



## The Woman who did not know her name

by Rosalyn Hurst

Arane glanced back into the sitting room at the body of her husband lying white, bloodless, lips curled back in his last spasm. Nauseous, she lent over the balcony, the paths of the wstate spreading out like a web below, planes descending to the airport on the other side of the river, peace and quiet.

She had always lived in the flat, first as a child with her mum and Gran. Then to her surprise finding her recently deceased her husband had bought it, now of course, gentrified. Perhaps this was why she had been so attracted to him, other than he was older, and experienced lover, gentle understanding, and so had lasted longer than the others.

She also felt queasy because she was pregnant. If only he hadn't forced himself on her earlier in the morning, things would have been different. She sighed deeply at the thought of having to explain another death.

Men just don't understand the trauma a woman faces on marriage in having to change her name. She had been Smith, O'Brien, Charalambous and most recently, Dobbins. Endless forms, changing passports, it was never ending. Not the same for blokes no matter how many times they remarried. Mind you, Arane was always sensitive about names. On the estate, there was tolerance about names often reflecting circumstances around a child's conception, Madison, Chelsea, Chardonnay or transgendered Taylor and Echo, but there was never another Arane. On reflection, she thought she had not really known who she was, a woman uncertain about her name, but her mother and her gran said she would find out in the end.

The nausea passing, she looked back at the body, what the hell would she do now? There had been no fuss when young O'Brien had been found dead in the park, and Charalambous had died following a stroke. It was unlucky that the same coroner, old Dobbins had been in charge of both cases. How sweet when he had looked across the court room, with lust and concern at the most unfortunate and obviously grieving young widow.

A distant memory returned, her grandmother sitting in the dark weaving silk scarves for Harrods, beautiful shades of grey to adorn only the richest of necks. Arane had started to learn the weaving techniques when sales dropped off. One client managed to strangle her boyfriend, a England rugby prop forward no less. It seemed the silk had amazing strength and neither broke or stretched. She also remembered her grandmother saying the silk had preservative powers.

Arane and old Dobbins had led the isolated lives rich people do in the newly modernised high rises. Would he be missed? Probably not.

Leaving the balcony Arane found the old loom and began to weave grey silk. Just enough for a shroud for old Dobbins. Then dragged him silently oh so silently into the cupboard with the Hoover.

Finally, time for a cup of tea. In the steamed up kitchen window, she wrote her own name, her secret name, Araneae Latrodectus Dobbins. That would, that would last her, no more names, this was perfect.