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A Hidden Identity

Jason Constantine Ford

As Ayesha sorted out the documents relating to the file for the early colonial era of Australia, the shadow that was overlapping her body brought back memories of the last day she saw her deceased husband. She briefly took a look at the ball that swung from side to side upon a string connected to the ceiling before returning to her duty. Finishing her archival work, Ayesha made her way from the Perth Reference Library to the nearest bus stop. It was a little after nine at night. As she was waiting for the bus, Alan another fellow worker was also waiting. He looked at her but she turned her gaze away from him. With a burka covering her face, she did not want him to know who she really was. Her facial covering was a protective shield from the curious gaze of men she was not interested in. Alan would never know her true identity. He would never know she was a white woman formerly known as Sandra Carlisle who did exactly the same duty she did tonight seven years ago. Arriving back to her home, she felt the loneliness of having lived without her husband for more than a year. Upon reaching the lounge room where a solitary candle was burning, the image of an antique clock within a case immediately affected her. As it reached ten o'clock, its' body swung from left to right reminding her of the work place injury which killed her husband. Memories of being told of a large clock falling down and killing him were coming back to her. She needed to shut this darkness out of her mind. Ayesha immediately turned on the television set and sat down on the sofa. It was a late night newsbreak featuring television host Brian Wright. He was talking about the Miss Australia Awards. The next few images were from the awards of women posing on a stage. The final image was of Candice Bernstein winning the title of Miss Australia. She took the microphone to make a speech.

“Thank you everyone for supporting me in the greatest victory of my life. I couldn't have done this without. I would like to thank...”

Ayesha immediately switched off the television. The image of Candice caused Ayesha tremendous distress. This was a woman she grew up with who fulfilled the modelling dream that she aspired to before her conversion to Islam. In primary school, it was Candice who took the role of Cinderella in a school play instead of her. After finishing high school, it was Candice who gained a scholarship with Regal Promotions modelling agency while she failed to even gain employment in modelling. The darkness of these memories was closing in on Ayesha as tears were falling down her cheeks. The bitterness of her own jealousy was too much for her. Although the sorrow on her face would not be seen by strangers, no one would see her pain nor understand her suffering.