

Chapter Three

The next day I woke up at around 7am to the sounds of chirping birds through my bedroom window. I had the tsunami dream again. The sun was shining and the day just beginning. After getting home from dad's yesterday I was feeling a wide-ranging flood of emotions from sheer delight and excitement, through to extreme sadness and shock at my uncles passing and my mother's affair.

I had some toast for breakfast and sat there flicking through the news of the day on my phone. I wasn't sure what to make of having a newly found cousin just yet. I mean what was I to think? I had no clue what my uncle was up to and to be honest, I had not thought about him much at all. I was so young when my uncle and dad had a fight, so thinking about my uncle or that I might have a cousin never entered my mind. I was in shock when my brother Curtis rang me last week. It's not that I don't love hearing from my brother because I do, its just he rarely calls unless he really wants something. So, when I hear from him, I am genuinely in shock and my thoughts turn to working out what he wants!

I was excited that I was going to meet my cousin Dave for the first time in my life. I know so little about him, except he lives in Nundah, that he is only 16 and he has answers about our book Seallinwold. So, is that enough information to draw any conclusions about our newly found cousin? I doubt it. I will know more when I meet him later today.

I decided to go for a drive first down to the beach and go for a walk to clear my head. My head was clogged with a range of thoughts and hearing the waves from the water lapping upon the shore is bound to help. I was hoping it would help. I went and got my beach gear on and got in my car and drove myself down to the closest shoreline.

I was walking along the beach deep in thought listening to one of my inspirational podcasts when I had a vision. Lately I have been having these dreams where I am work or at a beach and a massive tsunami comes crashing over me, at which time I wake up. I have been thinking of investigating my dreams because I am sure it must mean something. Why else would a woman my age, 23, continue to have the same dream night after night and week after week? Albeit I do have slight deviations to the dream, but its always a massive wave engulfing me at some point in my dream. As I was walking along the beach the thought of a real wave coming crashing down over me and drowning me was such a scary thought. I felt fearful for a second. When you are sleeping, even though the dream feels real, its just a dream and you wake up feeling a little shaken. When you are really hit by a massive wave you probably don't have time to think. But now thinking about what it would really be like if my dreams became a reality was scaring me. I continued my walk and then walked over to a nearby shop to have a morning coffee. I had my fresh air and was ready for a drink.

My local coffee shop that I normally go to was closed because it was Sunday, but I quickly found another. Many shops and cafes were still open and serving breakfast. I ordered my coffee and sat there

in my swim ware not really thinking, just daydreaming about a range of things. Those range of things varied from planning my day at work for tomorrow through to thinking of ideas for a business. What on earth would I need to start a business when I had a successful job at a company I liked? Well I had always wanted to start a business and right at this very moment my brain was thinking about how I would go about it. How would I start a business? I wanted to start a business selling stuff, my own craft stuff. I also wanted to be eventually leading my own oceanography related establishment. I had spoken to a career counsellor about it when I was younger and was kindly advised that there is not much need for an oceanography related business. I finished my coffee and then went back home to get dressed for my catch up with my cousin.

*

I drove up to the address that my brother Curtis had given me. There was a small front yard with a metal wire see through fence. I opened the gate and walked up a small walkway to the front door. The house was a small creamy coloured building with a brown wooden front door and a window on each side. I knocked, and a scrawny young boy opened the door. He was wearing a pair of jeans and a white T shirt. I could see a small family resemblance and assumed it was Dave. He had light brown wispy short hair and had brown eyes. I could tell he was our relative.

“I am Cottony Randstand,” I said introducing myself to the scrawny boy.

“Hiya. I am your cousin Dave,” he replied outstretching his hand to shake mine. We shock hands and he ushered me into his house. The first think I thought of was is this his mothers house? Lorena was her name I was told; would I meet her too? I followed Dave into the lounge room to see Curtis siting on a shabby looking lounge with that Seallinwold book firmly in his hands.

“Hi,” I said to my brother Curtis as I sat down next to him on the lounge.

“Can I get you a drink or two?” asked Dave sounded rather grown up for a 16-year-old nerdy looking lad.

“Yes please,” I replied without thinking. “So, do you live here with your mum, family or by yourself?” I sounded rather invasive with that question I felt as it was coming out of my mouth.

“No no. I recently moved out of home. You see my mother Lorena is a career woman and was never home anyway. She is a solicitor and my father Frank had become a weirdo of a life time with his psycho investigations. When Dad died the other week, I moved out of home. Would you like tea or coffee or a soft drink?” God was it me or was Dave taking everything rather calmly for someone who is young and has had a parent die? What Dave just said just threw me.

“Um...” I trailed off. “Tea please.” Curtis looked up from the book as if he had been complete oblivious to the conversation between me and Dave that had just happened. Dave went out into the kitchen to fetch me a cup of tea.

“So how are your investigations going?” I asked Curtis.

‘Um good. I had a quick chat with Dave about his findings, but he insisted I wait until you arrive, so we can discuss it altogether.’

‘Right, is it just me or is he rather grown up for his age? I mean did you just hear him then speaking so calmly about his father’s death, his mother and him moving out of home?’ I was almost whispering because I didn’t want Dave hearing me.

‘A little and from what I gather he had to grow up super-fast. His mother was never home even as a kid because she was too busy at work and being a socialite, and then his father went off exploring some unknown world travelling overseas leaving him all alone! I mean how would you feel? You are there alone in your house having no clue where in the world your father is, while knowing your mother won’t be home till late. You cook your own dinner, watch Netflix and plan your escape! I mean that is what I would be doing Cottony, honestly...’ Curtis was also speaking rather softly, and he had a point. I mean how would I feel if that was my situation? Curtis my brother was no angel either I might add.

“I understand. I know how it is,” I lied not really relating to how Dave must have felt at all. I was not willing to ask him either! “Can I have a look at that book again?” I said pointing to the Seallinwold book my brother was reading or trying to read.

“Sure,” said Curtis handing me the book. I was flicking through the contents of its pages as I had done yesterday feeling none the wiser. Dave walked back in the room with a hot cup of tea and placed it on the small side table next to the lounge. The lounge looked old and was covered in a brown coloured material. The lounge seated three people, with me on one side and Curtis seated on the other sprawled out a little with some books and material placed in the middle between me and him. The lounge looked like it belonged in the 1980s, not something in a modern house of the 2010s. I had a quick glance around the rest of the room finding another brown coloured recliner single chair to the left of the main lounge, and a large TV sitting on a TV stand near the window. The carpet was a light creamy colour and was clearly old and shabby. I was gathering the rent was cheaper here than some of the newer accommodation options in the Nundah area. Even the curtains were an off brown colour and looked like they were so old it was hard to find what era they belonged.

“So Cottony how much do you know about my Dad?” Asked Dave as he sat in the recliner chair.

“No much at all I am afraid,” I said truthfully hoping he would enlighten me.

“Well after my Dad and your Dad had their falling out, my father married my mother and I was born. Dad said he met Mum at a party. Then all was completely normal until recently. When I was about 13

my Dad said he was going overseas for a while to investigate something big. That's all he said and then I found his journal." said Dave so calm as if that was a normal thing for a young lad.

"His journal?" I asked.

"Yes, well I don't know if you would call it a journal, but it was his writing book where he put his daily musings and findings about Seallinwold that he had been writing. When I first read it, I thought what the hell is this crap! And when he died, I read it again with a different thought in my mind because I had access to that book your holding....."

"I see," I said flipping the book over in my hands. I didn't see anything or understand much either.

"I then knew what he meant by Seallinwold and what the hell he was talking about! I mean he went on and on and on about a place called Seallinwold in his journal and how he needed to know more and go exploring. I thought he was mental. My father was too busy humiliating me in front of my friends for me to worry about mysteries." I knew how he was feeling completely. I felt for my cousin. I had only known him for about 10 minutes and yet his story was rather amazing if not unbelievable. Imagine it, a young lad living a relatively normal life as a nerdy teen and then his father, my uncle, goes overseas on an adventure the likes no one has ever seen or heard and then he dies. I felt for him.

"So, what did you think of your Dad then?" I asked Dave.

"I thought he had gone mental. One day he came home from his 'normal' job sprouting on about how he had discovered something. He was pacing up and down the room like a psycho! I just sat there in our house thinking what the hell has happened to the man I called my father. To be honest I had been planning to move out of home since I was much younger."

"I see," I said not knowing what else to say while sipping on my tea. The tea was so tasty and full of flavour. "So, did he solve the mystery of Seallinwold?"

"He was apparently getting close to it. I will go and get his journal," said Dave getting up to get the journal. So, there was really a journal? I was now intrigued at what uncle Frank had written down. Why had we not got this supposed journal?

About two minutes later Dave walked back in carrying a tatty looking notebook. A notebook that you can pick up from Coles for 50c that all school kids use. It had a blue cover. Dave handed me the notebook. On the front read Notes. Nothing important just the hand-written word *notes*.

"Sorry I took so long I had to find it. You see dad went overseas roughly two years ago for his fact-finding mission – well that's what I call it and mum did to if anyone asked. This journal, book was written prior to that and he left it here and I found it."

"How did you find his personal journal?" I asked rather intrigued.

“Well I needed some money one day and I had asked mum to no avail in the morning, so I went searching in their chest of draws in their bedroom. Low and behold I found the book your holding and no money,” said Dave sounding as if searching through his parents’ room was the most normal thing in the world. Even my brother’s ears were pricked up listening intently. “What?” Dave shrugged. “I needed money to buy food for lunch! Honestly, I was only 13 and mum did not say anything. Anyway, I didn’t get to eat lunch that day.”

“Why didn’t you just make yourself a sandwich or something?” asked Curtis thinking rationally for once.

“Because we had nothing to eat in our house and anyway, I hate sandwiches!” said Dave explaining himself away. “You two have no clue, do you? My mother never ate much and ate out most of the time, so did dad. Food in our house wasn’t their priority.” I understood and felt it wasn’t our business to question how he came upon his father’s journal anymore.

“Curtis have you seen this?” I asked pointing to our uncle’s journal in my hands.

“Nope,” said Curtis. “How about you read some of it?”

“Ok,” I said opening the first page of the notebook not knowing what to expect. “Do you mind if I read this out loud?” I asked to no one in particular. Both Curtis and Dave said they didn’t mind. The text was hand written in a hard to read cursive handwriting in dark blue ink.

“18th of May 2014. Oh good the writing is dated.” I said out loud for no real purpose. I continued and read the first entry of the journal.

“I had re-examined the book titled Seallinwold today. A few years back I had a friend, a carpenter, who died, and he left me some of his stuff. In his stuff was this book and I had no idea what to make of it. On the front cover of the book is a word ‘Seallinwold’ and when I first read it, I felt so confused by it. I felt it meant nothing and was just a normal book. That was until I opened it and could see the writing was in another language. I had no way of knowing what the text meant or what it said on any of those pages. Here I was with this book. I left it. The book sat there on my book shelf until now. I picked it up again today and really gave investigating it some thought.

My wife Lorena is off at some function for her legal stuff and I have some time. Me and Lorena have not been that close lately. She is way too busy and every time I ask her if she wants to join me for dinner or anything really, she waves me away, saying she has work to do and that work is somehow much more important than spending time with me. Even my son is busy off with his friends.

I googled Seallinwold and nothing came up. I also sifted through the web searching for languages of the world to see if that strange text matched any known languages and I found nothing. That language is so strange and different from anything I have ever known. The book intrigued me. I had never had

the chance to work on anything so interesting and different in my life. I will go and visit the library tomorrow and see if anyone there has heard of this book. – signed Frank

We all sat there in silence absorbing the first short entry of the notebook. Wow I thought. Now I was feeling for my uncle, what with having a wife who was too career focused to want to even have dinner with him. He must have felt so alone and maybe that book and investigating its contents gave him that escape. It must of gave him something to focus on. What a family. I could not imagine having a mother that would work so hard and not even want to join my Dad for dinner, and therefore, I felt for Dave too. I also felt for Lorena, who was so busy being the breadwinner and working her life away. Maybe her work was that demanding that she had no other choice? I made a mental note to ask Lorena when I got the opportunity to meet her and speak with her.

“Wow, now that was interesting,” replied Curtis. “Are you going to read anymore?” I thought about it and then looked to my younger cousin for some guidance.

“Can I take it home and read it?” I asked Dave.

“Sure, you can. I think we all don’t need to hear the personal thoughts of my father anymore,” I think hearing that his mother Lorena was not there that often had struck a cord with him. It may have reminded him of something. I didn’t feel it was my right to ask him. “Actually, I have my own theories about Seallinwold now.”

“So, you think you have an answer?” I asked Dave.

“I wouldn’t say an answer as such, but I have some ideas that I think are worth investigating. I heard your archaeologist friend Alex is also investigating?” asked Dave rather interested.

‘Um... Yes, she is. She borrowed the second book yesterday,’ I said.

“Yes, your brother told me. I was excited,” replied Dave. “Next weekend I am going on a sailing boat trip out in the harbour. Do you want to come?”

“Come? Um, who else is going?” I asked not sure I should be spending weekends with my young cousin.

“Curtis and another friend of mine,” replied Dave.

“Well ok, what time and where?” I asked not sure in my mind I was really agreeing to anything. You know what it’s like when you say yes because you feel you should, but you don’t really want to go. It could be my introverted nature or just me. That’s how I truly felt. I love water and going on any sort of sailing trip made me happy, but then the other side of my brain was questioning going with my cousin.

“We are meeting at Manly harbour at about 6am next Saturday are you in?” asked Dave.

“Why that early?” I sighed. I didn’t want to get up that early on a Saturday. I live north so I will have to leave about 4.30am to get there for that time. Ugh I don’t know now I thought to myself. That’s a tad to early.

“A fresh start to the day,” that’s all Dave said. I just nodded and agreed to the event and agreed that I would be there at Manly at that time regardless of how long it will take me to get there. It was worth the effort, I convinced myself even though in the back of my mind I was not really convinced.

I put the journal in my handbag. My handbag was crammed packed with an assortment of things. The small notebook fitted in there nicely in between my makeup and purse. I then looked at my brother who was sitting there on the lounge not doing much. Once he had passed me the Seallinwold book he just sat there listening intently to me and Dave. He was listening intently to what I read out from the journal.

I had finished my cup of tea and Dave was telling us about his life and what he was up to now he lived on his own. I did not see any point in asking more about Seallinwold at this point because I had the journal to read first. I was so excited for Dave and what he was up to. He was at school during the day, year 11, and in the evenings, he worked at pizza hut in the back-making pizza’s and in customer service. He also had a weekend job as a waiter. He was a busy young lad. I had wondered how he could afford rent. He said his mother Lorena co signed the lease with him. I knew there had to be some way he was able to rent his own property at such a young age.

Dave was smart and switched on. He put me and Curtis to shame. I remember when I was 16, I had school and a part time retail job and so did my brother.

We went through some photos of Dave as a young child and he looked a little like us and that made me happy. It was our proof he was really our family and we were going to finally get to know him and he was going to get to know us. The photos were of him as a scrawny young boy sitting in front of his computer playing games. I loved the photos.

I then asked if I could have his mother Lorena’s phone number. “Dave?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Can I please have your mother’s phone number?” I felt bad asking him. I didn’t feel it was my right.

“Yes, of course do you have your mobile?” He took my mobile off me and entered his number and his mother’s mobile number into my phone. I didn’t know when I would have the gumption to ring Lorena, but I knew I was going to at some point in the future. I really wanted to hear her side of the story and if she had any more information about Frank.

“Guys because I am such a bad cook..... No, I am not really that bad, but I can’t be bothered making us food today, so I am going to order us a pizza,” Dave said and picked up his mobile. “Do you have any requests?”

“A pizza? I am fine Dave really. I am not hungry,” I said. Curtis did not say anything at all.

“Right well I am sure you will be hungry when the pizza arrives. Because I work at Pizza hut, I get freebies every so often. I will get us a Hawaiian, supreme and meat lovers.” Dave rang and ordered. I was surprised at the number of pizza’s he ordered. There were only three of us and he looked like he didn’t eat much normally. I could be mistaken as sometimes skinny people eat a hell of a lot and just don’t put on any weight. We will see I thought to myself.

About an hour later at around 1.30pm the pizza’s arrived and although I was not that hungry, I began eating some. The pizza was delicious and full of cheesy goodness. We finished the pizza’s, finished going through the family photo albums and then me and my brother Curtis prepared to leave.

I honestly thought that by now I would have more answers. I think Dave didn’t want us to find out everything in one sitting as it would have been a lot for us to take in. The news probably was the journal I thought to myself and the journal will answer my questions. That first entry alone was enlightening and full of information. I would read more at home anyway.

I said goodbye to Dave feeling more knowledgeable and went home.