

Celebrating Australian Playwriting



Australian Script Centre



Character Analysis

by Chris Howlett

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CHARACTER ANALYSIS

CHARACTERS

DETECTIVE
MOVIESTAR
WRITER
AGENT
WRITER #2

SETTING

The detective's austere office

TIME

The present

Lights up on a bare stage except for desk and chair. A door upstage. The DETECTIVE is sitting, head resting on the desk, humming. A KNOCK from off-stage.

DETECTIVE: I didn't order anything!

MOVIESTAR: (off) Detective? Please! They said you were a detective!

DETECTIVE: The door's open.

The MOVIESTAR enters.

MOVIESTAR: You're a detective?

DETECTIVE: Yep.

MOVIESTAR: You don't look like a detective. You look like a greengrocer.

DETECTIVE: Did you want something? I'm very busy here.

MOVIESTAR: Oh, detective! It's my sister. You see, I'm a moviestar...

DETECTIVE: A moviestar?

MOVIESTAR: Do you like movies, detective?

DETECTIVE: My life is like a film that no theatre would screen and nobody would pay to see, anyway.

MOVIESTAR: I've been in lots of films like that!

DETECTIVE: What movies you been in?

MOVIESTAR: My most recent was an action adventure where I rescue an innocent child from the nefarious clutches of the hospitality industry. It's called "Escape from Dishpan Hands".

DETECTIVE: Sounds corny.

MOVIESTAR: It was very tastefully done.

DETECTIVE: So what can I do for you?

MOVIESTAR: It's my sister. I fear that she's been kidnapped!

DETECTIVE: Were you in those nougat ads?

MOVIESTAR: No. That was someone else.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS 2.

DETECTIVE: Oh. (pause) You were saying?

MOVIESTAR: My sister.

DETECTIVE: What's her name?

MOVIESTAR: Lucky Flipper. You may've --

DETECTIVE: Heard of her? Sure I've heard of her. Lucky Flipper. World-renowned astrophysicist and professional dog-walker. Wooden eye. Glass leg. That may be the other way around. Drives a souped-up Fiat with a flame detail down the side. Yeah, I think I've heard of your sister.

MOVIESTAR: Actually, that's not her at all.

DETECTIVE: Then who the hell am I thinking of?

MOVIESTAR: I have no idea. My sister models jockey wear. She's highly sought after for her -- unique -- physical attributes.

DETECTIVE: Height?

MOVIESTAR: Hunchback. Detective, my sister Lucky is a loose cannon. I fear she may've found herself out of her depth.

DETECTIVE: And what makes you think she's been kidnapped?

MOVIESTAR: Only a hunch. And this ransom note.

The Moviestar produces the ransom note and hands it to the Detective.

DETECTIVE: (reading) I have your sister. Put one million dollars in a small, brown paper bag and leave it inside a slightly larger, plastic one. Place both bags somewhere convenient and I will return your sister unharmed. Alternatively, I may keep her. She's very charming.

The Detective drops the note.

This case reminds me of an over-stuffed knapsack.

MOVIESTAR: Pardon me?

DETECTIVE: Easy to open, hard to shut.

MOVIESTAR: Will you help me find her, detective?

DETECTIVE: I haven't taken on a kidnapping case