

# Fancy

Bobbie Gentry

Well, I remember it all very well lookin' back  
It was the summer that I turned eighteen  
We lived in a one-room, run down shack  
On the outskirts of New Orleans

We didn't have money for food or rent  
To say the least we was hard-pressed  
When momma spent every last penny we had  
To buy me a dancin' dress

Well, momma washed and combed and curled my hair  
Then she painted my eyes and lips  
Then I stepped into the satin dancin' dress  
It had a split in the side, clean up to my hips

It was red, velvet-trimmed and it fit me good  
And standin' back from the lookin' glass  
Was a woman  
Where a half grown kid had stood

She said, "Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
God forgive me for what I do  
But if you want out, girl, it's up to you  
Now get on out, you better start sleepin' uptown"

Momma dabbed a little bit of perfume  
On my neck and she kissed my cheek  
Then I saw the tears welling up  
In her troubled eyes as she started to speak

She looked at our pitiful shack and then  
She looked at me and took a ragged breath  
She said, "Your Pa's runned off and I'm real sick  
And the baby's gonna starve to death?"

She handed me a heart-shaped locket that said  
"To thine own self be true"  
And I shivered as I watched a roach crawl across  
The toe of my high-healed shoe

It sounded like somebody else was talkin'  
Askin', "Momma what do I do?"  
She said, "Just be nice to the gentlemen, Fancy  
They'll be nice to you"

She said, "Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
God forgive me for what I do  
But if you want out, girl, it's up to you  
Now don't let me down  
Now get on out, you better start sleepin' uptown"

That was the last time I saw my momma  
When I left that rickety shack  
The welfare people came and took the baby  
Momma died and I ain't been back

But the wheels of fate had started to turn  
And for me there was no other way out  
It wasn't very long after that I knew exactly  
What my momma was talkin' 'bout

I knew what I had to do  
Then I made myself this solemn vow  
I's gonna to be a lady someday  
Though I didn't know when or how

But I couldn't see spendin' the rest of my life  
With my head hung down in shame  
You know I mighta been born just plain white trash  
But Fancy was my name

She said, "Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
God forgive me for what I do  
But if you want out, girl, it's up to you  
Now get on out, you better start sleepin' uptown"

Wasn't long after that a benevolent man  
Took me in off the streets  
One week later I was pourin' his tea  
In a five roomed penthouse suite

Since then I've charmed a king, a congressman  
And an occasional aristocrat  
And I got me an elegant Georgia mansion  
And a New York townhouse flat  
Now I ain't done bad

Now in this world there's a lot of self-righteous  
Hypocrites who call me bad  
They criticize momma for turning me out  
No matter how little we had

But I haven't had to worry 'bout nothin'  
Now for nigh on fifteen years  
But I can still hear the desperation  
In my poor momma's voice ringin' in my ears

"Here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
Oh, here's your last chance, Fancy, don't let me down  
God forgive me for what I do  
But if you want out, girl, it's up to you  
Now get on out, you better start sleepin' uptown"