

Chapter 8 – Australia Present Day

The mystery deepens

The identification of a second photo from the history book in the library was something that both excited and scared Lena. She had got dressed and was sipping on a nice strong cup of coffee when her cousin Trish rang.

‘Heya!’ said her cousin Trish. Trish was a chubby woman with brown hair and these blue piercing eyes.

‘Hi,’ Lena replied.

‘How are you?’ said Trish. What was an amazing thing with all polite phone conversations, was how no matter what the nature of the phone enquiry all dialog began with hi and how are you?

‘I am good and you? I have something to tell you. Are you sitting down?’ asked Trish with an excited edge to her usually dull voice. Trish was not one to get excited easily.

‘Good, um yes. What do you have to tell me?’ asked Lena.

‘I did my heritage the other day and found out that we have these amazing ties to Norway. I am so excited about it! On our mother’s side we have a great great grandmother named Shirley Knudson who has ancestors who were born in northern Norway,’ Trish sounded so excited and that was unusual for her.

‘Wow, I didn’t know you were into family heritage Trish?’ As Lena was saying it, something clicked in the back of her mind. Where had she heard or seen the name Shirley Knudson before?’

‘Yes, I am a little into our heritage. I have done some research. Grandma told me the other day you were investigating a photo of hers that had this man in the background who she doesn’t know?’ asked Trish.

‘Well that’s grand about the ancestry stuff, gran never told me much. Yes, I am investigating the photo, but haven’t had much luck yet. I am meeting up with a photographer later today to see what he can tell me. Actually, you mentioned a Shirley Knudson?’ asked Lena really

excited for a minute. ‘Its just that name rings a bell,’ and then it dawned on her. The woman in the history book, wasn’t her name Shirley Knudson? Lena would have to check her phone.

‘Yes, um our great great grandmother is a lady named Shirley Knudson and her great grandfather was born in Norway. His name was Jens and he came over here in 1815. He was born in 1803 or so and apparently his father died in an accident, so they moved over here. I have a lot more research to go,’ replied Trish. That was exciting. Lena had another clue and piece to the puzzle. That a lady in the book was an ancestor and maybe just maybe that other man next to her was somehow linked to their heritage too? Only time will tell thought Lena.

‘Wow, I am excited. I never knew we had partly Norwegian heritage,’ Lena was in surprise and in shock at the great find. ‘Its just... I found this picture in a history book and in the picture was a lady named Shirley Knudson. Is it possible that the lady is our great great grandmother then?’ asked Lena.

‘Really? Where? Can I have a copy? It is possible it’s our relative for sure,’ said Trish rather excited. Lena pulled the phone away from her, went into her photos and found the one of Shirley and Sidney and sent it directly to Trish. It was amazing what technology could do these days.

There was a bit of silence at the end of the phone and then.... ‘Wow wow wow! I see a resemblance to us a little anyway. The lady is blonde, but the face and everything... I see a little resemblance.’ Lena looked at the copy of the photo and in truth she did see a little resemblance too. She could see how the lady could be their ancestor. She could also see something else that was forming before her very eyes, the man next to her in the photo, Mr Sidney Davis, was he their ancestor too? Is that why his doppelganger appeared in grandma’s photo?

‘I see a resemblance. But there is something else Trish. Did Grandma share a copy of her photo with you?’ Lena asked.

‘No, she didn’t, why?’ asked Trish.

‘Well. Um... that man standing next to Shirley, Mr Sidney Davis, he is an exact ringer for the strange man in grans photo,’ said Lena putting all the pieces of the puzzle together. ‘I am not sure what that all means just yet but.....’ Lena was excited to say the least.

‘Really? Can you send me a copy of grandma’s photo? I would love to see the comparison.’ replied Trish excited. This was the first time she had seen a photo of Shirley Knudson and given the timeframe and the rarity of the name, at least in Australia, it was extremely likely that she was indeed their great great grandmother. ‘Who would have thought our great great grandmother would be so beautiful. I am so surprised really.’

‘I love it. All this is making that little bit of sense to me now,’ said Lena just excited and surprised that the woman in the photo was their relative. How was that even possible? It was such a mystery to her. ‘Do you have a copy of our family tree? I would love to see it. It might make it easier to understand who that mysterious man in grandma’s photo is.’

‘Yes, I do. I do. I will email you a copy. We might also have ties to Iceland as I think I have discovered a mystery there, but only time will tell,’ replied Trish.

The two of them continued with their discussions about their newly found relative Shirley Knudson and what she was doing at that charity event. Was she the event organiser or just an attendee? They ended their conversation and Trish was going to send Lena a copy of her research notes and the family tree.

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Later that day, Lena was sitting in a café having a coffee and lunch with Milo’s friend Zach. Zach had in front of him an enlarged copy of her grans photo complete with modifications and information about what he had discovered.

Zach was a young man in his 20s with black fuzzy hair positioned high on top of his head and he was a bit of a nerd. Zach and Milo had met at one of many of their photography conventions and both had an interest in sci fi, reading and all that sort of stuff. Lena was just so grateful that Zach was willing to help shed some more light onto the mysteries that her grans photo presented.

‘Zach, what have you discovered?’ asked Lena really interested into finding out his views and opinions on the topic.

‘Well, do you see here in the photo?’ Zach was pointing to his big picture. ‘That man in the background he looks a little different to the others.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Lena.

‘Well, see here how the man is a lighter colour to the others in the photo? That means something, it could mean it was a film that already had some photos on it and was reused and new photo’s taken over the top of it.’

‘Like an overlay and that my family could have reused old film that they had without knowing?’ asked Lena.

‘Well that’s something to consider. But, now here is the thing that is puzzling me. Look at what the man is wearing. That is not something that anyone of our time would be wearing. His clothes look like they belong in the earlier 1900s to me. Granted I am no expert of history. But that’s what is puzzling me,’ Zach shrugged.

‘So, what are your other theories, or is that the only one?’ asked Lena.

‘No no. Well actually that’s the most scientific one. That your family could have had an old film not developed and it was reused. Another is that someone had taken an old photo and wanted to play a prank and put your new photo over the top and then took a photo of that photo. Or more likely used photo editing software to make the two photos look like one image. How did your grandmother come by the photo in the first place?’

‘Um. I think she said she just had it in her collection. My family were at a gathering at her house. The neighbour took the photo, but I do not know much more than that,’ said Lena truthfully. It was puzzling her.

‘So, it is like a ghost in the image? That is so spooky,’ replied Lena. Even if it was a film that was reused, and he was from an older photo, who was he? Was he the Mr Sidney Davis? Lena thought that would make sense if that strange man was an ancestor. Then that way if her grandmother found an old film, thought it was unused and loaded into the camera and started taking new photos with it, it would make sense and be logical. ‘Did Milo show you a copy of that new photo I found in a book the other day?’

‘Yes, he did. That is intriguing, but I can tell you that the Sidney Davis and that man in the original photo are not the same person,’ said Zach.

‘So, they are definitely not the same person then?’ asked Lena rather intrigued.

‘No, not the same person. I enlarged that photo too, and although the quality was so bad, I compared the two images with my software. The two men are related, but not the same person.’

Zach had taken out another rolled up photo from his bag and showed Lena and Milo the two images next to each other. The one from the book looked grainy, but you could see where Zach was coming from. The images of the two men when laid out side by side, looked similar and like brothers, but not actually the same person. That was interesting as now Lena was thinking that Mr Davis was somehow connected to their ancestry.

‘Do you know how the two would be related? It’s just my cousin Trish rang this morning and I found out that the woman in that image could be my great great grandmother, Shirley Knudson,’ replied Lena so excited at her findings for the day.

‘I am not able to answer how exactly they are related, but Sidney could be his grandfather or grand relative. I strongly recommend doing some family history research,’ replied Zach. Lena would wait until she received the family history tree and then see if she could find some images of her ancestors. That way she would have an idea if Sidney was an ancestor. Funnily enough Trish never mentioned a Davis in the family history. Although she was too focused on the exciting news that she was part Norwegian.

‘I will do, can I have a copy of those two images you have?’ asked Lena pointing at Zach’s large copies of the photo’s in front of him. Lena thought it might help in her investigations.

‘You can have these copies,’ said Zach handing them to her. Great. Lena stared at the images and tried to process in her mind what to make of them. The more she stared at both pictures the more she could see how the two men are related.

But the mystery still deepens.....

Lena needed to see how the two men were related. She had work to do. Zach and Milo had to go back to work and Lena was too excited. So, Lena went home to check her emails in anticipation for Trish’s email.