

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Some Mysterious Ways

by Georgia Keighery

EXTRACT

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SOME MYSTERIOUS WAYS

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[lights up on FRAN, who is stretching awkwardly on a ballet bar – her movements are the correct style and type for a ballet warm-up, but she manages to make them look uncomfortable and wrong]

My friend Sandra says it's because I haven't found my clitoris yet. Actually, Sandra thinks that most of the problems a woman faces in life are directly linked to her relationship with her clitoris. I said to her, "Sandra, it would be lovely if all us women could stay home and develop our clitoral relationships, but some of us actually have to function in the real world!"

Anyway, she says the reason my dancing career seems a little slow is because of the clitoris thing. My mother says it's because of people's jealousy. They're jealous of my talent she says. Mother believes completely in my ability as a dancer. I told her about Sandra's suggestion as regards to my clitoris, and she said, "Fran, honey, you know I think the Lord works in some mysterious ways ... and if you feel the need to find certain areas of your private parts in order to share your talent with the world, well ... you just let me know and I'll duck up the shops so you can be alone for half an hour ...". She's very supportive my mum.

[FRAN stops her stretching, and begins to move her feet and body around the floor, as if remembering a routine – this too she manages to make look ungraceful and awkward]

You see? Sometimes a number just wells up inside me and it just has to come out right away ... Mum says the same thing used to happen to Fred Astaire. It's a sign I'm a natural-born dancer. Funny though, she always says "the Lord works in some mysterious ways". Like when I was ten and I was taking tap-dancing classes at the Lovely Ladies Dancing Academy. I'd been there for four years doing jazz, tap, ballet and modern. My tap teacher took me aside after class one day and said "Fran ... You have to go. You're dragging the rest of the class behind because I have to keep re-teaching you the time-steps ... Samantha will now be playing the part of the horse in 'Shuffle Off To Buffalo'. You will no longer be required". I left that dancing school after that and started at the local community center. I wasn't too upset about leaving though – they had made me be a pumpkin while all the other girls got to be beans at the last recital My teacher said it was because I "couldn't possibly fit into a bean costume" ... I was a little heavier then. Anyway, when Lovely Ladies burnt down in a terrible fire a couple of weeks after I left, my mother said, "You see my darling? The Lord works in some mysterious ways ... that school obviously employed staff with questionable ability and the Lord saw fit to rectify the damage they were doing to the world of dance".

They never caught the arsonist who burnt the place down. Mother was very concerned over the incident though, don't get me wrong. She was constantly asking if the police had found any evidence, or if they had any suspects. She worried over it for ages ... But I suspect my mother was right. It probably was god who did it.

I don't take incidents like the jealousy of that teacher personally though. You really can't afford to be precious in the entertainment industry. It's like my mother says, "jealous people will try to tear you down, and you just can't let them" ... She also says "The Lord is my Shepard, I shall not want" quite frequently ... she says it over and over again, usually when she's stressed or doing the vacuuming ... funny. But she is right, you have to be strong.