

Chapter 5

Wednesday had come and gone, and James was coming to pick me up in 30 minutes. I was hardly ready. I was pacing around thinking if I looked ok. I was wearing a blue knee length dress. The dress was sleeveless with straps. I left my hair out but styled it a little and put on some blue eye shadow and light red lipstick.

At exactly 6pm the doorbell rang, and it was James to pick me up standing at the front door of my apartment. He was wearing a nice pair of black pants and a shirt and had his brown hair sleeked back with gel. He had brown eyes and was in his mid-20s. I was still stressing about what happened between me and him the other week.

“Hi Cottony. Are you ready?” he said handing me a beautiful bunch of roses. I was surprised he brought me anything at all! I had given him my address, so he could find the place easily but never expected any gifts.

“Yes certainly. You look great.” I said not thinking of anything else to say. “I will just put these flowers in some water.” I walked back inside leaving James standing at the door.

We went and hopped into his car and he drove us to a nice restaurant for dinner. I was so nervous not really knowing what to say or if I should ask about the other week? I thought it was best to say nothing at all. I don't know if he was nervous too, but he wasn't saying much to me either!

We walked into a restaurant that served a range of food and were ushered to a table near a window. I sat on one side and James on the other. The waitress gave us a menu. From the restaurant window you could see a view of the water. On the menu were several choices and I was instantly drawn to purchasing the burger and chips. I knew it wasn't something that romantic, I mean I could have had pasta, or a roast dinner or soup or anything, but I chose the hamburger and chips. Surprisingly, so did James.

The waitress took our order and we had some drinks while we waited for the meal. My heart was pounding a little nervous but excited he had asked me out.

“So, have you got anything planned for the rest of the week,” I asked just trying to make some conversation.

“Not really actually, I am working most of the week.”

“And what do you do?” I asked.

“I work at this small boat building business where we make fibre glass boats,” I was surprised as I never pictured him working for that kind of business. “What about you? What do you do for work?”

“I am a data analyst interpreting maritime data,” I said thinking that our career paths were at least a little similar both within the maritime industries.

“Wow, that sounds exciting,” replied James.

“Actually, it is exciting. I get to go on ships every so often. Our careers involve water.” It made me feel more connected to James and that we might now have something to talk about. James with his boats and me with my maritime research.

“I know it is great! I was never really into boats until I started working at the company I am now,” shrugged James.

“Well that is great that you found something you love doing,’ I replied.

“The other week when we were out dancing, I had such a fun time. We should do that again sometime,” said James. I remembered I was drunk and was attempting to dance and probably looked like an idiot. I always felt a little more laid back when slightly tipsy. I still could not remember exactly what we got up to or what we did!

“Yes, for sure. Truth be told I think I was a little drunk that evening,” I just came out with it.

“I was too,” he laughed nervously. That was reassuring that we were both a little tipsy together I thought to myself.

“Well let’s do it. I would love to have another night out dancing,” I said with excitement.

“Yes, that would be fantastic,” James replied. Not long after our hamburger and chips arrived, and we were sitting there eating while talking about a range of topics, our jobs, our future night out on the town and even what we were going to do on the weekend. I was really enjoying my dinner and time getting to know him. After we finished eating, we went for a walk along the beach together. A cool, crisp, fresh breeze was blowing and for the first time James held my hand as we walked.

After our stroll along the beach, we went back to my house where he kissed me goodbye. I was going to invite him inside, but felt it was too soon in our relationship. This was the second date. I don’t think you can call our first meeting a date as such. I met him a little drunk, we exchanged numbers and then I ended up dancing with him. Therefore, *this* was our first real date and the first meeting was just that, our initial meeting. I was scared something else might have

happened that evening that I had forgotten, but as James never said anything, I don't think it did. And the date was not as scary as I thought it would be. We arranged our next night out together for the Saturday night. I was excited.

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Inside my apartment later that evening I picked up the torn piece of paper that someone had left on my desk on the Monday trying to work out who LR was. I also checked my message bank and on it, was a missed call from an unknown number with a message. I listened to the message.

Hi Cottony,

My Name is Lorena and I am your aunt in law, Franks wife. I have something I need to tell you can you please give me a call,

cheers Lorena.

I was in shock. That note on my desk was from LR was that Lorena Randstand? I wouldn't think so, but you never know. The Note read: *Seallinwold is real. Your uncle had the answer. Please be careful.* What did the message on the note mean? I was excited to ring Lorena, but it was late at 11pm. Too late to ring Lorena. I will ring her in the morning I thought to myself.

I went to bed and slept soundly not waking to anything.

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The next morning was no different to any other morning except I was excited about my evening with James and really looking forward to calling Lorena. I went to work thinking about Seallinwold and what interesting discoveries I would unlock from reading my uncle's journal some more. I hadn't read any more chapters since Monday at work.

That evening I sat down and picked up my phone to ring Lorena. I thought ringing her in the day would not work given her busy schedule as a solicitor. After reading those two sections of Frank's journal I am not sure of my luck at reaching Lorena even in the evenings.

I dialled her number. After some ringing, she answered.

“Hi Lorena speaking,” came a curt well-spoken voice on the end of the phone. I had seen a few photos of Lorena and she looked beautiful.

“Hi Lorena, its Cottony,” I replied gathering she knew who I was given she rang me last night.

“Hi, yes Cottony. I am so glad you rang me. I have some news to tell you.” Lorena sounded very distinctive and straight to the point.

“Great what do you have to tell me?” I asked rather intrigued.

“Well, you know your uncle died, don’t you?” asked Lorena.

“Yes, I do and that he had a heart attack. Also, my uncle left me and my brother Curtis this box full of books and a photo album,” I replied forgetting to mention my meeting with our cousin Dave.

“Ah so you got the box then?” asked Lorena rather excited.

“Yes. I also met Dave on the weekend and I am going out with him sailing on Saturday,” Saturday was going to be rather busy, what with going sailing at 6am and then a dinner evening with James.

“Ah I see. I am so glad you met my son. He was also investigating those books of Franks. But I must tell you those books and the place called Seallinwold is very real. I know you might think I am a little strange, but I know Frank *had* discovered something. Dave knows that too.” Replied Lorena as if it was the most normal thing in the world.

“I am so glad you rang Lorena. I asked Dave for your number. So, you think Seallinwold is real then and not Franks imagination?” I asked.

“I don’t think its his imagination at all. I did at first. Have you read Franks journal yet? Has Dave shown you that?”

“Yes, I have read the first two entries from the journal.” I said with nothing more to add.

“Good, just wait until you get further along in his writings. That journal, I might add, was written before your uncle went on his adventures. A few years ago, your uncle went off on an adventure we called it his fact-finding mission and then he died.”

“Yes, Dave mentioned his fact-finding mission. Do you know what he discovered?” I asked really interested in finding out some answers.

“Yes and no. I know he deciphered part of the books. But we haven’t found any of his deciphering’s yet. It is so frustrating because I know that a place called Seallinwold was a real place that existed and that the writings in the book were the language of that place, but Frank was so good at keeping secrets.....” Lorena trailed off. I was so intrigued that my Uncle would spend vast amounts of his life working on investigating a book in an unknown language and not leave anything to show for it. And that reminded me, his heart attack. I had to investigate that too.

“Ah, so it was definitely a place that once existed?” I asked. I had to tell Alex right away and contact her at some point to see if she had any answers.

“Yes, it was,” was all Lorena said. She wasn’t all that forthcoming with answers and it was frustrating me. Especially because she rang me saying she had something important to tell me.

“I see. Also, do you know much about why Frank died?” I didn’t want to seem too pushy with my questions.

“The autopsy report said he died of a heart attack. He died overseas in Brazil he was cremated. So, they sent his autopsy report and said he had been cremated. I had my suspicions. I was never there for Frank as much as I should have been. I have always been so busy with my work.” Replied Lorena sounding a little guilty.

“I know my brother Curtis, told me that Frank died, he was cremated and then his box of belongings just appeared. He never told me where exactly he died,” I replied interested at another piece of information coming to light. “What are your suspicions?”

“Well about a week before he died, Frank had contacted me. He called me up saying that this person was following him. I was worried for him and told him to be careful. I couldn’t do much else. When Frank went on his fact-finding mission, he never contacted me much and I felt I was here, isolated, but I would ring him every so often,” replied Lorena. I felt a wave of sadness come over me about Lorena. Here was this beautiful career woman who was working so hard with a husband who needed her, but he was too busy investigating those books of Seallinwold.

“Ok. Well I am going to do some investigations into his death if that’s ok?” I thought it wise to ask and then take the lead in finding answers.

“Yes of course its ok,” said Lorena.

“Great I will let you know how I go,” I said in reply. I felt I really wanted to know more about my uncle’s death and the truth about it, especially with that new information about my uncle being followed.

“Great. I just wanted to introduce myself and let you know that Frank was onto something and that I can say for sure Seallinwold is real,” funnily enough I actually believed her and agreed with her. I felt in my heart that those books had something to reveal and I was not willing to give up.

“Its just sad that Frank never left his deciphered text. That would have answered all our questions!” I stated.

“Yes, it would have. I have not found any deciphered text because I really believe that if he had anything written down, he had it with him overseas. So, god knows what happened to it, if it existed.” You could tell there was an air of frustration in Lorena’s voice when she said that. You get a little closer to making a discovery but can’t because Frank never left deciphering’s or if he did someone else stole it or they simply disappeared. What a major setback!

“Would you like to come and have lunch with me next week?” I asked Lorena because she sounded like a nice lady and I was intrigued to find out more information in person. Also, I just wanted to meet her and get to know her.

“Yes, why not!” Lorena and I exchanged information and where we would meet for lunch and times and dates. We had agreed to meet in a weeks’ time on Thursday. I would go into the city to have lunch with her. With her busy schedule I am glad she could spare the time to meet me. I would make sure I had a purpose to be in the city, Brisbane, that day.

We said our goodbyes and I was so excited with the new information I had discovered. I decided to Google Frank Randstand and nothing came up. I googled Seallinwold and nothing came up. I Googled mysterious deaths, discoveries, lost worlds and nothing came up that was of relevance. I was so glad I called Lorena. I was so glad she called me.

I went to bed that night so excited and full of energy for the next day.