

A CHORUS LINE (High School Edition)

Conceived and Originally Directed and Choreographed by Michael Bennett

Book by James Kirkwood & Nicholas Dante

Music by Marvin Hamlisch, Lyrics by Edward Kleban

(5-Minute Excerpt)

Possible doubling:

AL/DON/MIKE

BEBE/MARK/JUDY/MAGGIE/KRISTINE

CONNIE/SHEILA

GREG/RICHIE

BOBBY/GREG

ZACH. What do you do when you can't dance anymore?

DIANA. What kind of a question is that?

GREG. Real heavy.

MARK. Yeah.

ZACH. I know, but what do you do?

RICHIE. Well, I'll tell ya. Because I'm getting scared. I love being in this business. But, one day it hits you, "Okay, Richie, you been havin' fun for almost eight years now ... but where's it gettin' you?"

AL. A lot of people are feeling that way. And they're getting out of the business fast.

RICHIE. Well, there's no security in dancing.

JUDY. But wait a second ...

RICHIE. There's no promotion and no advancement.

DIANA. Listen, if you're looking for that kind of security ... forget it.

RICHIE. No, it's not just that.

DIANA. Well, what then?

RICHIE. I could do without that, but—there's no work anymore.

*The whole remaining GROUP reacts simultaneously with similar lines.
All lines spoken at the same time—together with the next three lines.*

MIKE. Tell me about it.

CONNIE. It's true.

GREG. Sure it is ... but isn't that happening to every ...

BEBE. Oh, please— I don't wanna hear about how Broadway's dying. 'Cause I just got here.

BOBBY. Don't worry, honey—it's not.

CONNIE. They're not doing big musicals like they used to.

MIKE. But even if they did—even if you get this show ... it's gonna close one day—nothin' runs forever, right?

DIANA. Yeah, sure—but that's ... just the way it is ...

AL. *(overlapping the end of DIANA's line above)* He's right.

RICHIE. And then you have to start all over again—'cause the only chorus line you can depend on in this business is the one at unemployment!

*Again the GROUP reacts simultaneously—all lines spoken on top of each other—
together with the next three lines.*

CONNIE. Hit it, Richie.

BOBBY. Oh, please, give me a break.

DON. Well, look, it's ...

JUDY. But don't you want to do more than just dance in the chorus?

MARK. Gee, I just want to get in one.

JUDY. Well, I want to be something besides the tall, skinny one, second from the end. Not that I want to be a star or anything.

VAL. Hell, I do.

SHEILA. Oh, who doesn't. Everybody in the whole country wants to be a star.

JUDY. Okay—I admit it. I wanna be the next Gwen Verdon.

ZACH. But she dances.

JUDY. I know—Don't you just love her?

ZACH. But I want to know what you're going to do when you can't dance anymore.

VAL. Who cares? I don't care if I never dance another step as long as I live. I'd be happy just going to Hollywood and replacing Jill St. John. Big deal, right? Well, I can dream, can't I?

DON. Yeah, but dreams don't pay the rent.

VAL. So ... I'll find somebody who can.

MIKE. That's the thing that gets me—a girl can always get married.

SHEILA. She didn't say anything about marriage.

MIKE. *(to SHEILA)* Another thing is ...

BEBE. Oh, please, I don't know if I can take it.

MIKE. These bodies don't last forever ...

BEBE. I can't take it.

MIKE. We're no better off than athletes.

BOBBY. Well, I'm sorry—I can't worry about any of that now. 'Cause I plan to go on kicking these legs as long as I can. And when I can't ... Well, I'll just do something else.

VAL. Right. So you get into acting.

The GROUP reacts—positively and negatively.

VAL. *(continued)* No, you'll love it. I mean, it's fabulous to find out you can talk too. That's what I'm into ... not very good ... but I'm getting better. And I'll tell ya somethin', honey, it beats busting your butt dancing any day. And at least, when you're an actor you stand a chance.

AL. Aw, come on, there are more actors outta work than dancers.

DIANA. That’s theatre! Listen, nobody got into this business to play it safe. And we’re all here because we wanted to be here and you’re all acting like it’s just another job—and it’s not. So, what are you all talking about?

GREG. LIFE! Darlings. It’s tough all over. That’s why I have no plans, no alternatives— just get me through the day ... one day at a time is enough for me to deal with.

DON. Listen, we all feel the same way or we wouldn’t be here. But I have a wife and two kids and as much as I love dancin’ and theatre—it’s all about paying the bills now, and getting the kids through school. I mean, I have to go where the money is.

ZACH. What are you going to do?

DON. Well, I’d like to stay in the business ... maybe stage managing ... someday directing ...

VAL. *(already auditioning)* Hello ...

DON. Whatever, I’ll just have to see.

MAGGIE. Oh, I can’t think of anything else I’d do.

BOBBY. Well, if we all had to pick another career ... Go on, pick a career. What would you like to be when you grow up?

SHEILA. Young!

CONNIE. I know what I’m gonna do. Because I know—one night, whatever show I’m in is gonna close, and I’m finally gonna be able to get off my diet. Then I’m gonna get in the car with my husband, go up to our fifty acres in Vermont, have a bunch of kids, dance around my kitchen cooking and enjoy getting fat.

KRISTINE. That sounds good—except the fat part. Yeah, I’d like that. Just not right away.

BOBBY. Listen, all I want to be is just happy.

DIANA. Aw, come on, aren’t you happy? Look, I sit around and get depressed and worry about all these things too. But then I meet somebody and they say to me, “Wow, you dance on Broadway! How fabulous! You got somewhere. You’re something.” And I get this feeling inside— because I remember when I used to stand outside of that stage door and watch all these girls come out of there with their eyelashes and their makeup and I’d think, “God, I’ll never be that old. I’ll never be that old. I’ll never be old enough to come out of that stage door.” But deep down inside I knew I would, and, damn it, I’ve come this far and I’m not giving up now.