



Setting the Stage

In a busy, noisy world, a little girl walks onto a dark stage and begins to perform. She wears her pink princess costume with pride.

Will you love me? her actions ask. *Will you hold me; will you keep me close to your heart forever?*

The pain in her eyes screams at you. And with graceful pirouettes across the stage, she beckons you to choose her, to set her apart from the other performers, and to call her beloved. She has wounds buried so deeply beneath her costume that she has almost forgotten they are there. But the laughter of her audiences echoes through her mind as she thinks of all of the times she has tried and failed. All she has ever wanted is acceptance, but she has never found it—at least not for long.

Inside each of us is a desire to be loved, a desire to be chosen, called out of the crowd, and loved for who we are. Seeking these desires, we all become performers, morphing ourselves into whatever role may earn us a place in the hearts of those around us. We constantly audition for affection, and once we have it, we

feel we have attained perfection. We put all of our energy into our performances as we please our audiences however we can.

To become beautiful is the ogre's dream; to remain beautiful is the dream of the prom queen. But to be chosen is everyone's dream. What we fail to notice as we desperately dance is that One has never left His seat during our performance. Many audiences have come and gone, but this One, this Man, has sat there from day one and has never taken His eyes off of the little girl in the pink princess dress. His eyes answer the questions her eyes ask; His heart satisfies the needs of her heart. If only that little girl would take the time to notice, if she would stop focusing on herself and what she has to do to be beautiful to the other audiences, she would see that she is already beautiful to this One. He has called her the beloved, and He is offering her an important role in His dance—the Divine Dance.

She holds center stage in His heart. He has seen her at her best and her worst. He knows her flaws, but still He wants her. He wants to love her, to hold her, to keep her close to His heart forever. He has seen all of her costumes and sat through all of her performances, but He likes her best when she's not performing at all. He likes her best at the end of the day, when the other audiences are gone and she has taken off all of her masks. Whether she's smiling or crying, He loves her. And He wants to give her the world. But her concentration on her performances has kept her from seeing this answer to all her heart has ever wanted. God calls out to her, but she cannot hear Him. She is missing the fulfillment of her dreams and plans, the desires of her heart. Somewhere along the line she disregarded the invitation God sent because she was invited to another party put on

by the world. But the world never told her she would be cast aside the moment she failed to mesmerize them. She has been missing the Divine Dance because she has been too busy dancing for men and princes to notice the King.

That little girl is you. Each of us is a dancer; we dance our way through life, performing for others. We perform for our parents by getting good grades and cleaning our rooms. We perform for friends by wearing the right clothes and doing what they do. We perform for the guys we know by dressing to impress and putting our best flirt for-

ward. We perform for teachers by passing their tests and knowing the right answers. We even perform for people we don't know. And by the time we've reached our teen years, we have become artists.

You don't believe me? Then why did you spend so long in front of the mirror when you got ready this morning? Wasn't it because you wanted to make a certain statement when you walked out the door? You wanted to say something about yourself without using any words. You wanted to perform. Maybe you don't use makeup. Perhaps you use sports or grades to perform instead. We are all performers, and we audition for a place in the hearts of everyone we meet.

You want to be beautiful to someone—anyone. That can get you into trouble, because there is a world out there that will lie to you. It will tell you whatever you want to hear to get what it wants from you. As a young Christian girl, you have a lot to

She has been missing the Divine Dance because she has been too busy dancing for men and princes to notice the King.



offer. You possess authenticity, and that's a rhythm the world can never dance to. At best, the world offers poor imitations of everything you've ever wanted.

So why, then, do you dance so hard on its stage? Why do you try so hard to please the crowd? And why are you always unfulfilled? You dance because you want to be noticed, and you try so hard because everyone else wants to be noticed too. You are unfulfilled because God did not create you to dance for this world. He intended for you to dance for Him.



You are unfulfilled because God did not create you to dance for this world. He intended for you to dance for Him.

He has gifted you exclusively for this purpose. He has wrapped you in the package that is your personality and your body so you can play a certain role. Long ago He wrote a script, and He wrote a role for you that's all your own—only *you* can play it. Without you, the story cannot continue as it was originally intended. Without you, lesser meth-

ods have to be chosen, and somewhere the CD in God's divine CD player skips a beat. "Someone is not dancing like she should," it seems to say. You cannot dance for God the way you have been dancing. God will not share His glory. But He will share His love, and that is what this dance is all about.

When you get up on that stage and seek your own glory, or seek the world's applause, you break God's heart. Yes, you are dancing, but it's all to no avail. You're missing the story. You're missing the dance. Deep inside you are dissatisfied, and even if nobody else knows it, God does. He wants to change that; He

wants to give you the riches of His kingdom. God designed you to glorify Him. He designed the Divine Dance so others may see your life and want to glorify Him too.

He wants you to dance for Him, but it will cost you—although not as much as you think. You only have to give up the world, and the riches of heaven will be yours. Take off the vanity-stained leotard the world has given you and slip on God's grace. He wants to clothe you in righteousness and set you apart.

In the end, that's a far better deal than working really hard for seven seconds in the spotlight and a loveless reality.

Today you can have the performance of a lifetime, and I hope you don't pass it up. You can watch from the sidelines, but it won't do you any good.

You can dance your hardest for this world, but when you wind up with a trophy made out of fool's gold, you won't be very happy.

These are pivotal times in your life. The choices you make from here on out will define who you are. The costumes you wear will label you. Adulthood is just around the corner; maybe you've found it already. Soon enough, nobody will make choices for you anymore, and as nice as it sounds, a lot of responsibility comes with that. So practice making wise decisions right now. Dance for the One who deserves to be worshiped. Dance for the

God designed you to glorify Him. He designed the Divine Dance so others may see your life and want to glorify Him too.



One who desires to be worshiped. And dance for Him alone.

No matter your music or your style, dance unto the Lord.
Not only will you be changed, but you will also change others
with your song.