

A Chorus Line by James Kirkwood Jr.

Val is a dancer, around 25 and is describing why she is in NYC and what drives her.

VAL:

So, the day after I turned 18, I kissed the folks goodbye, got on a Trailways bus - and headed for the big bad apple. Cause I wanted to be a Rockette.

Oh, yeah, let's get one thing straight. I decided to be a Rockette because this girl in my home town - Louella Heiner - had actually gotten out and made it in New York. And she was a Rockette. Well, she came home one Christmas to visit, and they gave her a parade. A goddamn parade! I twirled a friggin' baton for two hours in the rain. Unfortunately though, she got knocked up over Christmas. Merry Christmas - and never made it back to Radio City.

That was my plan. New York, New York. Except I had one minor problem. See, I was ugly as sin. I was ugly, skinny, homely, unattractive and flat as a pancake. Get the picture? Anyway, I got off this bus in my little white shoes, my little white tights, little white dress, my little ugly face, and my long blonde hair - which was natural then. I looked like a nurse! I had 87 dollars in my pocket and seven years of tap and acrobatics. I could do a hundred and eighty degree split and come up tapping the Morse Code. Well, with that kind of talent I figured the Mayor would be waiting for me at Port Authority. Wrong! I had to wait 6 months for an audition. Well, finally the big day came. I showed up at the Music Hall with my red patent leather tap shoes. And I did my little tap routine. And this man said to me: Can you do fankicks? - Well, sure I could do terrific fankicks. But they weren't good enough. Of course, what he was trying to tell me was...it was the way I looked, not the fankicks. So I said: screw you, Radio City and the Rockettes! I'm gonna make it on Broadway!

Well, Broadway, same story. Every audition. I mean I'd dance rings around the other girls and find myself in the alley with the other rejects. But after a while I caught on. I mean I had eyes. I saw what they were hiring. I also swiped my dance card once after an audition. And on a scale of 10....they gave me for dance 10. For looks: 3.