

***Jesse's  
Triumph***

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MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

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# Chapter 1

I was walking down the corridor, fixating on the scene in my novel, when my protagonist was lost in the woods. The world around me was slightly hazy and out of focus. I knew I was in my high school corridor and saw the students milling at their lockers around me, but they were distant, ethereal, my body on autopilot as I floated in my make-believe world.

Ow! Pain in my shin and I fell forward, hitting the linoleum floor hard, my palms stinging and my knees burning. I looked up to find Joshua King standing above me. He attempted a concerned mask ruined by the smirk tilting his lips. ‘Sorry mate, didn’t see you there.’ He offered his hand under the guise of helping me up.

I knew better and ignored his proffered hand, standing up and wiping my jeans. His mates guffawed behind him. My cheeks burnt. I knew my milky skin showed all my emotions and, when I got embarrassed and red-faced, my blue eyes looked watery, like I was on the verge of tears. Sarah, my sister, teased me. I had a tragic face, and as a child I’d used it to sucker many an adult out of sweets. As I got older, it was a liability, especially in the cut-throat atmosphere of St Albans High.

I collected my books off the floor and walked around King and his idiot posse, staring at the floor. My rage built as I walked away. I was so sick of King and his bullshit. My mind turned to another scene, one of death and carnage. I ran to my safe space on the ground level of the three-storey building—the library.

When I walked in, I saw Brian, my best friend, sitting at a table. I rushed over, dropping to my knees in front of his desk.

‘Joshua King,’ I said. ‘I’m putting him on my hit list.’ I took out my notebook and took Brian’s pen.

A girl was sitting next to Brian. I glanced at her and saw she was reading my page upside down. Her face blanched when she saw the heading, *People to kill*.

‘Why?’ Brian asked.

‘He tripped me in the hall,’ I said.

Brian read the next Maths answer from his notebook, but the girl beside him was stiff and unresponsive.

‘Sabiha, this is my best friend, Jesse,’ Brian introduced me.

I looked at the girl, recognising her as the new student who had begun a few weeks ago. She looked between me and Brian, obviously struggling to understand how we were best friends. Brian’s brown hair was slicked back perfectly, and he wore black pleated pants and a dazzlingly white crisp shirt. He looked like he was going to a job interview. I wore loose jeans and an even looser sweatshirt, and both had seen better days. I’d never cared about my appearance until I saw myself through her eyes.

‘We’re in Phys Ed together,’ I said, then regretted it as I saw the moment she remembered me, wincing as she flash-backed to our last lesson.

When our teacher, Mr Robinson, left the gym to go to his office, all the boys in class played dodgeball with me as the target. I’d flinched, trying to catch the balls, but I didn’t have a chance in hell with multiple players targeting only me. Everyone laughed as the balls connected and bruised. I knew I’d become red-faced and watery-eyed again as rage worked through me, giving the bullies more hilarity as they revelled in thinking they’d made me cry.

When Mr Robinson returned and saw the balls on the floor around me, he’d asked me what happened. Mr Rob and I had a deal. I’d told him I couldn’t nark on the kids anymore. He’d tried to punish the bullies for their idiotic behaviour in the past,

which only led to more of the same. When I said nothing, Mr Rob ordered me to put the balls away. When we began playing soccer, he subtly punished King and his crew by not giving them their favourite positions. Their team lost, and mine won. It was a minor victory as victories went, but it was enough.

I noticed the book she was holding, Tara Moss' book *Split*. 'That one's great.' I took the book.

'You've read it too?' Sabiha sounded surprised.

'I can read.' I threw the book on the table. Did she equate me with King and his neanderthal brethren, incapable of stringing together a legible thought?

She grabbed my hand. 'I haven't met many boys who read.'

Sabiha smiled at me and my heart lightened; her green eyes sparkled, and her golden hair framed her face. My heart sped up for another reason.

'I was just surprised to find someone who shared my passion,' she explained.

'Jesse's the book-lover,' Brian said. 'I just read what he tells me to.'

She let go of my hand, and I clenched it, still feeling her touch. To hide my emotions, I looked at my watch. 'I've got to stock up on my rations.'

Seeing Sabiha's confusion, Brian translated. 'He needs to get reading material for the weekend.'

I quickly stood and went to the stack, peering at Brian and Sabiha through the gap in the shelf. As she stood and bent over to pack up, my skin heated as I noticed how her camouflage cargo pants curved around her waist. She straightened, revealing her bare midriff and curved waist.

'How long have you two known each other?' Sabiha asked.

'Since primary school.' Brian put his Maths book away.

'Has he always wanted to kill people?'

'Jesse's not a weirdo or anything. He uses fantasy to deal with the bullying. He couldn't hurt anyone.'

'Good to know,' she said.

My stomach dropped. Of course, she thought I was dangerous. What kind of weirdo talked about killing people at a school? I gently hit my forehead on the books in front of me. Shit! I glanced around, checking if anyone could see me. I had to be more careful. People already thought I was weird. I didn't have to help them.

I quickly pulled a few books from the shelves, needing a comfort read, returning to my favourites of John Green and Melina Marchetta. Sabiha and Brian had packed up and were waiting by the counter.

I placed my books on the counter next to Sabiha. 'This is a new title,' Miss Swan, the librarian, said as she scanned the latest John Green book. 'Write a recommendation since you're the first lender.'

I smiled, excited by the thought. As a writer, any byline helped boost my confidence. I placed my books in my book-bag and caught sight of Sabiha's face. She was frowning as she eyed me and the librarian. I looked away. She hated me. What did I expect? I'd thought I had an ally. As if?

Brian and Sabiha walked ahead of me as we walked out of the library and up the stairs to the second storey. We had History together.

Sabiha followed Brian to the back of the class and threw her backpack on the table next to him. I hesitated next to her, meeting Brian's gaze. Usually, Brian and I sat at the back. I doodled on the edges of my notepad as the teacher spoke while Brian stared out the window, caught up in his own world. If the teacher called on Brian, I'd quickly jot down the answer he could read out, maintaining the impression that he was engaged in class.

'Let's move one down so Jesse can sit on the other side.' Brian waved to her right.

Sabiha looked at me, flushing slightly, as she moved one seat down. I sat in the chair next to the window. 'So altruistic of you to give up your favourite seat,' I murmured.



Brian shot me a frown but said nothing as he sat between us. The teacher asked us to discuss whether World War I or World War II was the war that affected the world the most. Brian moved his seat back so that he included Sabiha, as no one was sitting next to her.

'World War I because it's the first war that involved the entire world,' Brian said.

'I agree because it's also the fact that it changed the class system. It brought about the demise of the aristocracy, and there were millions of deaths, both during the war and afterwards, from the Influenza,' I added.

'It might have been responsible for more deaths, but it was steeped in the traditions of trench warfare,' Sabiha said. 'The second world war was much more brutal and bloody because it was about genocide and extermination. Hitler's ideology has become a blueprint that keeps repeating. Just look at what's happening in my corner of the world.'

I frowned, not understanding what she was referring to.

'I'm Bosnian. Ethnic cleansing is a new term, but it's the same concept. Exterminate an entire race of people for a land grab.'

The penny dropped. It was years ago, but I'd seen news reports about the Balkan Conflict as the country that was once Yugoslavia tore itself apart, with each state seeking independence after their dictator Tito, who had ruled for forty years, died.

'Can you really compare the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia and the Holocaust, though?' I questioned, my intellectual brain engaged. Usually, Brian made a one-sentence announcement and then attempted to segue the conversation into his social life. This was the first time I'd actually had someone to debate.

Sabiha's jaw tightened. 'I wasn't comparing. I was justifying my argument that the second world war was more brutal.' She turned away, crossing her arms on her chest as she stared straight ahead at the whiteboard.

'Don't be a sore loser,' I stirred.

She looked at me, her green eyes flashing ire. 'I'm not,' she spat. 'To you, this is an intellectual discussion about war. To me, this is real life. My family were brutalised and chased out of their homeland. So excuse me if I don't want to trade details to win an argument.'

I flushed, looking down at the table as I scratched the edge. I'd been so engaged in the discussion I hadn't thought through that I was pushing emotional buttons. The teacher asked us to share, but our group remained stubbornly silent.

'Apologise,' Brian wrote on the edge of his notebook and held it to me. When I read it, he quickly scrawled over it and transformed it into a love heart.

Sabiha was frosty for the rest of the double, barely looking at me.

'I want to apologise,' I said as we packed up a few minutes before the bell. 'I didn't mean to be insensitive.'

'That's fine,' Sabiha snapped.

'Sabiha, Jesse apologised. Now you accept his apology,' Brian intervened.

She glared at him. Brian maintained eye contact. She wilted.

'I accept,' she muttered, swinging her backpack onto her back.

The bell rang, and we drifted out of the classroom and down the stairs.

'See you tomorrow,' Brian kissed her on the cheek at the bottom of the stairs. The boys' lockers were at the other end of the corridor.

She smiled, her face transformed. 'See you.'

'Jesse,' Brian prodded, looking at me.

'See you tomorrow,' I muttered, waving quickly.

Sabiha's smile faded. 'See you.'

I opened my locker, carefully checking my diary for all the homework and collecting the notebooks and textbooks I'd need. Brian emptied his backpack of textbooks and notebooks.

'Really!' I exclaimed.

'I don't need those when I've got you.' Brian smiled widely and put his arm around my shoulders. He came over every night after I'd finished my homework and used my notes and homework to complete his.

'Eventually, the teachers will figure out you're not doing any of your own work.' It surprised me it hadn't happened already. While Brian could complete the homework using me as a resource when we were doing the exams, he had to pass on his own, and somehow he always did.

'Please. They'll only figure it out if I over-reach. But I know my speed. I'm a bare-pass student.' He preened in front of the mirror he'd attached to the inside of his locker door, using his comb to slick back his dark hair.

'The fact that you pass all the exams means you've got a great memory. If you tried, you could get a great grade.'

'What do I need good grades for?' He slammed the locker shut as his face darkened. 'I know where my future is.'

I gently closed my locker door, not saying anything. Brian's father was an immovable boulder.

We walked home together. When we reached my house, Brian continued, waving as he called out, 'See you soon.'

I took my key from my pocket and unlocked the front door.

Mum was in the living room, sitting in her wheelchair in front of the TV. The bright colours of the TV show *The Price is Right* lit up her face in the darkened room, the sun setting early in winter.

I flicked on the light switch. Mum turned to look at me, a smile brightening her face.

'You shouldn't be sitting in the dark,' I chastised.

'Reggie, you're back from work,' she exclaimed, calling me by my father's name. He'd been dead since I was four years old, hit by a drunk driver, but lately, Mum sometimes confused me for him. I hardly had any memories of him. Just a vague impression of a show, maybe Moomba, as there was a river and water-skiers. I couldn't see, so he lifted me on his shoulders. He towered

above the other partygoers at six foot four, and I'd reached my hands up, convinced I could touch the sky.

Sometimes when I looked at the scant photo album charting my life with him, the ten photos of just me and him, I had a glimpse of a memory, a shimmer that quickly faded. My fourth birthday and the car birthday cake Mum made. Him lighting the candles, urging me to blow them, feeling his breath next to my ear as he helped me blow. I'd examined myself in the mirror, trying to see the resemblance. Something in the way the stubble covered my skin highlighted my square chin and high cheekbones. The one thing I'd wanted from him was his towering height, but alas, my mother's genes had dominated, and I was only 5 foot 10.

Mum's face cleared as she recognised me. 'Jesse, tell me about your day,' she demanded.

I placed my backpack on the shoe shelf in the hallway and wheeled her to the kitchen. 'First up, I had English,' I told her, as I opened the fridge and took out carrots, celery, capsicum, and the eggplant dip that was her favourite. 'We had a class debate about the ethics of cloning for language analysis.' I closed the fridge and took out the chopping board. 'My team won, of course.' I chopped the vegetables and placed them on a platter, fanning them out around the eggplant as I told her the Disney version of my day. There was a debate, but Joshua King was in my English class and made it a point to torment me by interrupting me every time I spoke. The teacher attempted to stop Joshua at the beginning of the year, but now was completely worn down and just let the class bully suck all the attention from the room.

I pushed Mum's wheelchair to the kitchen table and sat across from her. As we ate our snacks, she laughed at my jokes, her full cheeks wobbling.

'I love you, Jesse,' Mum said, her hand patting mine.

I held her hand in mine. Her fingers were thick and swollen, her knuckles barely visible. She'd had breast cancer five years ago

and, as part of her treatment, had her lymph nodes removed, which affected her thyroid. At first, the doctors thought she suffered from depression. She was tired and slept most of the day, and her short-term memory deteriorated. She attempted to keep up with her job as a nurse but cut back her hours more and more as fatigue hit her. Her memory began failing, and she made a few mistakes on the job. She was put on sick leave. Without a job, she drifted increasingly into lethargy, sleeping all day, gaining more and more weight. By the time she was diagnosed with hypothyroidism a year later, her career was in ruins, and she was morbidly obese and struggling to function.

I wheeled Mum back to the living room and parked the chair in front of the TV. She smiled as I turned the television screen back on. I returned to the kitchen, washed the dishes, and then checked the casserole I had started in the slow cooker this morning. I put on the rice in the rice cooker, glancing at the clock. I had an hour and a half until my sister Sarah returned from work. I went to my bedroom. I turned on my computer, flicking through my notes and working on my English homework. When I finished, I went to the backyard with a washing basket, collecting the washing from the clothesline I'd put up in the morning. I folded it as I went, returning to the house and placing the dried clothes in our wardrobes and drawers.

I checked on the rice cooker and the slow cooker. Both were finished and on warming. I served the table, putting out three dinner plates and cups, and the cutlery, then returned to my bedroom and started my history homework. I heard the front door open, and Sarah called out. Her murmurs from the front room as she kissed Mum hello, followed by footsteps down the hall and a quick knock on my door before she peered in. 'Hello, baby bro.' She blew a kiss.

I smiled at her. She looked so much like me. The same blonde hair and blue eyes, the shape of the face. We both took after Mum. Looking at Sarah was like looking at Mum twenty years

ago. Sometimes it made me sad. If Mum had been diagnosed earlier, how different would our lives have been?

‘See you in ten.’ Sarah went to her bedroom, and I heard the shower.

It was the first thing she did when she came home, jump in the shower and get rid of all the clothes she wore. Nursing was grimy work, and she felt she had to decontaminate hers. Sarah was twenty-two, six years older than me. After Mum went into remission, we expected life would return to normal, but it didn’t. The thyroid medication that she used wasn’t effective and had some pretty nasty side-effects.

Those were tough years. We survived on a pension Mum received from the government. We had to go to the food bank, and all my clothes were secondhand and frayed. Our extended family had to chip in regularly to help with large bills, and every time there was a visit from the Department of Human Services, our Aunt Cara came to stay overnight, pretending that she was living with us, to fend them away. When Sarah turned eighteen, she did a nursing course and started working full-time. At least the financial struggle eased a bit, but I had to take on more household duties to relieve the burden from her. I didn’t mind. I was just relieved that those days of stress and scarcity were behind us.

While Sarah was showering, I served up the food and placed it on the table. Mum wheeled herself from the kitchen. As I brought over a jug of water, Sarah walked in, wearing grey tracksuit pants and a matching top, her hair tied up loosely in a ponytail.

‘You’re a lifesaver.’ She sat down and lifted the serving ladle. ‘I didn’t have time to take a lunch break.’ She heaped her platter and began eating, shovelling in four spoonfuls by the time I had served Mum and me.

‘That’s better,’ Sarah said after a few more spoonfuls. ‘My stomach has stopped attempting to eat itself. How was your day? Anything interesting happen?’

'We had a class debate.' I sipped water.

'You did. How did you go?' Mum asked me. She had forgotten. Even though I'd told her the story two hours before. Another side effect of her condition.

I told the story again, this time for Sarah's benefit. We always began with my day. Sarah could only tell her work stories when we weren't eating, as most of the ones she found interesting or funny involved bodily fluids.

'Oh, also I met the new girl,' I added, serving myself another portion.

'New girl?' Sarah's spoon paused on its way to her mouth. 'Name, description, attributes?'

'Sabiha, blonde, blue-eyed, Bosnian Muslim. And I guess her key attribute was angry.'

'So she's the angry new girl?' Sarah smiled as she spoke.

'I guess she has reason to be. She's Bosnian Muslim, and her family came from the war.'

'Mmm. You forgot to mention she's pretty.' A wicked smile lit up Sarah's face.

'What? I don't need to say that.' Even as I was speaking, I felt my cheeks flushing. I had been awestruck the first time I saw her, and as we argued in history, I had felt more than the stirrings of intellectual debate.

'Oooh, so she's really pretty,' Sarah prodded.

My cheeks got hotter, and I flashed her an angry look.

'Stop teasing your brother,' Mum intervened. 'Just because Jesse finds the new girl pretty doesn't mean we have to tease him.'

'Muuuum,' I wailed.

Sarah and Mum chuckled. This was the problem with being the only male in the house. I was constantly outnumbered and outmanoeuvred.

'What was your day like?' I asked Sarah, desperately hoping for a tale of horrible bodily fluids to take the attention of me.

‘Oh, have I got a story for you.’ Sarah cracked her knuckles, a gleeful look on her face. She loved telling excruciating stories. ‘A man came in. Or should I say, hobbled in. After he’d checked in, claiming an excruciating stomach ache, he wouldn’t sit down.’

I closed my eyes and shuddered. It was going to be one of those excruciating stories about an obstruction in the bowel. Sarah gestured and mimed as she revealed details of the interview and investigation. When she shared details of the extraction, I had to breathe through my gag reflex. This was the problem with getting your wish. It was always a regret.

After we ate, I collected the dishes.

‘Shoo.’ Sarah took the plate off me and shooed me. ‘I’ll do the dishes.’

‘It’s okay. I’ve got time.’

‘You’ve done enough for today.’ Sarah went to the kitchen and filled the dishwasher while I returned to my bedroom. Sarah still had to bathe mother before bed, but she always wanted to be fair.

As I was completing my Maths homework, there was a brief knock, and the door opened. I knew without looking it was Brian. He had a distinctive knock of refusing to wait for the all-clear before barging in.

He threw himself on my bed and sighed. I spun in my chair and turned to him. ‘Do you want to talk about it?’

He was lying on my bed with his hand over his face. He shook his head. ‘No point.’

I turned back and left him. He must have had another argument with his father. Nothing else laid him as low.

‘Okay, I’m ready.’ He sat up.

I handed him my notebooks. He scrawled on sheets of paper. I finished my homework and flicked to the document where my mate, Charlie, and I were working on a graphic novel. Charlie was autistic, and while he was high functioning and so could endure the hallways of a public high school, he had found ways to cope. One of them was wearing headphones every day.



Another was fictionalising the school into a post-apocalypse world where everyone was a zombie or survivor. We'd started the project as a lark in our graphic design class when we were paired up, mostly because we were the class rejects.

At first, Charlie hadn't wanted to speak to me at all, but I'd watched him with his sketchbook. I began writing captions for his drawings that I showed him. He loved it, and pretty soon we were collaborating. One day, he showed me a blank page. He wanted me to write the story, and he would draw it. And so that's how we started. Now it has become a therapeutic after-school activity. I would write about what happened to me during the day, but re-setting it into my imaginary world and email it to Charlie. He'd send me the images the next day.

Charlie drew in black and white pencil and then scanned it. He got a fancy scanner that his extended family had pooled money for his last Christmas present, wanting to give him a chance for self-expression.

After I received the new pages, I'd lay them out using the publishing software we had access to at school. We impressed our graphic design teacher with our progress and story. Somehow he hadn't twigged that all the zombies were based on my classmates.

I looked at Charlie's photos and laughed as I saw Joshua King's zombie clone being killed with a hammer pounded to the head. I heard Brian shifting on my bed behind me. He stood and leaned over my shoulder.

'How many times have you killed Joshua King now?' he scoffed.

'Not enough,' I muttered as I saved the images to my computer.

'Listen,' Brian cleared his throat. 'About what happened in the library today—'

'I know,' I interrupted him. 'I completely freaked Sabiha out.'

'Yeah. She doesn't really know you yet. So we should probably keep all this on the down-low from her.'

I looked at the images before me. I was so used to them that the gruesomeness didn't register. There were images of body parts being hacked off, hands twitching as zombies were dismembered and blood, guts and gore spilling out in a multitude of ways.

'Yep, you're right.' I vowed not to mention anything to Sabiha, then I paused. 'Hang on, so she's going to be a regular girl hang?' I looked over my shoulder at him. Brian had gravitated towards girls as friends, but usually these were short-term goss sessions that didn't last longer than a few days. This was the first time he'd expressed interested in a girl.

'Yeah, she's special,' Brian smiled. 'I want her to stick around.'

I nearly said, I thought you were into guys, but bit back my words just in time. Brian had never officially come out, and I'd never asked. 'This is the first time you've had a crush,' I said instead.

'Maybe I just hadn't met the right girl,'

'Yeah, maybe you're right?' I turned around, a stone sinking in my stomach. Why did I care Brian liked Sabiha? 'I'm happy for you, man,' I forced out past my lips.

'Thanks bud. I knew I could count on you.' Brian patted my shoulder and headed for the door. 'Tomorrow.'

After he left, turned back to my graphic novel. At least this was one constant.

# About the author



**Amra Pajalić** is an award-winning author, an editor and teacher who draws on her Bosnian cultural heritage to write own voices stories for young people, who like her, are searching to mediate their identity and take pride in their diverse culture. Her short story collection *The Cuckoo's Song* (Pishukin Press, 2022) features previously published and prize-winning stories. Her debut novel *The Good Daughter*, was published by Text Publishing in 2009 and won the 2009 Melbourne Prize for Literature's Civic Choice Award and is re-released as *Sabiha's Dilemma* (Pishukin Press, 2022).

Her memoir *Things Nobody Knows But Me* (Transit Lounge, 2019) was shortlisted for the 2020 National Biography Award. She is co-editor of the anthology *Growing up Muslim in Australia* (Allen and Unwin, 2014) which was shortlisted for the 2015 Children's Book Council of the year awards. She works as a high school teacher and is completing a PhD in Creative Writing at La Trobe University.

Amra Pajalić publishes her dark fiction using pen name A. P. Pajalic. She also publishes romance novels under pen name Mae Archer.

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# A guide for international readers

This book is set in Australia and uses British English spelling. Some spellings may differ from those used in American English.

Australia's seasons are at opposite times to those in the northern hemisphere. Summer is December–February, autumn is March–May, winter is June–August, and spring is September–November. Christmas is in summer.

In the Australian school system, primary school is for grades Kindergarten to Grade 6, and high school is for grades Year 7–12. Secondary college is a name frequently used for high school. Tertiary education after high school is either at universities and TAFE (technical and further education) institutions.

In Australia, each school year starts in late January and finishes mid-December.

The legal drinking age in Australia is 18 years old.

AUSTUDY is financial help if you're 25 or older and studying or completing an Australian apprenticeship.

# Sassy Saints

*Sabiha's Dilemma* was my debut novel that was traditionally published under the title *The Good Daughter*. This story was inspired by my own experiences of being from a Bosnian background, growing up in the Western suburbs of Melbourne (a low socio-economic suburb) and being brought up by a mother who suffers from Bipolar.

I loved the characters that I created and kept imagining their lives beyond the pages of the book I wrote. The year after publication I wrote a follow up novel about another character, Alma, who finds out she has a half sister she never knew, Sabiha, and through Alma's story I continued Sabiha, Jesse, Brian, Dina and Adnan's stories.

When I embarked on my indie publishing career and was preparing *Sabiha's Dilemma* for release I was hit by a wave of inspiration. What if I expanded this universe and created a series where each character had their own book? This would give me the opportunity to recreate so many of the experiences that happened off-page for each of my characters and to extend their storylines.

And so the *Sassy Saints Series* was born.

## *Sassy Saints Series*

Follow the lives of six sassy teens coming of age in St Albans, as they navigate their sexual and cultural identity and search for belonging.

These books will be an inter-connected series that can be read out of order (I'll be keeping any spoilers off the page). If you want to follow the *Sassy Saints* journey join my mailing list and stay in the loop.

*Sabiha's Dilemma*

Sabiha's dilemma is being the good daughter so that her mentally ill mother is accepted back into the Bosnian community.

*Alma's Loyalty*

When Alma finds out that she has a half sister she never knew, she is faced with competing loyalties.

*Jesse's Triumph*

After Jesse's debut novel is published while he's a high school student, he contends with becoming popular.

*Brian's Conflict*

Brian's dreams of being a designer are in conflict with his father's hopes he'll join the family business as a bricklayer.

*Dina's Burden*

Dina carries the burden of living up to her parent's expectations to make up for her brother's errant ways.

*Adnan's Secret*

Adnan is the perfect son carrying the weight of his migrant parent's expectations, who lives a secret life.

# Also by

## **Memoir**

Things Nobody Knows But Me  
Growing up Muslim in Australia

## **Young Adult**

The Cuckoo's Song  
Sabiha's Dilemma  
Alma's Loyalty  
Jesse's Triumph  
The Climb

## **Romance as Mae Archer**

Return to Me  
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## **Dark Fiction/Horror as A.P. Pajalic**

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