

Sydney Aftershocks

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Introduction: The Night of Shadows and Solace

The summer night in Sydney descended not with its usual crisp tranquility, but with a suffocating heaviness that pressed against the chest of the city. It was a Sunday, typically a time for winding down, but this particular Sunday marked a fracture in the timeline of safety and routine. The catalyst was the terrorist attack at Bondi Beach, an event that unfolded with terrifying speed, sending shockwaves that rippled far beyond the coastline and deep into the suburbs of Parramatta. The serene beachfront, usually a canvas of crashing waves and laughter, had been disrupted by the jarring cacophony of explosions and gunfire, leading to immediate lockdowns and a contagion of widespread panic.

While the city mobilized, a profound, silent trauma settled particularly hard on those who were already untethered—the expatriates living far from the comforting embrace of home. Among these were the 18 exceptional Indian women deputed to the Sydney branch of PCS, a leading IT service provider. These were not just **employees; they were the crème de la crème of the company:** stunningly beautiful, confident, and highly intelligent professionals whose careers were on a global trajectory.

This was supposed to be a night of reprieve. Each of the ladies had meticulously planned a dinner date, a necessary respite from their solitary routines in a foreign land. But the attack canceled everything. Instead of candlelit dinners, they faced microwaved noodles, empty apartments, and the crushing weight of isolation. Loneliness amplified their fear and disappointment, transforming the silence of their flats into an echo chamber where deep depression took hold.

Enter Sunil Sharma. At 35, he was PCS's Business Continuity Manager, a man whose unique interpretation of his title would define the night. Sunil was charismatic, authoritative, and physically disciplined, but he was also married, with a wife, Nahari Das, who had recently given birth. However, tonight, Sunil's definition of duty had shifted. He watched the news, thinking of his team scattered across Parramatta, and reasoned: "Business continuity means ensuring our team is hale and hearty." If the ladies were depressed, the project would suffer. Therefore, he concluded, he was the remedy.

Armed with his trusty e-scooter and a self-assigned prescription of flirtation, comfort, and intimacy, Sunil embarked on a nocturnal mission: visit each of the 18 depressed ladies, offer a hug to soothe their fear, cuddle them in bed for warmth, and, if the lady was ready, make love to them slowly to **cure their depression** and restore their confidence. This was, in his mind, the **Art of Business Continuity**. The night promised a sequence of passionate encounters and unforeseen drama as he zipped into the cold, silent streets of Sydney, driven by duty—or delusion.

Chapter 1: Priya Sharma's Flirtatious Escape and Abrupt Interruption

The humid air of the Sydney summer night whipped against Sunil's face as his e-scooter zipped through the streets of Parramatta. The atmosphere was thick, carrying the distant, briny scents of the ocean mixed with the exhaust and concrete smells of the urban hustle. The streets were quieter than usual, the shadow of the Bondi attack keeping people indoors, but Sunil's electric motor hummed with a singular purpose.

He arrived at a modern low-rise building, the kind with glass balustrades and manicured hedges. This was the residence of Priya Sharma aka Ms. Aussie. Her balcony was easily identifiable, adorned with lush potted plants that she tended to with the same precision she applied to her code.

Priya, at 28, was nothing short of a vision. A brilliant software engineer, she combined sharp wit with breathtaking beauty. She stood 5'4", possessing curvaceous hips that swayed naturally when she walked, long raven hair that cascaded down her back, and large, doe-like eyes set in skin that glowed like polished bronze. Tonight was supposed to be her night. She had a date scheduled with a local entrepreneur, a man she had been excited to meet. But the text had come early in the evening—the date was scrapped due to the security situation.

The disappointment had been crushing. Instead of fine dining, she had microwaved a cup of noodles, eating listlessly at her kitchen counter while scrolling through terrifying news updates. She had scrubbed the bowl with frustration, the mundane chore highlighting the emptiness of her evening, and had collapsed onto her beige couch, tears welling from a deep, aching loneliness.

The sudden knock on the door startled her, making her jump. Wiping her eyes, she approached the peephole, expecting a neighbor or perhaps a delivery, but was surprised to see Sunil. She opened the door, and there he stood, wearing a reassuring, confident smile.

"Priya, as BCM, I'm here to check on you," Sunil said, his voice dropping to a comforting register. "The Bondi attack—scary stuff. Heard your plans fell through."

Relief washed over her. She wasn't alone. She invited him in, stepping back to reveal her attire. She was dressed in yoga pants that clung to her legs and a tight tank top that hugged her figure enticingly, a casual look that was effortlessly sexy.

They sat in her living room, the ambient light casting soft shadows. Initially, they chitchatted about safe topics—work deadlines, the beauty of Sydney's beaches, and their mutual longing for favorite Indian cuisines. But Sunil, skilled in the art of morale-boosting, quickly shifted the tone.

"You look stunning even in casuals, Priya," he said, his eyes locking onto hers. "That smile could light up the harbor."

Priya blushed, the color rising to her cheeks. She thanked him for caring, feeling the heavy cloak of depression lifting simply by being seen and appreciated. Sensing the shift, Sunil moved closer and pulled her into a hug. It was firm and grounding, his strong arms enveloping her completely.

"It's my duty," he murmured into her hair, his hands slowly stroking her back in a rhythmic, soothing motion.