

Our Special Place

It was a calm morning at the Sanderson residence. The sun hadn't yet risen over the horizon, but James was up and ready. He walked outside into the cold, chilly morning. He took one last glance at the house, then ran down the driveway. He looked around at the farmland and bush, so peaceful. James always ran first thing in the morning. He always got back while his mother was cooking breakfast and the rest of the family was still asleep. But today he felt adventurous, so he stopped and looked around at the bush and saw what looked like a small path leading into the trees. It wasn't, it was just his imagination taking over. Curious and excited about this new find, he followed the path into the dark, shadowy unknown.

"Ow", "Oh", "Arr", James cried as branches clawed at his face. He couldn't believe he'd willingly got himself into this! Minutes ticked past. After an hour of scratches and bruises, James finally broke through the underbrush to find himself standing on dirt with only a few small shrubs in front of him. But the strangest thing was a low rumbling sound coming from a patch of trees to his right. Intrigued and powered by the thought of adventure, and the even greater thought of discovery, he walked briskly towards the trees, charged through, and an amazing site met his eyes.



The year was 1895, a good time for the small community of Kalamunda. There was plenty of fertile farming land and timber in the Darling Ranges, so the two main occupations were farmer and wood cutter. Peter Sanderson, James' father, was a farmer. He raised cows, sheep, chickens and geese. He also grew wheat. James was meant to inherit his father's land and become a farmer, but he wanted to be an explorer. Being thirteen James thought he could make up his own mind about what he wanted to be.



James was tall with short brown hair and dark green eyes. Right now his eyes soaked in the view that was before him. A rushing waterfall of fresh water plunged into a deep valley of majestic Marri and Eucalyptus trees. If James had taken five more short steps he would have fallen over the edge into the roaring torrent of water as it dived downwards onto the rock face. James couldn't believe his eyes; he had just discovered a natural source of fresh water. It was beautiful, almost too beautiful to be true. He looked around and began to explore.



Back at the house the Sanderson family were eating breakfast around the large wooden table. His mother was beginning to worry, for James had not yet returned. His father didn't seem to notice he was gone, but Suzy, James' nine year old sister did.

"Mummy, where's James?" she asked.

James walked gloomily to his seat at the back of the only classroom at Kalamunda School, the Math, English, History and Geography room. As the school only had twenty-seven students, there was no need for more than one classroom. Right now James was learning Math, or supposed to be learning Math, but his mind was wandering to the waterfall, the trees, the birds, the peace...

"Sanderson! Sanderson! Wake up!"

With a jolt James woke up and looked around in alarm, the whole class was staring at him, no one in their right mind would fall asleep in this classroom.

"I fell asleep, I fell asleep in class. Crome's gonna kill me for this!" James thought as he looked up into the menacing face of Mr Crome.

James was taunted all day because he fell asleep in class, and it was made worse by the fact that he nearly dropped off during history.



When school finished for the day, James walked to the path that led to the waterfall. He told Suzy that he was stopping for a rest and she should run home and not bother about him, for he would catch up later. Suzy ran along the path and as soon as she had disappeared round the corner James sprinted into the bush. But Suzy was only round the corner and stopped when she heard James run. She turned around in time to see James speed into the bush. Intrigued and curious she followed him. She came out onto the same place where James came out and heard the same low rumbling noise James heard. She walked through the same clump of trees and was rewarded by the amazing sight; the waterfall.



James was sitting on the cliffs edge on the other side of the waterfall, listening to the sound of the rushing water. Suzy called out to him.

"James, James, James!"

James turned his head and nearly fell over the edge of the cliff. He stood up, took three large steps back and yelled "What on earth are you doing here?"

"I was about to ask you the same thing," Suzy yelled in reply.

James walked up-stream and waded through the rushing water to Suzy's side. He got out and stormed over to her and yelled, "Why did you follow me, you brat?"

"You don't have to yell at me," Suzy whimpered as tears formed in her eyes. James' anger boiled down and he hugged his little sister and said, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to yell or call you a brat. It's just this was my spot, my special spot, that only I knew about, and you kind of wrecked it."

"I'm sorry, I only wanted to know where you were going, that's all. I didn't mean to wreck your special place," Suzy looked at him and he knew she really was sorry.

James sighed, "Well maybe this could be our special spot?"

"Really?" Suzy exclaimed.

"Yea, but we'd better keep it a secret, just for now."

"Okay, this place is the sort of spot that needs to be secret for a while, right?" Suzy agreed.

"Right. Now, do you want to go to the very bottom of the waterfall?" James asked.

"You've been there?"

"Been there, done that."

"What are we waiting for then, let's go."

Suzy ran towards the steep path James had made to the bottom.

"Suzy! he yelled, "Stop!"

Suzy stopped to look around, but slipped on the loose rocks and fell over, causing a large cloud of red dirt to form in the air. Suzy screamed from somewhere in the dust. She screamed again, but it was further away this time.

"Suzy, Suzy!" James yelled frantically into the dust. When the dust settled Suzy wasn't there, just stones, rolling down the path.

James walked carefully down the path, calling all the time, "Suzy, Suzy!"

He walked around a bend fifteen metres down the track and saw, sitting under a small bush, covered in dirt and scratches, Suzy.

"Suzy!" he called happily.

Suzy looked up to see James walking down the path as fast as he could.

"Are you okay? Are you hurt?"

"I think I'm okay," she replied.

"You really need to go to the base of the waterfall now, don't you?"
James stated.

"Why?"

"To get cleaned up of course, you can't go home like this."

On their way home they decided they wouldn't tell anyone of James' discovery, people could find it themselves later.

"You know why I like that place?" a very clean Suzy said as they emerged from the bush.

"Why?"

"Because it's our special place."

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