

# You Can Dance If You Want To

by  
Kris Thompson

Kris Thompson  
1710 S. Main St.  
Georgetown, TX 78626  
281.253.3488  
kriskt@outlook.com

### Characters

BRIDGET:	Very young pretty stripper, smart, sarcastic, unbeknownst daughter to Collin
HOLLY:	Young pretty strip club waitress, friends with Bridget
COLLIN HAWKINS:	Very handsome, famous choreographer, somewhat pretentious, father to Bridget whom he has never met
MARK:	Beefy strip club bouncer with limited vocabulary
ANNOUNCER VOICE:	Strip club announcer – voice only (could be done by Mark)

### Setting

Small town strip club dressing room with a long, lighted, mirrored very messy makeup counter scattered with makeup, wigs on heads, half empty drinks, ash trays, brushes, and other items of multiple dancers. Large framed black and white portrait of a young, beautiful, ballet dancer is prominently displayed on counter. There are multiple folding chairs in disarray in front of counter. There is a full-length mirror and mobile dressing rods along one wall, all of which contain stripper and other clothing. A small very well used couch, covered in discarded clothing, is along one wall next to the only door which leads to backstage of the strip club. Every time the door is opened, the sound of stripper music is heard from OS.

### Time

Current time period, late evening before second show

### Summary

A struggling young striper is visited by her famous choreographer father she never knew she had and must decide what she thinks of him and his offer to change her life.

ACT I  
Scene 1

SETTING: Messy strip-club dressing room, couch littered with clothes, makeup table with makeup, mirror, and a portrait of a ballerina.

AT RISE: Bridget is sitting at counter applying eye makeup, wearing stripper costume under a silk robe.

BRIDGET

(Picks up portrait and speaks to it.)

How in the world did you get your eyes to look like that?

(HOLLY opens door and peeks in.)

HOLLY

Hey. Bridget. You have a, um... visitor.

BRIDGET

Jesus Christ! Will he ever stop? Tell Kevin I'm this close to getting a restraining order.

HOLLY

(Enters room and shuts door, leaning back on the closed door.)

Not Kevin. Hell, Mark won't even let that creep in the front door anymore. It's an older guy. Saw your last set and gave me fifty bucks just to ask you if you would talk to him. I'll send him away if you want. Looks rich though.

BRIDGET

(Starts to look through rack of costumes.)

Gawd. These men. Scooch. Rich lookin' you say?

HOLLY

(Goes to makeup table, sits, applies makeup while talking)

More refined than rich. Nice clothes. Nothing off the rack. Talks like he don't belong.

BRIDGET

Go ahead and send him back. Maybe it's my lucky day. (sarcastic) Maybe I have a long-lost RICH Uncle that died, and this is his attorney come to break the sad news to me.

HOLLY (sarcastic)

Oh, your poor uncle! I get half, right?

BRIDGET

Yeah, right. Hey, make sure Mark knows he's back here.

(Sits and continues putting on makeup.)

(HOLLY exits door.)

BRIDGET

(Looks at reflection and applies one blush stroke for each word.)

Rich. Dead. Uncle.

(OS there is a knock at the door.)

BRIDGET

Come!

(COLLIN, in suit and tie, enters hesitantly.)

COLLIN

Um...Bridget?

BRIDGET (focused on makeup)

That's me.

COLLIN

The waitress, Holly? Said you were expecting me.

BRIDGET

Well, I only just found out you wanted to see me, I don't know your name or why you're here, so no, I wouldn't say expecting. (pause) Look, I go on again in ten, so why don't you get right to the point.

COLLIN

Well...I don't really know where to begin. Might I sit...

BRIDGET

Help yourself.

COLLIN

(Gingerly picks up clothing from couch and looks around.)

Where shall I...

(BRIDGET, amused, grabs clothing and throws on a chair.)

COLLIN

(Rubs his hands on his pants.)

Thank you.

BRIDGET (sarcastic)

Sorry. We're fresh out of handi-wipes.

COLLIN

Handi-wipes?

BRIDGET

You most definitely are out of your element, aren't you?

(Amused by his discomfort, approaches him sexily.)

Well...you are easy on the eyes and you don't appear to be a lunatic...I don't know how much you're going to enjoy a lap dance if you're afraid of getting a little dirty.

(BRIDGET lets her robe fall to the floor and starts to straddle COLLIN who yells, shoots to standing causing BRIDGET to fall.)

COLLIN

No!

BRIDGET

What the hell? What is wrong with you?

(COLLIN pulls BRIDGET up while speaking angrily.)

COLLIN

I didn't come here for a lap dance!

(BRIDGET misinterprets him pulling her up as physical advance and pushes COLLIN onto couch while speaking.)

BRIDGET

Get off me!

COLLIN

What? Wait, you don't understand.

BRIDGET

No, you don't understand. I don't care how much money you have. Get out now! Before I call Mark in here to throw you out. (long pause) (yelling) Mark!!!

COLLIN

I was just helping you up! I would never...

MARK

(Throws open door, bursting in.)

Bridget, you ok?

BRIDGET

Get him out.

MARK

Gladly. Let's go asshole.

(MARK yanks COLLIN up and starts to drag him toward door.)

COLLIN

I assure you that I mean the lady no harm!

MARK

Yea right. That's what all you assholes say.

COLLIN

I swear I was trying to help you up. I bring good news for you! Life-changing news!

BRIDGET

Wait! Does this good news involve a dead Uncle?

COLLIN & MARK

What?

BRIDGET

Oh, never mind. What good news are you talking about?

MARK

Spit it out asshole or you're out of here.

COLLIN

It's of a personal nature. (long pause) Would you please call off your dog?

MARK

That's it asshole. You're out of here!

COLLIN

Five minutes of your time. Please! You won't be sorry. I promise you!

BRIDGET

Wait! (beat) Alright! Alright! Let him go.

MARK

You sure? Seems like an asshole to me.

BRIDGET

I guess we'll see.

(MARK drags COLLIN to and shoves him onto couch.)

MARK

Asshole.

(MARK exits.)

COLLIN

Really has the gift of vernacular.

BRIDGET

Well? (beat) You said it was important. This better be good.

COLLIN

(Stands, picks up robe from floor and hands to BRIDGET.)

Why do you do this? Strip for men?

BRIDGET

And women. Don't be sexist. Wait...that's what's so important? Here to save my soul? And by the way, I do more than strip. I dance. We are called exotic dancers you know.

COLLIN

You call that dancing? I'm pretty sure the (sarcastic) gentlemen aren't here for your dancing. Listen, I saw you dance. In between the gyrating and undulating, well, with the proper training I think you could really dance. Professionally. Without the pole.

BRIDGET

That gyrating and undulating pays the bills. What are you, some kind of dance expert? Scraping the bottom of the dancing barrel for the ones that slipped through the cracks?

COLLIN

Precisely.

BRIDGET

What?

COLLIN

You asked if I'm a dance expert. I am. My name is Collin Hawkins. Perhaps you've heard of me? (long pause) Bridget, don't you want a better life for yourself?

BRIDGET

Sure. You buying? (beat) Look...I can't afford dance lessons. Anyhow, it's a little late to start now, don't you think? Mr. (beat) Hawkins, was it? Thanks for your concern about my welfare and virtue and all. I've really got to get ready, if you'll excuse me.

COLLIN

So, you never took lessons? Most girls usually...

BRIDGET

Yes, well most girls don't have chronically depressed mothers that spend all their time self-medicating. Besides, Mother always said dance could only lead to heartbreak. Used to be a dancer herself. Ballet. This was her in Giselle.

(Hands COLLIN portrait.)

COLLIN

She's beautiful.

BRIDGET

She was that.

COLLIN

Depressed. What happened to her?

BRIDGET

Happened to her?

COLLIN

She wasn't always depressed.

BRIDGET

I don't know what... Wait...(Pause) Did you know my mother?

COLLIN

(Stands, hands portrait to BRIDGET, clears throat and paces.)

Perhaps I did not make myself clear. I want to train you. I'm a choreographer. World renowned. Two Emmys, Nine Tonys, and an academy nomination. I can give you opportunities that most dancers only dream about.

BRIDGET

Wonderful. You're a dance god. Now answer me. Did you know my Mother?

COLLIN

Yes. I, um, knew of your mother. She was a wonderful dancer. But that doesn't matter. What matters is that you can come with me now and start your new life. You've got years of training to catch up on. We need to get started right away. I have a car outside...

BRIDGET (perplexed)

Ok, so you knew of her. And now you want to help me. (pause) And in return?

COLLIN

Hard work. Dedication. Absolute discipline.

BRIDGET

And in this save the stripper scenario you've got going on, who pays? Is it a Scholarship?



COLLIN

I will personally take care of your living and dance related expenses during your training.

BRIDGET (sarcastic)

Yea, right. So now you're my fairy Godfather.

COLLIN

No, not Godfather. Actually, Bridget (pause) I'm (clears throat) I'm your father.

BRIDGET

(Flat, unaffected) You're my father. (More emotion, shock) You're my father?

No. Mother told me my father died in a car accident right before I was born.

COLLIN

No. Not dead. No accident. I have documents if you'd like to see them.

(COLLIN pulls out folder and offers to BRIDGET who takes, sits, and thumbs through.)

BRIDGET

(pause) So, when mother died you were notified? You found out you had a daughter?

COLLIN

Well...I, uh, I knew, I mean I've always...

BRIDGET

So, you already knew about me? All these years, you knew? You knew and you never...

Why now? (long pause) Oh, wait, I get it. Now your daughter has become a stripper.

COLLIN

Bridget...

BRIDGET

You've come to clean me up, haven't you? Can't have a famous choreographer's daughter dancing the nasty, now can we? That wouldn't look good if it came out, now would it? That would be quite embarrassing, don't you think? Academy Award Winner Collin Hawkins spawns stripper. Oh my God! Disgraceful.

COLLIN

Nominee.

BRIDGET

What?

COLLIN

The academy. I didn't win. I was a nominee.

BRIDGET (sarcastic)

Oh, that's funny. Please, don't correct me on the (makes air quotes) spawning a disgraceful stripper. Yes...correct me instead on your lost academy.

COLLIN

Bridget, listen-

BRIDGET

Look, Collin, (sarcastic) or should I call you Dad. Don't worry. I'm not going to bust you out to the media or blackmail you. Now, I really need to get on stage. I can sign something, a confidentiality agreement or whatever. I'm sure you have oodles of lawyers. Have them draw it up and I'll sign, no strings attached.

COLLIN

It's not like that. I want to help you. You're my daughter. You don't have to live like this.

BRIDGET

Live, like this? Honestly, (sarcastic) Dad, this is the very best my life has been for about ten years. It was bad enough when Mother was just depressed. But when she started drinking it got much, much worse. Her suicide wasn't her first attempt.

COLLIN

Oh my God. I...didn't know. I swear I didn't know. If I would have known...

BRIDGET

You would have done what? You would have come rescued us? Rescued me?

COLLIN

I would have...

BRIDGET

Would you have come when I had appendicitis? I almost died waiting for Mother to sober up enough to drive me to the hospital. Or how about seventh grade when Mother was too drunk to come and get me after the school nurse called to tell her I got my first period. Did you know I never once, not one time, brought a friend home because I didn't know how drunk she would be? Oh yea, and how about when I missed my senior prom because Mother was arrested for DWI and I had to spend the whole night borrowing money from everyone I knew so I could post her bail? Where were you then? Where were you when I scraped my knees, learned to ride a bike, won the spelling bee, fell in love, got my heart broken, and a million other things? (Shouting) Where were you?

COLLIN

Oh, Bridget. I...

MARK (yelling)

(OS, banging on backstage door) Almost time!

BRIDGET

(to MARK) Coming! (to COLLIN) Just go....Please go. I need to get out there.

COLLIN

I was young. I was immature. I was so focused on my dancing, my career, I just couldn't see how fatherhood...how a baby could possibly fit into the plan. Auditions, rehearsals, late hours, travel. There was just no time. It would never have worked...

BRIDGET

You mean the way it didn't work for my mother when you dumped everything on her and she had to give up dance completely to raise me.

COLLIN

She didn't have to give it up! She was brilliant. Watching her dance was like watching water flow. Seamless. Powerful. She could have been best. I begged her not to give up dance. I begged her to...to... (stops short, almost saying something didn't want to say)

BRIDGET

Go on. (long pause) You begged her to (beat) to what? (long pause) To get an abortion?

COLLIN

We were so young.

BRIDGET (sarcastic)

Well, of course. Abortion would have been the perfect answer. Then you both could have gone on to illustrious careers and she wouldn't have had thirty-two sleeping pills and a bottle of vodka as her last meal.

COLLIN

Oh God.

(HOLLY rushes in door.)

HOLLY

What are you doing? Come on! You're on in like one minute.

COLLIN

Please don't go.

HOLLY

You need to come now. Barry's freaking out that you're not back there already.

COLLIN

Please. I can help you. You don't have to do this anymore.

BRIDGET

Yes, Collin. I do.

(Grabs a feather boa, wraps it around her neck, starts to head out the door, turns back.)

Please don't be here when I get back.

(HOLLY and BRIDGET exit leaving door open, COLLIN picks up and looks at portrait, wipes away a tear.)

ANNOUNCER

(OS) It's that time again! Everyone, make some noise for Bridget! (Crowd hoots, hollers)

(COLLIN hangs head and lets portrait fall to his side.)

END