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Dis-Honesty

by Penny Humphrey

She'd tried her hand at most things but drew the line at honesty.

Where did honesty ever get you? And who would ever thank you for it?

She'd seen the results of an honest life in her parents.

Good honest folk they were, up at five in the morning, down to the factory by six to earn a pittance from that fat rich man with his fat rich cigars. They never missed a day. Loyal they were, trustworthy, honest, hardworking and dead before their time.

Well it wasn't for her; she had seen the light one Sunday in the third pew back where her family always sat in the local chapel, listening to the preacher shouting at everyone, telling them how sinful and bad they were. Mind you that was before he got caught molesting a young choirboy and got sent to prison.

A young man strange to the area came and sat next to her that day. While a rousing rendition of Immortal Invisible sung lustily in the right key and played lustily in the wrong key the collection bag passed along the rows. When it arrived in front of the young man he calmly put in his coin, but when he retrieved his hand it held a clutch of money, which he deftly put into his coat pockets. Turning he smiled at her as he passed the bag on.

It was a completely brazen act and she was so shocked by his behaviour that she said nothing. The preacher droned on and a smile crept across her face, yes at last she had seen the light, the answer to all her problems.

She began in a small way, just testing the water really, just to see how it felt. A Mars bar slyly pocketed at the local newsagents, a couple of lipsticks taken from Woolworths. She experienced a warm feeling when she got away with it and the stealing became a way of life.

As she grew into adulthood she became expert in her chosen trade and was never caught or even suspected. She got herself a job in a department store with a false CV. This was an Aladdin's cave of goods and money waiting for the picking. She rose to floor Manager then Store Manager and changed her persona. She no longer needed to steal but it had become a way of life, an addiction, impossible to stop but she became careless and got caught red-handed stealing a coat from the very store she managed.

She languishes now at Her Majesty's pleasure but she feels she's had a life and she looks forward to getting back to it