

### **The Unknown Tale of Fernando Lopez by Ahlam Ali Yusuf**

Pain is part of my existences which flows through my throbbing hand. My face was long-healed, solemn and stern, lips latched to the right, my hazelnut eyes peering at myself. I no longer feel the revenge, but parts of it lies in my heavy-hearted soul. My arm is agony at the ragged stump remaining.

Alburquerque's men ensured I would never see my beloved daughter Sofia or hold her in my disabled hands. Betrayals, bitterness and remorse gushed through my heart as if a slithering snake wound itself around my resentful heard. Perfidy was a torrent of darkness but I still didn't regret when we converted to Islam. The punishment of my brothers was far worse.

I couldn't bear their suffering: isolation, ridicule and sleep deprivation. My last ounces of gold spared their lives, vanishing to St Helena. My fate is to remain in Goa (for a further decade and a half) to witness Alburquerque's brutal dominance to my Indian brothers.

In St Helena, algae and cacti are my altar as beautiful butterflies cascaded to flowers like a tide flowing out. I started ploughing and transplanting the weeds to stop them harming the crops. To the peak of importance I shall lie, although my Holiness Clement Vii absolved me from the sin of apostacy. Guilt took over my mind as I felt deep remorse about not helping my fellow brothers. Forever in torment over my past transgressions, yet destined to spend the rest of my days in paradise.