

Out In The Moonlight

Night is falling as I sit in dead silence, staring at the rusty bars that hold me in here. Photos hang on the cold cracked concrete walls, showing my beloved family. All the pictures are happy, but I am not right now. I miss my children Kate and Jade, who are with their grandma right now, and of course my sweet husband Michael.

“Good night, Susan” the tall guard murmurs as he walks past to turn off the lights. I have done nothing terribly bad to get here, but they don’t care about me or anyone else in cells. My time in this confined prison is getting nearer. From today, the 7th of May 1945, it is only a day until I get released from this horrid place in Christchurch. It has only been a weekend here, but I still hate it and wish I never come here again. We hear no news or events that are going on outside, at all. I lay and stare at the ceiling, revisiting how I got in this scungy place.

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It was a cloudy day. I was sitting at home with my children admiring the city's surroundings when the mailman came to drop off the letters and packages. Jade and Kate went rushing out to see him like they do whenever he comes. He handed the parcels to Jade and headed off to our neighbours house. She gave me the letters she didn’t want, and skipped back into our home. I noticed a small brown package in my hands with big bold black letters spelling ‘**KIA**’. I dropped to my knees, still clutching the package in my hand, tears constantly falling from my eyes like an overflowing waterfall. The letter falls from my hands as I lay helplessly on the ground. I slowly walk back inside where my children sit on the couch, fighting over a toy. I sit beside them, still wiping my face.

“Kids, I need to tell you something. It’s about your father,” I mumbled, finding it hard to speak. I could tell they already knew because they were crying. I hugged them both tightly, hoping it was just a -dream or even a nightmare.

The moonlight shone through the gap in the curtains, lighting up a path to my room. As I walk past I see Kate and Jade fast asleep, holding their teddies tightly, dreaming about something all 6 year olds do. The house is lonely without Michael. I lay in the cool air, wondering what it would’ve been like if he were still here right now. I fall asleep not knowing what will hit me when the sun rises

I lift myself out of bed and head to the kitchen to make some breakfast. Jade comes screaming to me shouting something that I cannot understand.

“Mum, Kate! Mum, Kate! I can’t... find her... anywhere!” Jade wailed, out of breath. I start frantically searching, but she is nowhere to be seen or heard.

I sprint outside, knocking on my neighbor's doors, asking them if they have seen her. We run back home and call the police.

“Hello, my daughter has gone missing this morning. I live at 37 Chester Street West in Christchurch. Can you please hurry though, because I am really worried and she’s only just 6, and this hasn’t happened before and...” She cuts me off as I start to get more afraid.

“I know you are worried about her, but please calm down. We will send a search party as soon as we can.” The lady on the phone says calmly. She hangs up leaving me to face the problem myself until they come. I continue my search with Jade by my side. No luck comes my way. We search everywhere and everything until the party arrives 5 hours later. I’m exhausted, and I feel like I’m going to faint. I head back inside to let them do their job. I’m so exhausted that I fall asleep in a matter of time.

I awake with a pain, a pain of not knowing where Kate is, but also to a knocking on my door. I open it, because it isn’t dark yet, and there I see a Police officer. I look down. There standing beside him is Kate, but not the Kate had once known. I immediately hug her as the officer say his goodbyes. She looks hungry, starving infact, so I get her some dinner. I’m guessing she ran away because of her father, who she is dearly missing right now. We all are.

“Where’s Jade?” Kate asks.

“Oh no!” I gasped. “I forgot all about her!” I grab a torch, which happens to be the brightest we’ve got, and head outside forgetting all about the Black-out rules. The light shines around the front porch. I see Jade sitting in the rain with her long dark hair acting as a hood, to keep sheltered from the rain.

“I am sorry, please come in and have something warm to drink.” I suggest. Jade enters quietly and makes herself a hot drink. I watch her stir the milk around the mug, just like my life is stirring away from reality, whirling around and going down the drain. Outside is pitch black, and no lights are showing. I wonder if anyone spotted me with a bright light on?

Birds are chirping as the blinding sun fills the rooms. I am busy eating porridge with Kate and Jade when I am startled by another knock on the door. I reluctantly open it where I find 2 Police officers with their badges shining right at me. They are here to explain what happened about Kate, or at least that is what I think.

“Miss Susan Fleming, have you used any bright lights at night in the past week?” Questioned the big broad backup policeman. Suddenly I remember about last night. Should I tell the truth, or should I lie? “Well yeah, but not really. It was only because Kate got lost, and then I forgot about Jade and locked her outside. I had to use my torch to find her, or else she would have froze to death!” I replied in a screeching tone.

“We do not care why you had to use a bright light. Us police have to follow rules and guidelines to insure that our country does not get found if the Japanese aeroplanes fly over New Zealand. It is for the best, if any one likes it or not, we have to have these rules!” The more smaller, younger policeman yelled at me. He decides to continue before I get a chance to speak. “That is why, Miss Susan Fleming, you are being sentenced to a weekend in jail for not following to correct procedures of the black-out rules.”

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That is how I got here, unfortunately. Today is the day I get released, the 8th of May 1945. The guard walks into my cell and forces me out of the building into the freezing cold where a police car awaits us. Through these events I learned from my mistakes to never break the rules again, ever, because something even worse could happen to me next time.

“Hop in, I will take you back to your home,” he insists gently. We hop in the car and arrive back home shortly after. He drops me off without a single word, and speeds off into the foggy distance. I open the door slowly and see my children and my mum waiting for me. I walk in and sit between them both, talking about what they were up to while I was gone. Mum turns on the radio to hear if there is any news about the men overseas at war. We all listen for a while, then we hear something that we never thought we would hear, something that has released all of the weight off of our shoulders.

“The war is over, I repeat, the war is over. The Germans’ have surrendered today, and only just one day after the Nazi’s surrender. World War 2 is over!” The thankful radio hostman announced.



Putting up blackout curtains in WWII