁷ with my **love-glue-gunnin'**

Just like a **chick** in the casino
Take your bank before I **pay you out**²⁹
I promise this, promise this
Check this hand 'cause I'm marvellous

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Fergal Kavanagh runs the website www.tuneintoenglish.com, the web's largest free resource for learning English through pop music.



SCAN & WATCH



Scan this QR code with your smartphone or tablet and listen to the official *Poker Face* by Lady Gaga on YouTube while reading the lyrics.

GLOSSARY

- 26 **to bluff:** mentire
- 27 **stunning:** splendida
- 28 **tight trousers:** pantaloni attillati
- 29 **to pay out:** pagare
- 30 **derogatory:** dispregiativo