

Chapter 6

I woke up very early on the Saturday morning at 4am to drive myself to Manly to go on our sailing adventure. The weather was not too bad for sailing, with only a few clouds and no rain predicted for the day. I got into my car and drove down to Manly.

I arrived at Manly harbour and walked out onto the jetty where there were yachts moored and could see my brother Curtis, my cousin Dave and another man who was the friend. I was excited and a little tired still. It had been such a busy week for me with my work, my investigations into the journal and then my date with James. But I was excited about our sailing trip. At first, I was not really wanting to go and now I was there I was kind of excited to see all the yachts and the water.

I waved and greeted the three young men. Dave's friend was older than him. He looked like he was in his 30s or older and had curly black hair and was of average height. As I got closer to them and said hello, I could see his friend was tallish, slim and had brown eyes.

'Hi Cottony, this is my friend Ralph it's his yacht we are going on today,' said Dave with excitement. I was wondering how his had this older friend who was taking them out on his yacht and thought it best not to ask.

'Hi,' I said to Ralph, Dave and Curtis.

'Shall we get going then,' asked Ralph walking us up the pier to his yacht. It was at the end and looked rather small and unassuming compared to some of the others. I was betting that the mooring fees and maintenance were expensive enough. We embarked on Ralph's small sail boat and climbed down inside. Inside there was a small sitting area, a small working and kitchen area and an area for sleeping at the end. A door behind us led to a small bathroom area with a toilet. It was small and fit for a couple to go on sailing trips. On the deck was a small seating area to sit. I sat down inside the boat absorbing my surroundings and envying how much I would love my own yacht to sail the seven seas. I knew that even if I could afford something reasonable, I would hardly ever use it.

I was excited. I climbed back up the stairs and sat on the side looking out in the distance to all the other boats in the harbour of different designs. Then we were off on our way. Ralph the skipper and we his passengers. My brother Curtis was not feeling too good and was sitting on the deck with the breeze flowing trying to not throw up. I had gone back down stairs, so me

and Dave were sitting in the sitting area discussing Frank's journal and my phone call with his mother Lorena. Ralph was in control of the boat.

I had brought my uncle's journal with me for this journey and took it out to read the next chapter.

26th May 2014. I had spoken to the specialist librarian who looked after manuscripts and special collections and she had never seen or heard of any book called Seallinwold. Of course, I never expected she would have.

I also spoke with a linguist yesterday and he advised, after some careful investigation, that the text in the book is not of any language that existed. I could have told him that myself. He was of no help really.

I had continued with my deciphering myself. It was a sad realisation for me today when I finally realised, I am on my own with the investigations. I have asked everyone who I thought could help and none of them were of any help. I even asked an archaeologist and that archaeologist thought I was a total crack pot I am sure! I think I have got a little closer with my deciphering's.

With the words and text, I have identified several reoccurring words and that many of them appear to be joining words and descriptors. I am not an expert of the English language, so I am finding it so difficult working out what those reoccurring words mean in English. I was thinking this week they are most likely words such as 'and' 'for' 'at' 'it', but I am still a complete novice and more work must be done. The word 'xtzay' I have no idea what that means yet. It occurs many many times and I am struggling. As soon as I have a translation, I am going out celebrating!

As for the map I have concluded that it represents a place that once existed. I know it sounds like a crazy notion. But I just know it was and I can't even explain how. There is nothing more exciting than discovering a place that once existed. I got the courage to mention it to Lorena and although she never said I was crazy, I am sure she was thinking it. She just stood there staring at me as if I had lost the plot and then said, 'that's nice'. However, I was making progress and I now have dinner organised for tomorrow. Signed Frank.

Well that did not answer many questions, but as I read through the journal, I felt I was getting that tiny little bit closer to finding some answers. I feel I am following Franks journey of discovery and at the end will be the answers smack bang in front of me.

I went up on deck to check on my brother and found him and Ralph talking. Ralph and my brother were talking about the football, the weather, and where we were going. Apparently, we were just going out on a cruise for the day. I was rather pissed off that I had to get up at 4am to drive all the way to Manly just for a morning outing on Dave friend's yacht, but I said nothing.

'Curtis?' I said. 'Are you ok?'

'Yes, I am fine. I felt a little sea sick for a bit. Ralph just told me something,' Curtis sounded rather excited.

'What?' I asked.

'Well Ralph used to take our uncle Frank out for trips because apparently he was investigating all these things to do with the sea,' said Curtis. And here I was thinking they were having a normal conversation about sport!

'What? When? What about the sea?' I asked really intrigued now. So, that is how Dave and Ralph knew each other and were friends was it? Dave and Ralph knew each other because of Frank.

Ralph entered the conversation. 'Well, I was contacted by your uncle back in 2014 towards the end of the year and he was asking me about tides, currents and what I knew about seamounts and wave patterns. I said I could take him out sailing for the day, but my knowledge of seamounts was another matter!'

'So, you took him out sailing?' I asked confused over the joining factor between a trip out sailing and a mysterious book.

'Yes, and he spent most of that first trip sitting where your brother is now taking notes and I didn't ask him why. Then a few weeks later he called me wanting another trip. This time he brought Dave with him. Dave is into sci fi like me, so we became friends.' Now that Ralph had said that everything was falling into place.

'So, did you find out why he wanted you to take him sailing again? Or why he was asking about seamounts?' I was so intrigued now, especially being a maritime data analyst.

'No, he never told me. He would come out on my boat, take notes and then not tell me anything. I had my suspicions,' said Ralph.

‘And what were your suspicions?’ I was standing there between Ralph and Curtis so excited I wanted to jump up and down with glee.

‘It was my suspicion that he was analysing the waves, wind, sea and all that sort of stuff. I seriously thought he was a scientist and then Dave told me he wasn’t.’ That was not what I was expecting or wanted Ralph to say. I was hoping he would say, Frank found something so profound that it changed the world as we know it. But nope my uncle was just interested in sea patterns and hell I do that every day at my work!

‘Right....’ I said trailing off disappointed at Ralph’s answer.

‘Look I think its best I keep out of it Cottony,’ replied Ralph. I just agreed with him and knowing my brother was ok I went back downstairs to talk to Dave. I wanted to ask him about Franks adventures.

‘I was just speaking with Ralph about your dad’s sailing trips with him. Do you know anything?’ I asked as I sat down inside and folded my arms and rested them on the small fold down dining table.

‘Um...Well he was investigating the changes in weather, waves, land formations to correlate them with the map in that book Cottony,’ said Dave as he wriggled in the chair a little uncomfortable.

‘I see,’ I said as I raised my eyebrows. So, Frank wasn’t just off exploring the waves, he had an objective. It was now making more sense. Exploring the different changes to see if the map in the book existed? What was still puzzling me is why would he explore the shore and waves and water off Australia’s east coast? Is that where he believed the map in the book was located? I doubted that very much! ‘So, did Frank think he had found the location of the map in the book?’ I sounded very unconvincing, but I came out and asked it anyway.

‘No. He was documenting all possibilities. But he had access to our coast, so he explored it every chance he got,’ replied Ralph. I just sat there thinking about all the possibilities.

We were still going further out and away from the coast today in Ralph’s yacht. I asked Dave where we were going, and he said we were going out a little further and would anchor and have some lunch, and coffee. It was a morning outing for Ralph and Dave to catch up on everything. I was just excited to find out how Dave knew Ralph, and to discover that the sea patterns were somehow linked to my uncle’s mystery. I would investigate that back at my work. I would examine all the wind, wave and underwater land formations in relation to the map in that book. Who knows what I might discover.

At about 11am after being out sailing and navigating we had some lunch. It was just prepacked sandwiches. I can honestly say that even though we left at 6am, it felt like I had not been out on the yacht for that long at all! What with between having a cup of coffee, talking to the three young men and reading my uncles journal, I didn't have much time left for anything else.

After our sandwiches and while still onboard I rang Alex. We had a great chat and I updated her on all my findings. Alex had discovered something of her own that she did not wish to disclose 'over the phone' and I agreed to catch up with her on the following weekend on Saturday and she would come around to my apartment. I had a busy week ahead of me that was for sure.

We sailed back to shore and I disembarked. I was so happy and agreed to go sailing again in the future. Now I had to drive all the way home to prepare for a night out on the town with James. I was exhausted, and I had to perk myself up. I drove home to get ready for the evening.

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That evening I got dressed in a nice short black dress and did my hair all nice. Me and James were going dancing and night clubbing that evening. I was excited. I had got home from my sailing trip feeling a little tired and had a rest before preparing for this adventure.

That night James and I arrived at a disco club at around 11pm ready for our night out on the town. James came over around 9pm and we had a late meal and then went clubbing. I was such a novice at the night club scene. We had a cocktail and were dancing and dancing the night away. I wished I wore something other than that short black dress as it kept riding up my thighs and causing me all sorts of issues.

After a few drinks I was enjoying myself and not caring about much else. James was the worst dancer I had ever seen and yet I loved just being with him. We talked while we danced, and hours passed before he drove me home. That night was one I will never ever forget. I invited him inside and passed out on my lounge. I was so tired!