

Released: Sandra Faase

It was 35 degrees outside and with the heavy curtains packed away, the sun had rendered the small top floor apartment into an unintended sauna. The grime and sweat of sorting and packing relentlessly into the afternoon clung unpleasantly to her skin. She was exhausted and could go on no longer. She lay herself down onto the hard-trodden carpet, splayed out amongst the boxes that would carry her life into a new phase.

She thought of the children she had somehow raised in the confines of the apartment, the friends who had visited, the conversations and laughter, the lovers who had been and gone, the sorrows that had shaken and nearly taken her, the years of life that the small apartment had held. She felt strangely calm in the throbbing heat and blinding unfiltered light as if the universe had chosen, at this very moment, to cast its focus on her.

She had sorted the old filing cabinet and kept the things that might one day define her: the poems of her youth, meticulously researched family trees, old letters and cards from friends (written words that still meant something), references from past employers singing her praises, her academic records (she had promise), birth certificates, and other legal papers that would one day need to be consulted in her final absence.

She had found her old diaries and glanced through them, amused at how self-absorbed she'd been before greater responsibilities had taken over her existence. The shredder had ground to a halt several times as it recklessly chomped through the pages of the five thick exercise books that housed her youthful deliberations.

Tomorrow she would lock that door one final time and there was no other choice but to look ahead.