

The Modesty Guard

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Location: Jerusalem, the Western Wall. A married police superintendent becomes infatuated with a modesty guard.



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In the Year 2000 I considered moving back to Israel. I did not know that I would soon find myself in a war zone.

I was 30 years old, beautiful and single. I returned to Jerusalem, after traveling to the Far East.

One night I had a dream: flames of fire rose above the walls of Jerusalem's old city. I was in awe of these flames. When I woke up, I felt drawn to this ancient city; I wanted to understand the meaning of this dream. I started hanging out in the old city and I soon found myself working as a modesty guard at the Western Wall.

In the beginning I wore Indian skirts and later I brought long dresses. (After a religious man told me that in the bright light my skirt turned see-through).

I thought that this job might be a sign that I need to become religious but I still had a yearning for freedom. I enjoyed flirting with the guards and I visited Sinai during my vacations. (Most Israelis feared visiting Egypt at this time.)

My post was outdoors, in the women's section, a few meters from the Western Wall.
(Kotel in Hebrew)

Many people visited the Kotel: fanatics, moderate religious people, secular brides who insisted on being photographed in revealing wedding dresses and tourists. My job was to cover the women who weren't modest.

A Palestinian uprising had begun; they claimed it all started when Sharon visited the Temple Mount. Rocks would sometimes fly from the Temple Mount into the Kotel.

The police superintendent who was in charge of this district was called Adi. Adi was handsome, arrogant and married. He never smiled and always had a few policemen running after him, asking for advice. The police-station faced the Wall. When I started working at the Kotel, Adi's office was renovated and the exterior wall was replaced by a huge window. He now had a clear view of the Kotel. I didn't know it at the time but he had been watching me. I was not the typical Modesty guard and he wanted to get to know me.

In the winter, I worked the evening shift and we both left at the same time. One day I missed the bus and he drove me home. He apologized that he can't visit, even though I never invited him. Later that week he did visit. We talked for hours; it felt as if we had been friends for ever. We soon started to have an affair and I was in a moral dilemma, I felt conflicted by my desire to be with him and my beliefs.

At work, he would look out of his window and call me. I was wearing long dresses, telling women to cover up and at the same time I was sleeping with the King of the Kotel. I was confused.

My whole life revolved around him. He had a key to my apartment and would show up whenever he wanted. It was our secret, but not for long.

A few months later everything changed. A terrorist attack killed one of my friends. From that day it felt as if someone had turned off Jerusalem's bright golden lights. Everything turned grey. From a seductive, beautiful modesty guard I turned into an angry and frustrated woman. I called his wife and she invited me to

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her house. She told me that this is not the first time he's unfaithful to her. We talked for a while and then the dog started barking. "He's here" she said "now you love him more than me." Adi walked in. He was shocked to see me. He opened the front door and I left.

I was still in love with him and saw him every day through his window, only now he didn't call me.

I told one of the guards about us, and the rumors spread like fire. Everyone knew. I was embarrassed and he was angry. He wasn't promoted and left the police force a year later. There was no reason for me to stay, and so I left Israel.

When I returned to visit, 5 years later, I went to the Kotel. I looked for the police station, but it was gone. I was told it had been destroyed for archaeological digging. It felt as if it was a stage that had been built just for us. When we left, the stage was brought down.

I met Adi. He had completely changed. He lost weight and had long stringy hair. His confidence was gone. "You look like a beach bum" I told him. We planned to meet again the next day, but I didn't go. I wanted to remember him the way he was when I first met him.

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