

DareMe: A Little Bump 'n' Grind



Photo credit: Thomas Alan Rugg

In my last article, "Taking It All Off," I divulged personal information about my feelings on my own body. It outraged the Rhode Island burlesque community. Feeling self-conscious and not appreciating one's body is unacceptable to the beautiful and bold women of burlesque. Corinne Southern reached out to me after reading my tell-all and dared me to embrace my body and perform in her monthly burlesque show at The Spot Underground.

I remember the first time I saw burlesque. I was 16 years old and attended the 2009 Motif Theater Awards where I was introduced to a whole different world. Performing was Miss Bettysioux Tailor whose performance was unlike anything I'd ever seen before; I relished in her self-confidence and beauty, and hoped that one day I could be like her. Fast forward three years when I got the privilege to present at the Motif Music Awards. This time, Bettysioux was running the show. I took the opportunity to tell her about the impact she made on me years before. Little did I know that one day I'd perform with her.

When I agreed to take the burlesque dare, I could feel the anxiety pulse through my body. I attended Corinne's show a month before the one I was to appear in so I could watch and get a feel for burlesque. Anyone can dance, but looking graceful and sexy while doing so is a challenge. With each burlesque dancer who performed that night, I was reassured just how much I didn't want to do this. All I could picture was attempting to slip my pants off, getting them stuck on my foot and tumbling off stage. Not sexy.

The next step was to prepare. Picking my song was fairly easy because I knew I wanted to do a local artist's song that was slow and sultry. "Black Suit Blues" by Superchief Trio was the perfect choice. But finding a costume and preparing a routine was anything but easy. Anytime I stood in front of my mirror to practice dancing, I'd get anxious and nauseous and would have to stop. I started losing sleep over trying to find a routine that would work for me, so eventually I came to the realization that I was just gonna have to wing it when I got on stage.

The day of the show arrived. As I dressed at home, I nervously bit at my lip until it bled, but continued to put on my black suit, a white tear-off shirt, red suspenders and a fedora. Fully dressed, I felt mildly more prepared.

When I arrived at the venue, I felt my heart fall into my stomach. Everyone there thought it was funny that I went to a burlesque show in the most clothing anybody had ever seen. The lineup scheduled me second to last, which meant I had to deal with being anxious for the next two hours. Then I read the

name above mine. The act I had to follow was none other than Bettysioux Tailor.

I paced back and forth, still with no idea what I was going to do when it was my turn to get on stage. I could barely even think about it without a lump rising in my throat. At one point I scuttled up to BettySioux and wrapped my arms around her waist like a frightened child. "I'm nervous!!" She reassured me everything was going to be fine and told me to just have fun with it.

Multiple acts (and drinks) later, my time to be on stage arrived. Not as nervous now with some liquid courage in my belly, it was time for me to just go out there and wing it, and that's exactly what I did. The crowd was very loving and received me with a warm welcome. First off came the hat, then the tie and then I went all the way down to nothing but garters and red suspenders. The crowd went wild, and I had so much fun!

I was filled with adrenaline and on top of the world. People congratulated me and wanted to take pictures, and it ended up being a very lovely and fun experience. I promised a lot of performers I would be back, and I never break a promise or turn down a dare. So keep your eyes open — you may just see this girl strutting her stuff on stage again soon.

To see a video of the burlesque [click here](#)