



Take a Chance

When Kelly Clarkson was 13 years old, she sang a solo in a concert at school. After the concert, an old man told her, "You're a terrific singer. You have talent." Those words from a stranger changed Kelly's life.

Kelly's family didn't have much money, so she started working part-time when she was 16. When she was 18, she started working full-time. She sold popcorn at a movie theater, and she sold vacuum cleaners door-to-door. She made sandwiches and pizza at fast-food restaurants. She worked as a waitress, too. But she didn't like those jobs. She wanted to be a singer. "Was the old man right?" she wondered. "Do I really have talent?" To find out, she had to make a change. She had to leave her hometown in Texas.

Kelly moved to Hollywood, California, to look for a job as a singer. But the only job she found was as a waitress. One night she was coming home from work and saw a big fire. Her apartment building was on fire. Everything in her small apartment burned. For a few days, Kelly slept in her car. Then she decided to go back to her hometown in Texas. She went back to her old job at the movie theater.

One day Kelly's friends told her about a new TV program. "It's a contest to find the best pop singer in the United States. You can win that contest."

"I don't know," Kelly said. "I couldn't find a job as a singer in Hollywood. How can I win a contest like that?"

"Take a chance," her friends told her. "Enter the contest. What do you have to lose?"

Kelly entered the contest. More than 10,000 other people entered, too. Kelly Clarkson won. She was 20 years old, and she was the best pop singer in the United States. The old man was right: She had talent.

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