

Just One Sequin: Janne Seletto

Mum grew up on the edge of the desert. Her family lived east of Kalgoorlie and moved around as her dad found odd jobs around the goldfields. It was the 1920s and the family lived for years in a house where they had no running water or electricity. And Mum and her brother Ted rode their ponies to the one teacher school. If they could only catch one pony they had to double dink, and Ted sometimes made the horse pig root and toss them both onto the ground. One of them thought it was funny.

And that's how it went their whole lives - Ted was the larrikin and Mum was the serious one.

Mum met Dad and they moved over here to Sydney. They had a quiet but good life - Dad working as a barrister, both working in the enormous garden, both playing golf. Dad did well financially, but you wouldn't know it. Nothing changed. Modest clothing, minimal jewellery, simple house - but it did have running water and electricity. We did start to eat out from time to time but nothing fancy. Dad would have been okay with fancy, but Mum, never. The bushkid from the hard scrabble childhood couldn't do that.

But she could dream. And she could see, we're in the 1970s now, just what Fancy looked like. Because Fancy had arrived, on TV, with a candelabra and a grand piano. He had enough outfits to make your head spin, adorned with ostrich feathers or velvet, lace, mink fur or rhinestones. Or all those things, plus sequins - lots of sequins.

Fancy lived a life of flamboyant excess, of which my mother disapproved, but found fascinating too. And it made her laugh. It made her laugh till the tears ran down her face and her tummy ached. She never laughed that way before.

Fancy said: 'I have to be very careful getting dressed, with all these sequins. If I get one thing inside out, it's agony.'

'Just one sequin will do it.'

Fancy said: 'You know that bank I cried all the way to. Well I bought it!'

Mum did not buy any banks or outfits with sequins. But she did buy a new dress and went to coffee with her golf friends. And she let herself enjoy it.

And that's due to you, Władziu Valentino Liberace. Thank you!