

**HISTORICAL NOVELS AND RELATED GENRES
IN THE HISTORY CURRICULUM**

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BA (Hons) (Tas.), MEd (Tas.), PhD (Tas.), PhD (N'castle), PhD (Tas.)

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Volume 1

*Whose History? engaging History students through historical
fiction, University of Adelaide Press, 2013.*

Volume 2

Exegesis

and

A Time-slip Novel: Saving Sydney (unpublished)

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy, School of Education, The University of Adelaide**

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ABSTRACT

Based on publications, this thesis is submitted for examination in two separate parts. Its overarching theme, however, is an examination of historical novels and related genres as a means to enhance student engagement in the History curriculum. The thesis was written during a time of considerable falling enrolments in Australian senior History classes, which has been juxtaposed with the mandating of the teaching of History in Australian schools for Years K(R)-10, with Years 11-12 to follow in 2014.

The thesis argues that the teaching of History in grades K(R)-10 can be greatly enhanced through the strategic use of historical novels and their various genres. Not only does the pedagogical use of historical novels increase students' engagement with History, but this pedagogy also significantly enhances their understanding and appreciation of history as a discipline, greatly increasing their historical literacy. This pedagogy improves students' knowing of both history and the discipline of History, and is a method of developing students' understanding about the relationships of peoples and events in the past.

In order to demonstrate these statements, this thesis has been developed in three parts: a recently published scholarly monograph (volume one); an exegesis and a time-slip novel, written with intention of publication, and to demonstrate the arguments advanced in the scholarly monograph (volume two).

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Grant William Rodwell and, to the best of my knowledge and belief. Contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

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Grant William Rodwell

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ACRONYMS and ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Commission
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
CIB	Criminal Investigation Bureau
ERA	Excellence in Research for Australia
FECCA	Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
HMAS	His/Her Majesty's Australian Ship
HMT	His/Her Majesty's Transport
HTAA	History Teachers' Association of Australia
K(R)-10	Kindergarten/Reception to Year 10
NAPLAN	National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
POW	Prisoner of War
SA	South Australia
SACE	South Australian Certificate of Education
SOSE	Study of Society in Education
WA	Western Australia

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Whose History?

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This book is available as a free fully-searchable PDF from
www.adelaide.edu.au/press

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/press/titles/whose-history>

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EXEGESIS

A CONTEXTUAL STATEMENT: HISTORICAL NOVELS AND RELATED GENRES IN THE HISTORY CURRICULUM

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INTRODUCTION

This PhD thesis by publication is submitted for examination separately in three parts: a Contextual Statement: Historical Novels and Related Genres in the History Curriculum; a published work in the form of a scholarly monograph – *Whose History? Engaging History Students Through Historical Fiction*; and a time-slip historical novel – *Saving Sydney*, which is technically in manuscript form, and awaiting submission to a publisher.

This submission comes at a time of heightened anxiety for the study of History in Australian schools and colleges. A variety of challenges and also exciting opportunities face teachers of History, not the least of which is the Australian History Curriculum, mandated for all students from the first year of schooling through to Year 10, and from 2014, to Year 12. What are the challenges here for teachers of History in Australian schools and colleges? For many Australian teachers, most likely the only History they have taught since the early 1970s has come from a Study of Society and Environment (SOSE) (in New South Wales, Human Society and its Environment—HSIE) curriculum, which may have resulted in a dumbing down of studying History as a discipline. Ironically, over the same period these developments have been coupled with drastically falling enrolments in History in Years 11-12, where students have a subject choice; and there are a number of associated challenges and opportunities, which are described and further developed in this contextual statement, and in the associated scholarly monograph.

Yet, important opportunities exist that may have significant benefit for our students. Indeed, there is an opportunity here to meet these challenges with

a revitalised set of pedagogies, particularly through the use of historical fiction and its related genres. Principally through its scholarly monograph component, this thesis demonstrates how this pedagogy not only enhances the development of historical literacy, but also is a potent tool of engagement for students.

Time-slips novels are a subset of the historical novel genre, and I have written the accompanying time-slip novel, first to demonstrate how the reading of this genre can engage students and at the same time enhance their development of historical literacy. There has been little of the genre written in an Australian context, and I hope this attempt will stimulate students, teachers and curriculum planners to delve more into this fascinating and charming form of historical literature, enriching a literature-rich History classroom environment.

CHAPTER ONE

The Context of the Study

Introduction

This PhD thesis has been written and submitted during immense developments in secondary and post-secondary teaching of History in schools. Included amongst these are: new demands on the school curriculum resulting from the national assessment; a very strong decline in students attempting History at a post-secondary level; changing school demographics; the continuing impact of postmodernism on our interpretation of history; and new concerns about teachers' understanding of history in the light of the national mandating of the teaching of History in all grades from K(R)-10.

NAPLAN testing across Australian schools

Anecdotal evidence reveals for me the huge effect that the National Assessment Plan – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) has had on school communities. As I move about schools doing my research and undertaking my professional role, talking with teachers, or observing student teachers participating in their practicums, I am struck with the time that schools are spending in preparing Years, 3, 5, 7 and 9 students for their NAPLAN assessment. This activity is relevant to this study in respect to the amount of time schools devote to NAPLAN testing, and how this can detract from time responding to the imperatives of the newly introduced national History curriculum. Most teachers will comment that the imperatives of NAPLAN far outweigh those of ACARA History.

National concerns have been reflected in a mass of research reports and media commentary on the effect that NAPLAN testing is having on schools. Dr John Collier, headmaster of St Andrew's Cathedral School, and chairman of the NSW/ACT (Independent Sector) Academic Committee, has written:

One of the problems with making the NAPLAN results so high stakes is that it will encourage schools to teach to the test with endless drills to make students 'test savvy', which may improve their score but not fundamentally affect their literacy and numeracy. It will encourage schools to narrow their curriculum to place extensive focus on literacy and numeracy at the expense of the richness of the current curriculum, with less time spent teaching the sciences, humanities, or the creative arts. Such narrowing is not in the interests of nourishing an educated and civil society (Collier, 2010).

Other research endorses these concerns. For example, in a national survey of the research of the effects of NAPLAN on the curriculum, Au (2007) locates research supporting Collier's (2010) findings, while highlighting competing views. Some studies suggest this form of high-stakes testing is only one of the limiting factors on classroom curriculum, it has little influence on teacher practice in classrooms, and actually can improve learning experiences. Other research, however, suggests this form of testing narrows the curriculum, limits the ability of teachers to meet social needs of students and interferes with broader practices of educational measurement. Certainly, the study was 'limited by the fact that the research was looking only for changes in curriculum as a result of high-stakes testing and, therefore, studies that showed no change were not included in the analysis' Au (2007). Au (2007) found NAPLAN had three major forms of curriculum control on schools:

Content Control – Majority of studies found a narrowing of curriculum (both subject areas and content) to address testing needs.

Formal Control – Significant number of studies suggested that knowledge becomes increasing fragmented in high-stakes test situations to allow for test-size pieces of knowledge.

Pedagogic Control – Move towards teacher-centred instruction as a result of testing to allow for transmission of test-related knowledge (Au, 2007).

Clearly, the ACARA History curriculum is going to be restricted under these conditions. This is so mainly because, as I have argued in my *Whose History?*, in many educational jurisdictions, History has not been taught as a discrete curriculum area since the early 1970s, a period of time spanning two generations of teachers.

Decline in History enrolments in schools and colleges

The ACARA History curriculum has been mandated in Australian schools from grades K(R)-10 during a time of massive falling enrolments in History in Years 11 and 12. There have been immense demographic changes to the Australian population since the Second World War, but particularly during the last thirty years, there has been a significant increase in Islamic and Asian immigrants, which are immediately mirrored in Australian school demographics. These latter demographic changes have occurred at a time of a huge decline in the students' interest and participation in History in schools.

The scholarly monograph component to this doctoral submission (Chapter 1) deals at length with Clark's (2008) national survey of students' responses to the content and pedagogy of their History curriculum. The survey revealed generally extremely negative views of content and pedagogy.

This translates into massively falling student enrolments in History in Years 11-12. In South Australia there is a well-publicised issue surrounding an alarming fall in the number of South Australian schools offering History the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE, 2012). Writing in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, with an article titled 'Humanities takes a hit', Holderhead (2012) recorded the alarming decline in some subjects,

including History, and an accompanying increase in Mathematics and Sciences in South Australia. This occurred during a time of the restructuring of SACE, the so-called New SACE, which has featured students' independent Research Project. The class of 2011 was the first to complete the revamped SACE, which introduced the research project to replace a fifth subject in Year 12. Falling enrolments in History were confirmed by the SACE Board of SA (2012), which reported declines in South Australian schools offering Australian History from 18 in 2008 down to eight in 2011; schools offering Modern History in South Australia fell from 108 in 2008 to 87 in 2011. These are alarming statistics, indeed, especially for SACE History teachers beginning their careers.

Changing demographics of school populations

The disturbing decline in enrolments in History at a senior level corresponded with a considerable changing demographics of school populations.

In 2000 Professor Graeme Hugo from the Geography Department at the University of Adelaide addressed the Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia on the subject of past, current and predicted demographic changes of school populations. He wrote that 'some of the most rapid and significant changes in the Australian population in recent decades have been in its composition. The national population is becoming more diverse and heterogeneous in a number of ways' (p. 3).

Hugo (2000) shows a rapid and sustained growth in Australia's Indigenous school population: '55 percent between 1986 and 1996 compared with 12 percent among the non-indigenous population', and 'projected that natural increase alone will see the Indigenous population increase to 400,800 in 2001, 441,516 in 2006 and 497,181 in 2011. This would see the Indigenous population increase to 2.4 percent of the total population' (Hugo, 2000, p. 3).

In regard to the changing Asian component of Australia's school population, referring to the 'ethnic strength' of various groups making up Australian society since the 1996 census, Hugo (2000) showed 'the Asian component increased from 0.4 percent in 1947 to 3.2 percent in 1987, 3.3 percent in 1998', and he extrapolated this to '10.2 percent in 2030' (Hugo, 2000, p. 4).

Hugo (2000) goes on to show 'another area of changing population composition which has important implications for teachers is the massive shifts which have occurred in family composition and functioning in recent decades' (p. 4). During the 1950s and 1960s an Australian teacher could assume that the bulk of the students in their classes came from a two-parent family in which one parent (usually the father) worked outside the home. But now this 'applies to less than one tenth of children'. Moreover, 'overall in 1997 of 4.6 million children in Australia aged under 18, 1.1 million (23.9 percent) lived with only one of their natural parents' (Hugo, 2000, p. 7). Moreover, during the past three decades, there has been a rapid growth in blended families (Hugo, 2000, p. 9).

These are massive changes in the demographics of Australian schools, and they run parallel to the decline in History enrolments in Australian schools. There is no available data and analysis similar to that developed by Hugo (2000) available based on the three Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) censuses conducted since Hugo's (2000) analysis. However, a cursory read of the ABS 2011 census data reveals that overall national trends are very similar to that predicted by Hugo (2000) (see ABS 2011 census data).

Perhaps, not surprisingly the demographic changes of Australian schools are similar to those in the United States. Steeves (2007), has shown that generally the content of the History curriculum in United States classrooms, and the manner in which it is reflected in textbooks and electronic formats, have reflected these demographic changes. For Steeves (2007), this in turn has required considerable professional development by American teachers. But, for Steeves (2007) these steps in professional development has to do

with content: that is, aligning appropriate content for ethnic diversity. The research for this present doctoral thesis principally concerns pedagogy and the manner in which it relates to the development of students' historical literacy.

Steeves (2007) has addressed the issues of the apparent pedagogical differences between History taught in universities and that taught in schools and colleges. Teachers do not always respond to the new demands of a pedagogy suited to a wide range of student ability and cultural backgrounds found in schools and colleges:

Research shows that the method and materials of college history classes are translated daily into the K-12 classrooms as the way history should be conveyed. If lecture is the primary method of delivering the ideas, theories, and data of historical inquiry, this, then, becomes the method that college students perceive to be the appropriate one if they themselves begin to teach. Research also indicates that lecture is not the most effective daily method for the diverse learners in today's schools. At the very least, the lecture method must be combined with active discussion and with exercises that involve the use of historical materials and historical analysis (Steeves, 2007).

The issues impacting on student dissatisfaction with History teaching and the History curriculum in schools, and consequent falling enrolments in senior History clearly are very complex, and most likely are due only partly to the factors of changing demographics of school populations. Also running concurrently to the changing demographic composition of Australian classrooms has been the rise of postmodernist thought.

In the wake of postmodernism

Undoubtedly, postmodernism has had an enormous influence on the interpretation and writing of history. What is the nature of the History curriculum in the wake of postmodernism?

In Chapter 7 of the scholarly work component of this doctoral submission I discuss how Parkes (2012) describes the effect of postmodernism on

historiography. Clearly postmodernism has also had profound influences on the way in which history is recorded and interpreted. At the core of postmodernism is a denial of any notion of absolute truth. In this manner, postmodernism connects with my arguments for the use of historical novels, which presents history through the lives and experiences of the characters involved. Perhaps, in this manner, historical novels undermines the objective base of the discipline.

Parkes (2012, p. 99) argues ‘historiography is vital for any critical approach to the study of histories, but lethal for a History curriculum that desires to maintain its claim to truth’. So, engaging students in historiographical discourse mainly at a senior level is at the heart and soul of any History curriculum. This is the reason why I spend so much space in my scholarly monograph component dedicated to this study arguing for historical novels as being a starting point and stimulus for this discourse. But, as Parkes (2012) argues, this discourse should not be expected to arise from any discrete component of historiography in the History curriculum, but rather should arise from incidental discussion during the course of the teaching of the curriculum, to avoid, as Parkes (2012) puts it, ‘quarantining historiography’. What better way to stimulate this discourse than through a discussion of a historical novel?

Teacher preparation and teachers’ understanding of History as a discipline

Prior to the rollout of the ACARA History Curriculum in 2012, in Australian middle schools (usually years 7-10) the term ‘teachers of History’ referred only to teachers in Victorian and New South Wales secondary schools, and a small number of independent schools throughout the country. Dating from about the early 1970s, teachers in the other Australian educational jurisdictions taught History through SOSE, or some variation of that.

Having never studied History as a discipline, when confronted with the imperatives of the ACARA History curriculum, the new pedagogical and

content demands may challenge many teachers. The introduction of the new ACARA History curriculum, as compulsory for all students from Kindergarten (or Reception) to Year 10 raises an important issue in relation to teachers. In addition to those teaching specialisation in History, a great many other teachers will be required to teach the subject once it becomes compulsory for all classes. Those who have never studied History as a discipline may find the pedagogy and subject demands of the ACARA History curriculum very challenging. Under these circumstances, there is a danger that the quality of History teaching in schools will be comparatively less.

How could the History Curriculum and Methodology courses in in Education programs throughout Australian universities, and teachers of History in general in Australian schools and colleges, respond to these current imperatives? Could they adopt what perhaps might be new historical knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudes that might more effectively engage school and college students in History teaching? To what extent do the History Curriculum and Methodology students adopt new and engaging approaches to teaching History in schools and colleges, or do they transpose the methods in which they found so much success and enjoyment in learning History during their undergraduate and honours years? How might these students and practising teachers adopt new pedagogies specifically associated with using historical novels as a teaching/learning strategy in schools and colleges? Underlying these issues is the challenge to students' historical understanding of history as a framework and structure of knowledge is what Husbands (2011, p. 87) calls 'conceptualizations of the discipline'.

Wilson and Wineburg (1988, p. 526-7) investigated the influence that social studies teachers' diverse disciplinary backgrounds had upon how they 'think about history' and their approach to the teaching of History. They focussed upon four social studies teachers in their first year of teaching, each of whom had a different undergraduate major and all of whom taught American history classes in high schools. Through the course of their study,

the authors identified four ‘dimensions’ for organizing the differences in these teachers’ ‘conceptions of history’. These included ‘the role of factual knowledge, the place of interpretation, the significance of chronology and continuity, and the meaning of causation’.

Based on their observations of these teachers, Wilson and Wineburg (1988, p. 537-8) concluded that in the social sciences, ‘[l]earning about disciplines is not simply a matter of acquiring new knowledge... It also entails examining previously held beliefs’ (p. 537-8). The authors noted that there was a need to raise all teachers’ ‘*awareness* of different ways of knowing’ and the impact these philosophical and methodological differences could have upon the teaching of History. This is what Husbands (2011, p. 87) refers to as teachers’ ‘procedural concepts’ (for example, their understandings of ‘change’, ‘evidence’ and ‘continuity’) and their ‘conceptualizations of the discipline’ (their understandings of ‘the nature of history as a framework and structure of knowledge’.

Husbands’ (2011) set of concepts, first identified in Canada, and labelled Benchmarks of Historical Thinking (Seixas, 2006), in Gilbert (2011, p. 254), ‘offer a more elaborated and complex guide to historical understanding’. Gilbert (2011) shows how they feature in the *Framing* paper (2008a) and the *Shape* paper (2008b) of the new national Australian History curriculum, two documents vital to the Australian History curriculum. As Gilbert (2011) explains: ‘International research on historical pedagogy has identified core components of historical understanding’ (National Curriculum Board, 2009, p. 6, as cited in Gilbert, 2011, p. 254). These benchmarks are based on ‘Seixas’ (2006) benchmarks of historical thinking (Historical significance, Evidence, Continuity and change, Cause and consequence, Historical perspectives, Historical empathy and moral judgement), with the addition of two further concepts of contestation and contestability, and problem-solving. As Gilbert (2011, p. 254) concludes, ‘it seems clear that the Australian history curriculum developers saw these concepts as the foundational ideas of the discipline’.

‘Since ancient times’, writes Sam Wineburg (2001, p. 5), ‘the pundits have lamented young people’s lack of historical knowledge and warned that ignorance of the past surely condemns humanity to repeating its mistakes’ (p. 5). In an interesting precursor to Liberal Prime Minister John Howard’s Australia Day 2006 address to the National Press Club, (described in Chapter 10 of *Whose History?*) Wineburg continued: ‘in the contemporary United States, this dire outlook drives a contentious debate about what key events, nations, and people are essential for History students (p. 5).

How can university curriculum and methodology lecturers encourage student teachers in secondary History curriculum and methodology courses to embrace new pedagogies and break away from the lecture-type delivery, in light of the manifest success and enjoyment they gained in their History courses at an undergraduate and honours level? Before we begin to discuss various pedagogies that should be developed for student teachers of History, let us examine of the kind knowledge they should possess.

Concluding remarks

The first component of the study, the scholarly monograph, titled *Whose History?* is framed implicitly on a literary-rich curriculum. It is written for students in History Curriculum and Methodology course and teachers of History generally in school and colleges during a time of enormous opportunity and challenge for the nationally mandated teaching of History in Australian schools. This is a theme developed in much greater detail in the following section – Part One of the First Component of the Study, *Whose History?* But the central thesis of this PhD submission also is premised on an argument that the use of historical novels and their various sub-genres can enhance the quality of pedagogical practice, as well as students’ historical literacy.

CHAPTER TWO

The First Component of the Study:

Whose History?


Introduction

This component of the PhD thesis is an exhaustive and scholarly study of the place of historical fiction in the History curriculum in Australian schools and colleges. It is written for History Curriculum and Methodology undergraduates and graduates, as well as practicing teachers of History in schools and colleges. It sets out first to illustrate the popularity of historical novels amongst the Australian public-at-large, in the face of drastic falling enrolments in History in senior classes in Australian schools. How can the study of historical fiction enhance students' engagement in the History curriculum, and their understanding of the discipline of History? This surely, must pose serious questions for History curriculum designers and teachers in Australian schools and colleges.

What kind of historical knowledge should History Curriculum and Methodology graduates possess?

In an article that aims to unpack 'History teachers' knowledge about history', Husbands (2011, p. 86) writes 'a critical foundation of teachers' knowledge is their substantive or content knowledge, which is often detailed, deriving from either degree or their continued engagement with reading or television and DVD documentaries'. Husbands' conceptualisation of History teachers' knowledge about history has close relationship with Peck and Sexias' (2008) and Sexias' (2006) research. For

Husbands (2011, p. 86), ‘successful teachers deploy this knowledge in both planning and action’. In order to explain this, Husbands (2011, p. 87) developed a tri-partite schema, a conceptualising of a hierarchical form of knowledge:

History teachers’ knowledge about history, Husbands (2011, p. 87)		
Substantive content knowledge	Procedural knowledge	Conceptualizations of the discipline
Knowledge of content and context	e.g., ‘change’, ‘evidence’, ‘continuity’	Understandings of the nature of history as a framework and structure for knowledge
		

As Husbands (2011, p. 86) claims, ‘the implications of very detailed content knowledge are often clear in successful History lessons, and especially in extended classroom questioning where teachers used students’ residual knowledge to ask closely focused questions and to probe pupils’ responses, to correct or explore misconceptions’ (p. 86). While most History teachers and History Curriculum and Methodology lecturers in universities acknowledge the importance of content and contextual knowledge, as Husbands’ (2011) schema illustrates, quality History teaching also recognises the dynamic relationship with the other two elements of History teachers’ knowledge about history: i.e., procedural concepts and conceptualizations of the discipline.

In explaining how teachers move in a cognitive and affective manner between the substantive content knowledge, Husbands (2011, p. 86), Husbands (2011) draws on research by Lee and Ashby (2001):

[S]ubstantive history is the content of history, what history [is] 'about' ... procedural ideas about history ... concepts like historical evidence, explanation, change are ideas that provide our understanding of history as a discipline or form of knowledge. They are not what history is 'about' but they shape the way we go about doing history (p. 215).

Each of the elements of Husbands' (2011) schema for History teachers' knowledge about history is in itself constantly in the process of change and continual development, as social and cultural factors impact on current understandings, and consequently on how we interpret the past. As I have stated in my *Whose History?*:

Writing history is what people do to persuade others that events are knowable and that life and civilization has some direction and purpose. That is why events are being reinterpreted continually, as society's values and knowledge constantly change, allowing for an expression of new prejudices (Rodwell, 2013, p. 146).

Consequently, our substantive content knowledge is dynamic, constantly undergoing change as historians re-examine the past, and respond to how social and cultural groups are increasingly given a voice in history, or have it taken away from them in subsequent power struggles. For example, Indigenous Australians – the Australian Aborigines – since the 1960s have attained their rightful voice in Australian history. This, to a large extent, has occurred because of social, cultural and political changes.

This, in turn influences, and is influenced by our procedural concepts of, for example, 'change', 'evidence' and 'continuity'. We come to understand these are transient and problematic terms. The relevance to the teaching of History is contextualized by a particular socio-political and cultural setting. At present in Australia, with the onset of the ACARA History Curriculum considerable emphasis is being placed in these procedural concepts. As I show in my *Whose History?* (chap. 3) Taylor from the National Centre for History Education, addressed the issue of developing 'historical literacy' in our school students, and proceeded to outline a list of necessary components of historical literacy.

Husbands (2011) explains how an appreciation of these procedural concepts is associated with the level of teaching experience and pedagogical understanding.

A distinction between novice and experienced teachers lies precisely in their different approach to procedural concepts: a lesson might be 'about' the Battle of Hastings, whereas for experienced teachers the lesson is 'about' the procedural concept [namely, 'change', 'evidence', 'continuity'] One important way of thinking about learning to teach a subject is, therefore, that it involves the acquisition of increasingly sophisticated understandings of procedural concepts (p. 87).

Is this level of professional development, possible, however, *vis-a-vis* History Curriculum and Methodology student teachers? How to teach about procedural concepts may depend on classroom experience, and an understanding that cannot be pushed too quickly in University History and Curriculum Methodology courses.

Regarding the third element in Husbands' (2011) schema of History teachers' knowledge about history, namely, 'understandings of the nature of history as a framework and structure of knowledge' relates to history as a discipline. To a large extent, in this regard History Curriculum and Methodology student teachers are dependent on their experiences undertaking undergraduate History courses, and, of course, their own readings in the subject. Husbands (2011) writes about this in this way:

For history teachers this has a particular prescience given the pressure of their subject in the curriculum. For one of the teachers in our study, 'history is riddled with uncertainties, history is up in the air'. For another, 'the question I ask is "am I enabling those children to do good history?" ... history for me is setting questions, finding out, coming across the problems of methodology, patterns being thrown up that then raise finding out more'. Successful teachers draw on an overall conception of history as a discipline. Recent work has emphasized the importance of organizing ideas and frameworks – what Foster et al (2008) have called 'usable historical pasts', and this sense

of the epistemological frame for history is a critical component of teachers' subject knowledge (p. 88).

The epistemological frame for history constitutes what people perceive history to be. This connects very closely with historiography. For example, one may ask 'is history to be understood in a deterministic manner, forever evolving towards a better world, with progress an essential ingredient'? This is sometimes referred to as a triumphalist, or an evolutionary idealist view of history, and sometimes referred to as Whiggish history – a historical interpretation premised on the fundamental idea of progress in historical developments. On the other hand, some people may perceive history to be a chain of events determined by the modes of production, and the resulting class conflict. This is referred to as neo-Marxist history, and its essential element is its determinism. Yet again, others may perceive history to be something more akin to chaos theory. This latter view allows for free will, and human agency, and completely rejects any notion of determinism.

A central question posed by Husbands' three categories of History teachers' knowledge about history is teachers can accelerate through these stages, as in Piaget's developmental stages, do individuals require sufficient experiences in order to advance from one stage to another? This may well be the subject of future Australian empirical studies.

Whose History: Engaging History Students through Historical Fiction

This component of this the PhD submission grew from my earlier paper, 'Historical Novels: engaging student teachers in K(R)-10 history pre-service units', published in *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* in 2010.

In the above research paper, as a response to the rollout of the ACARA national History curriculum in 2012, I asked, 'How do we engage student teachers in the many and complex aspects of historical knowledge, understandings and historical skills?' (p. 27). I responded by advocating 'the use of historical novels as a stimulus for teaching/learning in pre-service teacher education History curriculum units' (p. 10). In doing so, I wrote

from the point of view of student teachers being prepared for K(R)-10 teaching.

My research in the above paper drew on work by Tony Taylor from the National Centre for History Education who showed:

teacher competence in the history curriculum is more about developing historical literacy, and this has multiple facets, many of which are underpinned by values. So developing trainee teachers' expertise in the history curriculum will have as much to do with developing passion and values as it will have with skills and knowledge ...

Through their readings of historical fiction, student teachers develop an appreciation of the powerful and engaging medium of historical narrative, and one that is in tune with its rising popularity in our society and culture (p. 28).

At the time of publication, the *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* was an Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Category A journal. My paper was immediately published, and I received considerable anecdotal comments of support from colleagues for the article. It seemed logical to follow the 2010 article up with a more extensive study, addressing teachers of History generally throughout Australia, as well as university students undertaking History Curriculum and Methodology courses.

The organisation of the academic monograph

I have organised the study into four parts. Part 1 is titled *The Challenges of Compulsory History in the Australian School Curriculum*, and comprises three chapters. Chapter 1 concerns issues confronting Australian teachers of History working in education systems wherein the teaching of their subject has been mandated. In Chapter 2, I seek to advance an argument that the issues surrounding student engagement through historical narrative points to a need to examine the place of pedagogy, in particular the place of narrative in the pedagogy of the History curriculum. In Chapter 3, I develop this line of argument through looking at the pedagogical dimensions of historical novels and the development of historical literacy.

In building up an argument for the use of historical novels, Part 2 of the monograph leads the reader into understanding the genre of the historical novel. Consequently, Chapter 4 defines the historical novel. Chapter 5 examines the increase in history as a subject for novels, and memory and the context of interpretation. From here, in Chapter 6, titled ‘The plot against the plot’: ‘page turners’ for students, I look to the way in which authors of historical novels such as Alexander Dumas’ *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-45), or such gripping movies as Zoltan Korda’s *The Four Feathers* (1939), re-filmed as *Storm over the Nile* in 1956, again by Korda. Indeed, *The Four Feathers* was redone in 2003 by Shekhar Kapur, and starring Heath Ledger and Wes Bentley.

This same quest and enthusiasm for historical novels is continued today with works from the pen of such renowned and acclaimed authors as Steven Saylor, and represented in his historical novel, *The Judgement of Caesar* (2004). Chapter 7 moves the argument for the use of historical novels in the History curriculum through to counterfactual histories. I distinguish between straight counterfactual histories, written in nonfiction style, from alternate histories, written in the style of a novel. Consequently, Chapter 8 explores the use of this latter sub-genre of historical fiction in the History curriculum. Concluding Part 2, is Chapter 9, titled ‘Caught in Time’s Cruel Machinery’, and which deals with the use of another sub-genre of historical novels, that of time-shift novels, in the History lesson.

Part 3 of the document is about deconstructing the historical novel, and is written in order to build up History teachers’ confidence in the use of the historical novel in the History curriculum. Chapter 10 asks the age-old question fundamental to all historical enquiry: whose history? The Chapter examines historical fiction and the discipline of history in the classroom: varying views of the past. Chapter 11 deals with issues surrounding understanding the past through historical novels, arguing that the historical novel and the historical nonfiction writing approach a common end, through differing paths. As a logical development, and concluding Part 3 of the

academic monograph is Chapter 12, aims at unpacking historical novels for their historicity: historical facts and historical agency.

The final section of the academic monograph, Chapter 13, is concerned with key themes in Australian history and their reflection in historical novels. Here, I use a multitude of examples of Australian historical novels to explore such themes as national character and our convict heritage; European inland exploration and pastoralism: key issues in Australian historical novels; *Indigenous* Australian/European relations in Australian historical novels; Her Majesty's loyal Australian colonies: patriotism, nationalism and empire in historical novels; and militarism and war in Australian historical novels.

Concluding Remarks

Taken as a whole, the monograph strives to help teachers to comprehend the emerging great opportunity – through the introduction of ACARA History – and challenge, with dramatic falling enrolments in History in Australian schools and colleges. It seeks to lead all teachers of History in Australian schools and colleges to an awareness of the significant pedagogical value in historical novels, and at the same time recognise their role in developing students' historical literacy.

CHAPTER THREE

The Second Component of the Study:

Saving Sydney: a time-slip novel

Introduction

Saving Sydney is a time-slip historical novel written for an adult audience. I have described this sub-genre of historical novels in Chapter 9 of my *Whose History?* Throughout I have argued historical novels not only are a powerful pedagogical tool in the History curriculum, but also in a historiographical sense sit very well beside historical nonfiction.

In a sense, the two works – the fiction time-slip and the academic monograph – are companion documents. I am seeking to demonstrate how historical fiction, even in its most abstruse form of a time-slip novel, can provide very powerful historical insights for students and teachers of History. Therefore, in content the novel needed to be located reasonably close to the Australian school curriculum. There have been few time-slip novels set in Australia, and written for an adult audience.

This time-slip novel provides a pedagogical device to engage students and teachers; it provides historical insights into the history of the period, and should enhance students' historical understanding as well as their historical literacy; and it also provides an opportunity to enrich their historiographical understanding. These aims of connecting historical novels and their related genres to classroom teaching and History curriculum are discussed in greater detail throughout my related scholarly monograph. This provides an

opportunity for what Husbands (2011) calls a conceptualization of the discipline: progressing students to an understanding of the nature of history as a framework and structure for knowledge, which I have described above.

My previous published historical novels

I had published five novels, all of which are in the historical genre. I include a brief summary of them here in order to illustrate my interest and record in publishing historical novels.

1. **Grant Rodwell**, *Tiger, Tiger Burning*, Sydney, William Michael Press, 1994 (364 pp.). ISBN 0 646 18449 0. An Australian social/political novel, nationally reviewed:

Canberra Times 15 Oct. 1994: ‘ALP steals the limelight in this political thriller’;

Bendigo Advertiser, 12 Aug. 1994: ‘Political ambitions are burning bright’;

Advocate (Tasmania), 20 Dec. 1994: ‘Political thriller includes strong Tasmanian links’.

2. **Grant Rodwell**, *Fortunes of Fire: a Historical Saga*, Crawford House Australia, Adelaide, 2003. ISBN 1 86333 261 8 (442 pp.)

‘Richly atmospheric and deeply satisfying...truly the best of both reading worlds: a page-turning story of the exploits of an astonishing man and an indelible portrait of an unforgettable time and place.’ Ellen Tanner Marsh *New York Times* Best Selling Author.

3. **Grant Rodwell**, *Goulburn’s Deliverance*, Sid Harta Publishing, Melbourne, 2008 ISBN 1-921362-52-9 (342 pp.)

‘a riveting read’ Ellen Tanner Marsh, best-selling *New York Times* author.

‘Innocence is shattered in this period novel as the harsh reality of prison life is about to fall on a young Irishman’. John Morrow, *Booktopia*.

‘Bravo to author Grant Rodwell for an intelligent, well-crafted and riveting read which paints a personal portrait of life in early Australia – frills, warts and all. This is not only a story about one man’s personal triumph – flowing and ebbing beneath the pages is a riveting love story. The author is a learned man who has masterfully captured the tone of life in early Australia. The book is loosely based on the early Australian author, James Francis Dwyer. But this is no biography, it’s a captivating and clever work of fiction from beginning to end.’ Wendy O’Hanlon, *Acres Australia*, Editor.

4. **Grant Rodwell**, *Gommeria Woman*, Sid Harta Publishing, Melbourne, 2009 ISBN 1-921362-52-9 (342 pp.)

‘Known for his painstakingly researched and colorful historical novels...Rodwell is back with what may very well be his best novel yet. [His] fertile imagination [has] created characters who literally live and breathe on the page, particularly Fuhi, who is as unforgettable as this absorbing and stunningly vivid work...surely one of the most complex characters in modern literature.’ Ellen Tanner Marsh *New York Times* Best Selling Author.

5. **Grant Rodwell**, *Blood Her Maiden Sword*, Sid Harta Publishing, Melbourne, 2011 ISBN 1-921829-62-1 (93,504, words, 389 pp.)

‘Readers who have a natural affinity with the Australian bush will love this book. Not only does Rodwell beautifully describe the bush, but he has certainly researched the old ways of the Wiradjuri tribe to bring a real sense of cultural depth to this novel... The more immersed I became in this novel, the more appreciative I was of Rodwell’s skills at recounting a story filled with history, traditional ways and just plain good old fashioned storytelling.’ John Morrow, *Booktopia*.

‘Rodwell is a fine writer and a masterful storyteller. This is Australian literature at its best. The colonial world of Australia, particularly Sydney, and the struggle and excitement in building this great country is the backdrop of this fictional story. Rodwell brings this world to life and brings the countryside to life. A must read for Aussies who cherish this country, its landscape and its history.’ Wendy O’Hanlon, *Acres Australia*.

I began to develop a passion for writing a time-slip novel after I had researched the genre for *Whose History?* Then I read a number of recent time-slip novels, including Stephen King’s *11.22.63*, dealing with an attempt to save President John Kennedy from assassination. This is a novel which I consider offers so much to the teachers of History in schools and colleges for the development of students’ historical understanding.

Saving Sydney: a time-slip novel

Saving Sydney is a time-slip historical novel of c. 93,000 words. Of course, its primary aim is to entertain, but in the context of this present submission for a PhD thesis, it also seeks to demonstrate several things for History Curriculum and Methodology student teachers, and for teachers of History in schools and colleges.

Time-slip histories are by their very nature founded on a particular view of history, and for me, nowhere is this more succinctly stated than in King's 11.22.63:

He leaned forward, his eyes not just bright; they were blazing.

'You can change history, Jake. Do you understand that? John Kennedy can live.' (King, 2011, pp. 51-52).

History 'can turn on a dime': it is all about chaos and chance, and far removed from any triumphalism or determinism. With a little imagination, the *HMAS Sydney* can be saved. But what might be the consequences? What are the 'butterfly effects' when an academic and a student from the University of Adelaide travel back in time to save the 645 ratings and crew of the *HMAS Sydney* who perished on that fateful day on 19 November 1941, when the *HMAS Sydney* was involved in a mutually destructive engagement with the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran*.

As I write in Chapter 9 of *Whose History?*, the appeal and value of the time-slip genre for History students comes at least three levels. First, there is the intrinsic appeal of the plot. The sinking of the *HMAS Sydney* was Australia's single most tragic Naval disaster, and came at a time of terrible exterior threats to Australia, and accompanying internal anxieties.

Secondly, there is the potentially fascinating attention to the socio-cultural differences between the two eras portrayed in the novel. Time-slips provide a wonderful and engaging opportunity to portray sociocultural and comparative political themes, such as architecture, law and order, elections, popular culture and transport. *Saving Sydney* also provided an opportunity to take the reader inside the infamous enemy alien and prisoner of war detention camps that were hurriedly assembled in Australia at the beginning of the Second World War.

But for me, the most important reason why our History students should engage with the time-slip genre comes with historiographical opportunities

they provide. The ‘what if ? questions that flow from a reading of this genre are a wonderful opportunity for teachers to explore what Husbands (2011) describes as ‘understandings of the nature of history as a framework and structure for knowledge’ a critical aspect of ‘conceptualizations of the discipline’ (p.87), as described in Chapter one of this contextual statement.

Before teachers engage students with the ‘What if?’ questions that might be posed in the novel, teachers should read the following chapters of my scholarly work: Chapter 7: Counterfactual Histories in the Classroom; Chapter 8: Alternate Histories in the Classroom; and Chapter 9: ‘Caught in Time’s Cruel Machinery’: Time-Shift Novels in the History Lesson. As I state in Chapter 7, it is no accident that Stuart Macintyre and Neill Ferguson should be editing volumes on counterfactual histories. Macintyre is the Ernest Scott Professor of History at the University of Melbourne, since 2002 a Laureate Professor of the University of Melbourne, and Ferguson is Professor of History at Harvard University and William Ziegler Professor at Harvard Business School, and a Senior Research Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford. I conclude Chapter 7 by claiming:

Not surprisingly, there is a growing number of historians and theorists who see counterfactual history in positive terms, as putting contingency back into history, and serving as a strong counterweight to traditional deterministic conceptualisation of history. Moreover, its development during the past few decades marks a growing acceptance of the great need to experiment in our approaches to history. Rightly, with counterfactual history, the History classroom becomes a wonderful and tantalizing laboratory (p. 126).

When addressing counterfactual issues in *Saving Sydney*, teachers may seek to ask their students to consider the many ‘butterfly effects’ posed when the principal characters seek to travel back in time to change the course of history. King does this masterfully in his *11.22.63*, and I am indebted to him for my many references to the *Butterfly Effect* DVD in my own novel. In a sense this is similar to the Coda that Macintyre uses in his *What If?* (2006) to deconstruct the various counterfactual histories in the work. In my novel I

have my principal characters engage in discussion of the butterfly effects of attempting to save *HMAS Sydney* from disaster.

Literary background to the novel

My Barsden trilogy described above features a semi-fictitious family, with each book highlighting a generation of the family. Fuhi Barsden, who first appears towards the close of the first book of the trilogy – *Fortunes of Fire* – was the child of William Barsden and a woman from the Tahitian *Arii* warrior class. She travels to the colony of New South Wales to find her father, William Barsden, the founder of the fabulous Barsden pastoral dynasty. Fuhi has much affinity with the Wiradjuri people of Central Western New South Wales where much of the novel is set.

In *Gommeria Woman*, Fuhi reappears as the central character. Pregnant, and following the tragic loss of her parents during a maritime disaster off the New South Wales Shoalhaven Coast, Fuhi spends two years with the Umbarra people of the Yuin nation. They understand her deep affinity with *Indigenous* Australian culture, and following the birth of her child, Omomow, old Burapin, the Umbarra gommeria, or shaman, takes her into the deepest realms of the mysteries of the gommeria. This involves time-travel, or purposeful time-slips. Is this possible? Who knows? But we do know that there are ample recorded instances of these paranormal phenomena in European history.

Actual accounts of earlier time-slips

My principal characters in *Saving Sydney* are Dr Peter St Claire from the University of Adelaide, and his postgraduate student, Harriet Barsden, a direct descendant of Fuhi Barsden. In the opening pages of the novel, in 2012, following his time-slip lecture to his History Curriculum and Methodology students at the University, academic, Peter who is approached by Harriet to make an assessment of an ancient document she has uncovered in her family's large archive at Twin Rivers, the Barsden homestead property. We learn the document is in fact Fuhi Barsden's memoirs of her time with the Umbarra where she has been taken into the secrets of the

gommera. The novel then moves to the Twin Rivers property outside Bathurst in Central Western New South Wales, where Peter has been invited to inspect Fuhi Barsden's memoirs.

Here, I have written a scene in which there is a discussion between Peter, Harriet, and Harriet's mother, Sophie, where they discuss time-slips, or what are sometimes called paranormal events, in European history. Peter states:

Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain were respectively the principal and vice-principal of St Hugh's College in Oxford, for heaven's sake. Hardly the people you'd expect to be putting out concocted stories for financial gain, or some other form of benefit (Rodwell, 2013, p. 24).

He is referring to what has become known as the 'the Moberly–Jourdain incident, or the Ghosts of Petit Trianon of Versailles', an event that occurred on the 10th of August 1901 in the gardens of the Petit Trianon, a small chateau in the grounds of the Palace of Versailles. The incident involved two female academics, Charlotte Anne Moberly (1846-1937) and Eleanor Jourdain (1863-1924).

The women were both from educated backgrounds: Moberly's father was a teacher and a bishop; Jourdain's father was a vicar. During a trip to Versailles, they allegedly experienced a time-slip, and saw Marie Antoinette as well as other people of the same period. After researching the history of the palace, and comparing notes of their experience, in 1911 they published their work pseudonymously in a book entitled *An Adventure*, under the names of Elizabeth Morison and Frances Lamont. Their story caused a sensation, and was subject to much ridicule. However, it has been the subject of many other books, journal articles and TV mini-series (Flieger, 1997; Iremonger, 1975; Johnson, 1945; and Jourdain, 1989).

I included this discussion to prompt in the reader an awareness that time-slips have some foundation in European history. But, because of the absence

of written records among Aboriginal people's history, delving into the paranormal in *Indigenous* Australian society is more problematic.

Introducing the reader to the possibility of a time-slip

How can we introduce the mechanism of a time-slip phenomenon in a novel?

Daphne DuMaurier's *The House on the Strand* (1969) is a classic in the time-slip genre, with the author having her principal character, Dick Young, coming into contact with a specially prepared drug before being carried off to the fourteenth-century Cornish Manor of Tywardreath. DuMaurier is a master storyteller, with an uncanny penchant for suspense in her narratives.

Dick Young uses an experimental drug to travel back in time. The context of DuMaurier's (1969) novel tells it all. She wrote the work during a time of rapidly changing social attitudes to recreational drugs. DuMaurier (1969) compares Dick Young's 'trips' to the acid trips people were making in similar semi-legitimate scientific circles at the time, but what she describes are trips to the fourteenth century. The book combines a story in the present, of the narrator and his trips, his relationships with people in his own century, his growing addiction and the way he hides it from his family, with a story in the past, of which he is a voyeur. He goes back in time to crucial moments in the story of Roger of Kilmarth; he sees only the highlights, murder, adultery, plague, betrayal.

Dick Young, the narrator, says:

I drove away from St Austell thinking how much I had accomplished in one afternoon, witnessing a ceremony in a Priory long since crumbled, coupled with a Martinmas upon the village green. And all through some wizard's brew concocted by Magnus, leaving no side-effect or aftermath, only a sense of well-being or delight. It was as easy as falling off a cliff (p. 47).

DuMaurier's (1969) time-slip is as much about the looming recreational drug culture of the late 1960s, as it is about a series of time-slips to fourteenth century Cornwall.

In his *11.22.63*, Stephen King doesn't spent many words explaining to his readers how he manages to have his principal character, Jake Epping, slip back in time to save President John Kennedy (JFK) from the assassin's bullet. Jake simply slips into a 'rabbit hole' in the storeroom of his friend's diner:

You know how, on a bright day, you can close your eyes and see an afterimage of whatever you have been looking at? It was like that. When I looked at my foot, I saw it on the floor. But when I blinked – either a millisecond before or a millisecond after my eyes closed, I couldn't tell which – I caught a glimpse of my foot on a step. And it wasn't in the dim light of a sixty-watt bulb, either. It was in bright sunshine.

I froze. (King, 2011, p. 25).

The choice of the actual mechanics of the time-slip adds to the power of the narrative – a time-slip resulting from encountering a chemical reaction as in DuMaurier's (1969) novel, or a simple rabbit hole, as in King's (2011) novel?

Some readers may consider DuMaurier's explanation is more convincing than King's. Of course, exactly how believable the author's explanation needs to be rests on the artistic judgement of the author. I used *Ndigenous* Australian gommera 'know how' for my principal characters to slip back from 2012 Adelaide to 1940 Sydney in order to achieve their mission of saving the *HMAS Sydney* from the *Kormoran* ambush, and the loss of 645 Australian lives.

I chose to make use of the mystique surrounding *Ndigenous* Australian society and culture, which I already had utilised in my *Gommera Woman* (2009). I chose to do this, principally because I wanted my readers to consider, or even make the subject of further research, explanations of

paranormal events, and the manner in which they are described and understood in *Indigenous* Australian society. This possibility was exemplified for me in the television production *Spirit Stones* (Allan Collins, 2008). The production is by Jennifer Gheradi of Jag Films for ABC television. The website of this production has links to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) and the Western Australian Maritime Museum, and also provides History curriculum suggestions for follow-up learning and research. The website explains the film is ‘about how people of different cultural and spiritual backgrounds respond to and understand events which may not be subject to a single [rational] explanation. It offers a different perspective on the history, culture and spiritual life of a group of Indigenous Australians’ (*Spirit Stones*). For many students, the paranormal holds boundless fascination, which can be linked to the serious study of history.

The principal character’s missions

DuMaurier’s (1969) Dick Young, admirably named because of his immaturity, has no particular high-minded mission as he travels back and forth from the fourteenth century to 1969 Cornwall, except his own pleasures. There is a rich tapestry here of commentary concerning the evils of recreational drug taking in the looming permissive society of 1969 United Kingdom.

King’s Jake Epping’s mission is to save JFK, but in doing so he is beset with what King has described as ‘the butterfly effect’, principally in Jake’s meeting and falling in love with Sadie, and thereafter not wanting to return from late-1950s America to 2011, from whence he came. Jake could never have planned for this, and it is King’s way of showing the reader, that it is not possible to launch a character back into history without consequent repercussions – change one thing in history, then as a consequence other things will change, most likely? But exactly what? This is what makes the time-slip genre so appealing.

But much had happened to the theory of historical explanation between the time of DuMaurier's writing of her time-slip novel in 1969 and King's in 2011. There was the advent of chaos theory.

I have devoted some space in my *Whose History?* to a discussion of the influence of chaos theory on historiography in respect to how it rejects determinism (Chapter 7). In arguing for the demonstrable influence of chaos theory on historical explanation, Reisch (1991) has contended 'history ... is chaotic. And ... is characteristic of events in chaotic systems that they just cannot be explained with covering laws ... In fact, this argument against covering-law history is simultaneously one in favor of narrative. ... explanation's temporal structure has become essentially narrative'. (p. 5).

In order to explain the butterfly effect of having my two principal characters 'land' in 1940 Sydney to save the *HMAS Sydney* from Australia's worst Naval disaster on the 19th of November 1941, I follow King's (2011) lead. I have my narrator, the Adelaide University academic, Peter St Clair, state:

I again began to reflect on Eric Bress and J Mackye Gruber's wonderful 2004 time-slip trilogy The Butterfly Effect. Apart from being a fantastic piece of science fiction and a really disturbing psychological thriller, it offered insightful hypothetical examples into chaos theory, illustrating how, in any dynamic system, small initial differences may, over time, lead to large unforeseen consequences. Surely, this is what is happening here, but in a manner I didn't fully understand. I had just begun to comprehend what I had overheard of Wolf and von Merhad's conversation. I had to think about what I could do to avert this imminent disaster. Maybe our mission of saving the Sydney is somehow related to saving Sydneyites from another dreadful catastrophe (pp. 254-5).

Much of the second part of the novel, the building of conflict in the plot, and its resolution, concerns the butterfly effect of characters involved in time-slips.

Sydney society and culture in 1940 and 1941

Harriet declares to Peter St Claire during the early part of *Saving Sydney*:

'We're arriving during Manly's heyday,' she explained. 'The 1930s through to the 1950s were its halcyon years. It was once a tourist resort of the kind Surfers Paradise and the Sunshine Coast became in the 1960s. Even during the late nineteenth century, colonials were describing it as the Australian equivalent of Brighton in England. By the late 1800s, crowds were flocking to the seaside resort of Manly – weekend excursions on steam ferries, bonnets and bows, picnic baskets – marvellous stuff.' (Rodwell, 2013, p. 89)

Manly grew into its own during the late 1930s, with its many and varied art deco public and private buildings, as it grew as a dormitory suburb, with trans-harbour commuters adjusting to faster and more efficient ferry services.

My descriptions of early wartime Manly were developed from my appreciation of the suburb, dating from the mid-1950s when I visited it as a young child. However, for detailed descriptions, I consulted John Ramsland's (2008) work concerning the history of law and order in New South Wales.

The Commonwealth's dealing with enemy aliens

The *HMT Dunera* sails into Sydney Harbour in September 1944, while Peter and Harriet are searching for ideas on how to alert the authorities to the imminent disaster facing the *HMAS Sydney* in fourteen months time. They are on a Manly ferry, the *Curl Curl*, as the narrator describes a memorable event in Australia's history.

The war was grinding on and, here in Sydney, this very morning, unbeknown to Sydneysiders, a British vessel finally had reached the safety of Sydney Harbour. And if any Sydneysiders knew of this, they could have wandered down to Pyrmont's Number 3 Wharf and seen for themselves some real live Nazis. There were Nazi POWs packed in beside Italian POWs, and Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria – two countries which now constituted the Third Reich. (Rodwell, 2013, p. 192).

On 10 July 1940, 2,542 detainees, all classified as enemy aliens, were embarked onto the *Dunera* at Liverpool. They included 200 Italian and 251 German prisoners of war, as well as several dozen Nazi sympathizers, along with 2,036 anti-Nazis, most of them Jewish refugees. Some had already been to sea, but their ship, the *Arandora Star*, had been torpedoed with great loss of life. In addition to the passengers were 309 poorly trained British guards, mostly from the Pioneer Corps, as well as seven officers and the ship's crew, creating a total complement of almost twice the *Dunera's* capacity as a troop carrier of 1,600. The ship berthed at Pymont on 6 September 1940. Its voyage, and the later life of these people – commonly referred to as the Dunera Boys – have been recorded through a TV movie, books, museum exhibitions and websites. For Peter and Harriet this was the beginning of a terrible series of events as they are swept up in the hysteria of wartime Sydney, the butterfly effect of appearing there sixty years before their departure from the year 2011. These primary and secondary historical records supply a wonderful insight into life in the New South Wales internment camps during the early years of the war.

Law and order during 1940 and 1941 in Sydney

The narrator records in *Saving Sydney*:

Police Commissioner John MacKay had allowed his senior men to build up a highly complex network of paid police agents throughout Sydney. McFawn had sponsored several of these, all in key positions in Sydney's daily life: pimps, publicans, opium traders, cat burglars, but also people such as the man he was now waiting for. This one, particularly, often had valuable information for him. (Rodwell, 2013, p. 101)

Here, I introduce two colourful characters: Detective Sergeant Desmond (Bull) McFawn from the Sydney Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB), and Froggy Small, part-time cat burglar, and paid police informer. Indeed, Police Commissioner MacKay had built up a network of police informers, many of them reporting directly to CIB officers, such as the fictitious Bull McFawn

During the period from Easter 1940 through until March 1941, when the novel is set, the Commonwealth had little organisational infrastructure to uncover alleged, or suspected enemy aliens in Australia. This operation was left to the local CIBs in each of the capital cities, furnished as they were with a very highly dubious network of informers. As Cain notes, 'MacKay had already established in 1938 a combined police and military intelligence unit in his own force'. Ramsland's (1996) study is an invaluable secondary source on the history of the New South Wales correctional services during this period.

The possible 'butterfly effects' of saving *HMAS Sydney*

Of course, there are an almost infinite number of butterfly effects from placing some characters in a time-slip to save *HMAS Sydney*. But the principal ones which the novel postulates is with Peter in the Orange internment camp uncovering a planned attempt by some Nazis to break out of the camp during the Japanese bombardment of Sydney and Newcastle. In the mass hysteria they presumed would follow, they intended to link up with some other agents, and poison the Sydney water supply. This was supposed to be preparatory to a German invasion of Australia's east coast. Would this have been likely, or even possible?

As with Macintyre's (2006) coda, discussed in Chapter 6 of *Whose History?*, a discussion of the actual butterfly effects of Peter and Harriet's excursion into 1940 wartime Sydney to save *HMAS Sydney* requires a consideration of historiography. Two people appear in a different time-zone. What are the historical effects of this? If they do manage to save *HMAS Sydney*, what might be the possible effects of that action? Might it lead to events associated with the general good? How could this have possibly affected the outcome of the war? Or might saving *HMAS Sydney* be associated with some possible negative effect on the outcome of the war? And what might be the nature of this negative outcome?

The imminent Japanese/German invasion of Sydney

The novel takes the reader to the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour through to the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney. This is a fascinating period in Australian history – a crisis point. I talked with people who were present in Maroubra on Sydney's eastern suburbs when it was shelled, and discussed the sense of panic amongst the population. Sydney was woefully exposed to invasion, and starkly unprepared. Much of the Sydney water supply came through open canals from the Prospect Reservoir. Narrating the involvement of the chief characters in these events not only provides an opportunity for students to learn of the conditions on Australia's home front, but also to speculate on other scenarios that could possibly have led to a national disaster.

Concluding Remarks

This time-slip novel demonstrates to teachers of History the manifold possibilities of counterfactual historical novels as a pedagogical device in the History classroom and a way of providing a literature-rich curriculum. This genre is engaging, stimulating in students historical understanding and historical literacy, and leading to much historiographical discourse in the History classroom.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE OVERALL STUDY

In the opening pages of the academic monograph component of this doctoral submission, I alerted readers to how the sales of historical fiction exceeds that of other genres in the Australian retail market. History, generally, is a big seller. History is popular with the Australian public. These are accepted facts within the publishing industry. So why is there such a dramatic decline in student enrolments in History, when students in the senior school have a subject choice? Clark's (2008) national survey of senior students in Australian schools shows generally students are not engaged with the teaching of History, and often a prime reason for this is their dissatisfaction with the employed pedagogy.

With the Australian History classroom under a wide range of challenges, historical novels and their various sub-genres can offer a huge panacea for student engagement and improved historical literacy. The use of these as a pedagogical device makes use of the genre's broader public popularity, but the opportunity such novels provide in respect to the enhancement of historical literacy that renders their use in the History curriculum as most appealing. My academic monograph of this doctoral submission illustrates the manifold ways in which teachers can confidently use historical novels alongside their traditional methods of teaching History. Most importantly, this enhances a literary-rich History curriculum.

In order to achieve these ends, Australian teachers of History require a greater access to a variety of Australian historical fiction with a focus that appeals to teachers and students in respect to the content the ACARA

History curriculum. Authors need to turn to writing in this genre, as publishers need to look to the exciting possibilities of increasing their variety and output of the historical novel and its various sub-genres. With this, partly in mind, I have written the time-slip novel that forms the third component of this doctoral submission. But, I also have had in mind the objective of illustrating the manifold ways in which this particular sub-genre can contribute to the development of students' historical literacy.

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Saving Sydney

Grant Rodwell

A Time-slip Novel

Chapter 1

From my tenth-floor window, I was carefully studying the mass of humanity crossing North Terrace as the green light blinked encouragement to the pedestrians: mostly university students. I was looking for nobody in particular: just a part of my normal daily routine. It was 9 50 am and my lecture was due to begin on the hour. I had ten minutes to take the lift down from my level to the ground floor and cross to North Terrace to the Napier Building, about a hundred and fifty metres further on. Subconsciously, I had gone through my little ritual, of which I had only become vaguely aware some weeks previously. The stupid things we do. I picked up my roll book, USB memory stick containing my lecture, and some books.

It was mid-autumn in Adelaide and four weeks into the first semester. It was surely the best time of the year to be in one of Australia's great cities – the City of Churches. Today, I was due to start my favourite two lectures: the pedagogical applications of the time-slip historical novel genre as taught in senior colleges. I was aware of my elevated mood. I looked forward to these lectures more than any other. During my last lecture I had dropped a few incidental statements about how counterfactual history might assist in the teaching of history in our schools and colleges.

'Teaching History that never was ... you mean ... to senior students?' an intelligent-looking blond crewcut girl – with fiery blue eyes, and more than her fair share of tattoos about her ankles and neck – had blurted out last lecture, apparently in disgust with what I might be suggesting for this week.

'Yes, that's right: history that never was. But next week we'll look at the time-slip genre, and consider how that might assist us in our teaching of history', I had answered in a tone suggesting we all should wait until next week's lecture before we drew any hasty judgments.

My last lecture had gone well, with 'attractive blond crewcut' contributing a welcome counterview, stimulating much discussion during the last ten-minute discussion period. I was always thankful for students such as she. She was a smart thinker. I could see her fellow students respected her for that.

So, as I now crossed Adelaide's expansive North Terrace to the Napier Building of the University of Adelaide, I breathed with a little more sense of excitement as I thought of the looming lecture on the use of time-slip histories in the teaching of history in schools and colleges.

As I fired up the data pc and projector in the cavernous, well-worn lecture theatre, I looked up to the several hundred students. I smiled at those sitting in the front row and, in obvious good humour, they returned my greeting. By now they were used to me, and we were establishing a solid rapport. *I'm sure they're looking forward to what I have to say.* I flicked on my PowerPoint with its title slide and looked to the students, inviting any comments before I started the lecture.

As I chatted with some of the students in the front rows, I looked up to the rapidly filling lecture theatre. I noticed the attractive blond crewcut, tattooed girl – with a noisy knot of supporters – take up a position nearby in the front row. *Excellent! I might get some lively discourse again today.*

I smiled at her, and she returned my smile. I sensed she enjoyed this as much as I did. She held up a plastic DVD pack of *The Butterfly Effect*, and winked provocatively at me, with a saucy challenge. She was suggesting counterfactual history is no more than science fiction. Of course, in a sense, she was correct.

Now, seated next to Blond crewcut and her small group of supporters was a young woman with strikingly thick, dark, shoulder-length hair, whom I hadn't noticed in my other lectures or tutorials since the beginning of the course. My first thought was that I didn't think she was a student enrolled in this subject. Perhaps, she was with Blond crewcut who had brought her in, either for support, or to listen to my particular argument. *Either way it doesn't matter. This will liven up the discussion at the end of the lecture.* There was something subtly different about this young woman with the long, thick, dark hair: certainly not the usual young woman who might be beginning a career as a specialist history teacher. *I must try to get to know her a little better in my tutorial class, if she turns up.*

My course is History Curriculum Methodology – how to teach history in schools and colleges.

I booted up my PowerPoint presentation. My lecture was titled 'Caught in Time's Cruel Machinery: time-shifts in the history lesson'.

With the title page set on the screen, and the latecomers taking up the last few seats, some sitting on the aisle steps, I smiled challengingly and held up a copy of Stephen King's *11/22/63*. I read the following extract: (King's principal character's ailing friend, who has enticed him to undertake such a perilous journey into time, is speaking.)

But when it comes to the river of history, the watershed moments most susceptible to change are assassinations – the ones that succeeded and the ones that failed. Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria gets shot by a mentally unstable pipsqueak named Gavrilo Princip and there's your kick-off to World War 1. On the other hand, after Claus von Stauffenberg failed to kill Hitler in 1944 – close, but no cigar – the war continued and millions of people died.

'History is a chancy thing, I think you'll all agree,' I challenged. 'Indeed, history turns on a five-cent piece. Chance and chaos are the driving forces in this thing called history we get kids to study in our schools and colleges.'

Earlier this semester, I had devoted a lecture to history and the chaos theory. I had asked the students to watch and critique the DVD of *The Butterfly Effect*. Momentarily, I reflected on the main features of the movie. I had enjoyed it greatly and, from their comments, I gathered the students also did.

Blond crewcut put up her hand to interject, looked at me for a moment, smiled and then withdrew it.

'Of course, those of you who have read King's book will know that his hero, when granted access to a time-slip back to the year 1958, is set the challenge of preventing President John Kennedy's assassination at the hands of Lee Harvey Oswald in Dallas Texas 22 November 1963. This is 'what if ...' history. What if the great man had not been assassinated that fateful day? How would history have unfolded?'

I looked to the students. There wasn't a murmur, and their eyes were glued expectantly on me. I looked to Blond crewcut. There was some lively body language between her and her friends.

'But what is the purpose of all this, for us as potential history teachers you may well ask,' I continued.

'Exactly, Dr St Claire!' Blond crewcut broke in, with her hand politely in the air, and her eyes flashing towards her supporters. 'Interesting stuff to read, but the plain fact is

that Oswald did kill JFK, so what purpose can this genre serve in a history class? Are you advocating we teach our kids a lie?'

'I was hoping you would ask that question. You will recall how we discussed some weeks ago how history as subject matter is a phenomenal seller. There's a huge and insatiable public demand for it in its fictional and non-fictional forms. That needs to be juxtaposed with the very, very negative view students have of their various history courses in schools and colleges. Remember, we have also talked about this.'

'Okay, I'll agree students may find time-slip history an interesting genre,' Blond crewcut agreed. 'But what can students gain from examining history that never happened – JFK not being assassinated, for example. It's a bit far-fetched,'

From the nodding heads among many of the students, I could tell Blond crewcut was garnishing considerable potential support. *This is taking too long. But I certainly have them engaged.*

'Of course, we need to stress with our students that, in reality, time-slips are simply impossible, and we are doing this to improve our understanding of the historical process'.

Most of the other students were nodding in approval. I looked to Blond crewcut and her knot of acolytes. I was expecting this, but I didn't want to spend too much time discussing the point: far too divergent.

'Many of you may not be too sure what we're talking about here. Google time-slip,' I replied, 'and you will find many websites describing these paranormal phenomena – a person, or group of people, travel through time via unknown means. Of course these occurrences are highly disputed. But some appear to be more convincing than others.'

They seemed to be aware of these psychological time-slips.

'One of the best-known, and earliest, examples of such paranormal phenomena,' I continued, 'was reported by two English women in the summer of 1901. They claimed that while in the gardens of Petit Trianon at Versailles they slipped back in time to the period of the French Revolution.'

'Do our history lessons really have room for discussions of paranormal phenomena?' Blond crewcut asked. 'It's a little divergent, don't you think, Dr St Claire?'

A murmur from the students suggested some agreement. Of course, most people would agree with her point of view. She was one very smart student. *Where could I go from here?*

The attractive young woman with the strikingly thick dark hair seated in the front row next to Blond crewcut and her supporters caught my attention. She was raising her hand to speak. I nodded for her to do so. But she withdrew her request. I encouraged her to join in.

'We should also remember,' she said eventually, in a low and deliberate tone, 'there are examples of shaman amongst indigenous populations around the world who declare they have travelled forwards and backwards in time. Though our Western ethos being founded on demonstrable scientific proof may reject time-slips, I think we should at least consider that our understanding of these paranormal phenomena is culturally bound. I believe that fact should underpin the relevance of what Dr St Claire is arguing for our history teaching.'

Her point had some considerable support among her fellow students and I moved on to the next slide.

Most of the students were drawn into animated discussion at the conclusion: a good sign. I was happy with the presentation.

When I had gathered my belongings, I turned to meet the group of students who wanted to raise points about the lecture. I answered these as I left the theatre. The last of them was the young woman who had made the statement about time-slips and the Indigenous shaman.

'Can I email you to arrange a discussion with you some time?' she asked. 'Some time when you're not so rushed.'

'Certainly.'

By the time I had returned to my office, had a coffee and opened up my computer, her email was in my inbox. Her name was Harriet Barsden, and she was suggesting Friday afternoon at 1 pm for a coffee at Aroma, a coffee shop on the ground floor of my building. That suited me fine.

Barsden? That's a name I recall: a hero from the Boer War and Great War?

Immediately I googled Barsden. *Yes, I thought so.* The rather lengthy Australian War Museum article began:

Harry Omomow Barsden (DCM, DSO, MC, MM) born Bathurst (1875–1950) the eldest son of Omomow and Hilary Barsden. Brother to Richard Omomow Barsden (1876–1953). Grazier and philanthropist. Saw service in the Boer War (1899–1902). New South Wales Lancers. Sailed in the *Nineveh* (Melbourne 6 November 1899) ...

Surely, they're related. This prompted my memory. *Harriet Barsden must be a descendant of the fabulous Barsden dynasty, a family who, in our colonial history, matches the Caesars of Ancient Rome in heroism and exploits. But what's she doing here in my course – History Curriculum and Methodology – for God's sake. Harriet Barsden, a history teacher? Surely not!*

I went to the university website to look at her academic record. She had straight HDs next to her name. Most of her subjects were in the disciplines of history, politics and English. Last year, she had completed an honours degree in history, scoring a First class. *Interesting!*

I picked up my attendance rolls for the course. Today was the first time she had attended a class. *Even more interesting!*

When I took the lift to the ground floor on Friday to keep my appointment with Harriet, she was already seated in the coffee shop opposite the entrance where I could easily see her. As I approached her, she rose to greet me.

'Good afternoon, Dr St Claire.'

She smiled warmly with a confident outstretched hand. Her voice was low and almost husky.

As I shook her firm hand, I said 'Peter, please'.

'Of course. Thanks for giving up your valuable time. What I'm going to request from you may take only a short time, or it may take considerably more.'

Harriet Barsden was a tall, slender woman who clearly spent many hours in the gym, or some other physical activity. She had an olive complexion matching her slightly wavy hair. *Is there a touch of Pacific Islander blood there?* In the old measurement, she was a little under six feet. She had an easy smile, and a general air of confidence and bearing. I could imagine her as a grazier, but not as a history teacher. By any standards, she was a very beautiful young woman. *I must research the Barsdens more when I have an opportunity.*

I felt a little embarrassed as I ordered a coffee for us both. I was wondering why I had only just come across her. After all, we'd just finished Week 4 of the course and the Easter break was only a few weeks away. She had only attended one lecture, the last, and no tutorials. *Why should I be first encountering her just now? The Easter break is only another two weeks away, and she is just beginning to attend now? Surely not!*

'Considerably more time – that's a challenge,' I smiled. 'What have you got on your mind?'

'I particularly wanted to talk with you now – this week – because I'm leaving the course this week. No offence intended, mind you.'

'That's okay. Some of our students discover by about Week 4 or 5, that teaching isn't for them.'

'Oh, I never intended to be a history teacher. I enrolled in your course for other reasons.'

'Really?'

'Well, this may seem strange, but I wanted to engage in some discourse concerning counterfactual history ... listen to what you had to say about time-slips. You have something of a reputation among the students for that stuff. But you're probably already aware of that.'

'That's interesting,' I smiled in return.

'Of course, I've read your many academic articles on time-slip historical fiction during my undergraduate study, and I heard you generated some interesting discussion on time-slips in your classes. And I must say this week I'm so pleased I attended your lecture: fascinating.'

'What's behind your interest in time-slips?' I asked. 'You're paying a great deal of money for only one or two lectures.'

'Perhaps. But my family is very interested in what I'm doing. You see, I have evidence of what appears to be time-slips in my family.'

'You're joking,' I answered.

But clearly, she wasn't joking.

'No. One of my ancestors was named Fuhi Barsden. She was murdered in 1877 – the infamous Twin Rivers atrocities – but evidently she had been working on her memoirs before she was murdered. Her uncompleted memoirs had been packed away decades

ago when my grandparents moved house. By chance I uncovered them in our present home when I was looking for some material for a topic I was researching last year.'

'Sounds interesting,' I said, encouraging her to continue.

She momentarily studied my face.

'Her handwriting was such that it took me some time to figure out what she was writing about. But ... turns out ... fascinating stuff! In her writing, she referred to some relics she had from her life with the Aborigines on the New South Wales south coast.'

'What are they?' I asked.

'I found them packed away in an old sea chest: a possum-skin cloak, a walking stick, possibly a ceremonial type and, bound on it, are some white cockatoo feathers ... very dilapidated. There is also an Aboriginal yalo. It's also bound with something, which my father assures me is kangaroo sinew.'

'A yalo? Isn't that a human bone?'

'Yes, this is a full human femur.'

'Amazing! So, she obviously spent some time with the Aborigines?'

'Oh, yes, apparently so. Then later, I found a heap of newspaper cuttings, mostly from the Sydney Morning Herald. It appears for a long time throughout the colony she was known as the Gommera Woman, and was quite famous.'

'Gommera?'

'Yes, it's a word – from the Yuin nation of Aborigines from the New South Wales Illawarra region – which translates to shaman.'

Now I could see where this conversation was going. This is what she had alluded to in this week's lecture about certain shaman from Indigenous peoples having the ability to enter into time-slips in a purposeful manner, quite distinct from the example I had given the students at the lecture this week. But what this young woman was proposing was something quite different.

'So you're saying your ancestor, Fuhi Barsden, was a gommera, or shaman ... or probably had gained knowledge from the Yuin Aborigines who had experienced time-slips?'

'That's what I'm saying, and I have permission from my family to invite you to examine the material and write a report for the Mitchell Library before we hand the material over to that institution.'

This was a very appealing offer, and one which would require some considerable thought – not so much about the payment for the research, but for the once-in-a-lifetime experience. I knew I needed time to think, especially because I could find it might interfere in my work here at the university. I told her I was currently involved in a very time-consuming project.

'What is that?'

'The social history of the aftermath of the *HMAS Sydney* tragedy.'

'Yes, I suppose that would be taking a great deal of your time. But what do you think of my proposal?' she asked.

'I should first see the material ... the artefacts.'

'Sure. When could you do that?'

'Easter?'

'Excellent. I'll phone my parents.'

Chapter 2

I caught the early morning Qantas flight from Adelaide to Sydney, picking up an Avis Ford Falcon at the airport. Before leaving Adelaide I did my homework on the Barsden family.

There was a plethora of information: William Barsden (1799–1848) and five other members of the family – five males and one female – pastoral barons, graziers, war heroes, adventurers, politicians and philanthropists. All had entries in the Australian Dictionary of Biography

The Australian War Museum listed eight Barsdens, all decorated. They certainly served King and Empire or, mostly in their case, Queen and country, from the New South Wales Sudan contingent in 1885 through to the Vietnam War. Some family!

Fuhi Barsden was the daughter of William Barsden, and we know much about William because the Barsdens had donated his journals to the Mitchell Library, and now its contents were available on the web. William had been a sailor in the early Pacific sandalwood trade as a very young man. Apparently, he had fallen out with his captain and had jumped ship in Tahiti some time around 1813. This was a time when many of the Tahitian islands were rebelling against their traditional rulers. William had sided with the Christian Tahitians who had sought his skills with a canon. He had played a decisive role in the battle of Fei pi, an event that proved to be a watershed in Pacific history. In return for his services, the victor, Pomare II, had given him permission to marry a young princess – Manana, of the Arii warrior class. Fuhi was the result of that union. Hence the Tahitian blood in the Barsden family.

The Barsden Pastoral Co website provided further background on the various branches of the family and their pastoral interests. There seemed to be three main branches of the family involved in the pastoral industry, with holdings in all Australian states, and in the Northern Territory. They were heavily involved in the live beef export industry to Asian countries while, in the live sheep industry, they were major players in the live export industry to the Middle East.

Fuhi had come to New South Wales when her father had just begun his pastoral venture during the time of Governor Lachlan Macquarie and the inland pastoral expansion of the colony. She had assumed control of the many Barsden properties on the death of her father in a maritime tragedy off the New South Wales south coast. She and her partner, Caleb Williams Saleeby, had survived the tragedy, which apparently had been the design of her two stepbrothers, who were seeking the control of the Barsden pastoral empire. However, in attempting to reach land, Caleb was taken by a shark.

With the assistance of a pod of orcas, Fuhi had reached land. She was pregnant, and the Umbarra people of the Yuin nation of Aborigines nurtured her through the birth of her son Omomow. She lived with the Umbarra – the black duck clan from around what is now Nowra – for nearly two years. While she was with these people, she immersed herself in their culture. They were still very much untouched by Europeans. Old Burabin, the gommera, or shaman, of the Umbarra, saw in her a woman of great destiny, and passed on to her the secrets of the gommera. These were highly treasured sacred secrets, of which only Old Burabin was custodian.

Finally, with her infant strapped to her back in the traditional Umbarra fashion, she reappeared in white society, wearing only her possum skin cloak, her yalo around her neck, carrying her sacred ceremonial walking stick with its white cockatoo feathers. She then set about wreaking her revenge on her stepbrothers, and regaining control of the vast Barsden pastoral empire. A remarkable woman, indeed!

The Twin Rivers atrocity involved Fuhi Barsden and her daughter-in-law, Hilary Barsden, whom the Jimmy Parkes' gang of four Wiradjuri murdered. She was among five European women this notorious gang had killed. There were two separate academic articles on the Twin Rivers Atrocities. These atrocities seemed in many ways a precursor to the infamous Breelong Massacre, some twenty years later, where the Wiradjuri, Jimmy Governor, murdered nine women and children, maimed numerous others, and raped a teenage girl. Certainly, the commentators agreed there were significant parallels between the two terrible episodes in Australian race relations.

Omomow Barsden took his revenge on the gang who had so terribly murdered his beloved mother and wife. The colonial government had declared the notorious gang outlawed. Omomow killed them singlehandedly while they were attempting an escape

through what is now the Boyd National Park, bordering the Jenolan Caves resort, just west of the New South Wales Blue Mountains.

It was the National Trust website that provided me with the most interesting detail on the family, particularly Fuhi Barsden's interests and activities. Fuhi had had the Twin Rivers homestead rebuilt from the foundation up after the great fires of 1833. Much of it was done with the original, scrubbed clean, sandstone blocks. She had built additions to it several times; by the 1860s the house was a grand, sandstone-block-towered house, courtesy of the most recent additions in a Lombardic Romanesque style, of two-storeys, and a basement. It had a tiled hip-roof. The sandstone blocks contrasted various golden shades, with highlight arches, arcading and quoining, in a lozenge-shape pattern.

Surrounded as it was by so many sporting facilities – tennis and croquet courts, lawn bowls links – and its many outbuildings, the Twin Rivers homestead was really a town in its own right. Apart from the multitude of workers' houses, there was a post office with a telegraph service connected to the Bathurst Post Office. But, apparently Fuhi's great pride and joy was her kindergarten and school.

After Fuhi's passing, there came the new century, a federated Australia, and the country's involvement in two appalling world wars. Accompanying these times was a multitude of cultural and social changes, and by the 1960s the Bathurst branch of the Barsden family had handed the grand old homestead over to the National Trust. It now served to accommodate urban children from Legatee families for short educational and recreational experiences for a total of twenty weeks a year. The family had built a new residence three kilometres to the north of the old building. Obviously, the Barsdens were rolling in old colonial money, but had also maintained a very strong sense of citizenship, and the accompanying social and political obligations.

Some family, but it's Fuhi's experiences with the Umbarra that most interest me.

* * *

I'm a Tasmanian, and have spent most of my working career in Victorian and South Australian universities. While I had been in Sydney many times, I had never travelled across the Blue Mountains to Sydney's west. Now, being guided by my Navman GPS

system, I found I was greatly enjoying the experience, particularly as I reached the townships of Laura and Katoomba, and saw the old Victorian and Edwardian hotels.

Having passed through Katoomba, and now approaching Medlow Bath, I was looking forward to seeing a tourist mecca of this district of the Blue Mountains. I had heard about the Hydro Majestic Hotel, and planned to stop there for lunch. Being a historian, I understood it to be one of several large hotels built in the Blue Mountains in the early part of the previous century to cater for the throngs of people who sought to leave the growing congestion of Sydney's suburbs for the mountains' exquisite and world-renowned beauty and fresh air. Located on the mountains' western side, it overlooked the titanic and majestic Kanimbla Valley. Bushwalking and general nature pursuits have attracted people to the hotel for over a hundred years.

I had heard some of the fabulous stories that abounded about it. It was rumoured that at weekends it was a haven for Sydney businessmen and their mistresses. It was widely suggested a bell sounded in the early hours of the morning for couples to return to their own beds.

The weather was warm – a true Indian summer day. Having driven into the small carpark at the front of the hotel, I gathered my iPhone, locked the Falcon and anxiously stepped into the hotel foyer, looking for the lounge. The receptionist pointed to the left along a large corridor. With my mind locked on what I might discover about some recorded experiences in time-slips, I sauntered off in that direction.

There was an inviting vacant table next to a large sandstone fireplace and a huge window overlooking the valley. I ordered toasted sandwiches and a cappuccino as I turned my thoughts to what I knew about Fuhi Barsden and Twin Rivers. I reckoned all of that was only about an hour's drive away. Is this a watershed moment in my life? I thought. It's not every day people are invited to read and evaluate a document containing an account of a time-slip. I was becoming strangely apprehensive.

I needed the hour or so over my refreshments. I looked out the huge window overlooking the grandiose Megalong Valley. To the west, beyond the Great Dividing Range, was Barsden country – not all of it, of course. Once it had been many tens of thousand of hectares. They surely must have been – and apparently continue to be – an amazing family. They were strong supporters of Indigenous rights, and worked hard in support of Aboriginal Land Rights, even to the extent of giving up many thousands of

hectares of their grazing country to various Wiradjuri groups across the New South Wales Western Plains. *I wonder what kind of person Harriet Barsden is away from university.* I couldn't wait to meet her and her family at the Barsden homestead.

After lunch, and back behind the wheel, my Navman directed me along the Great Western Highway to the regional city of Bathurst, and through Bathurst along the Goulburn Road. From there, I took a turn-off to the left, and travelled in an easterly direction along a narrow bitumen road. Soon, with my GPS making excited noises, I noticed a large sign announcing:

Barsden Pastoral Co.
Twin Rivers
Stud Poll Herefords

At the imposing redbrick Victorian-styled gatehouse and the entrance to the property, there was another imposing sign: *Agents and deliveries first to the Manager's Cottage.* Only very wealthy families had managers' cottages. The driveway from the gatehouse on the Bathurst Road to the homestead was about a half-mile long. It was lined with tall poplars, all lavishly interspersed with magnificent grevilleas of a multitude of colourings. I reckoned in the early days, these trees and shrubs had been gathered from all around the Australian colonies. For the last five hundred metres of the driveway there was a lavish display of marvellous autumn colour.

Approaching the magnificent old homestead, the bitumen driveway veered left, ascending a scrub-covered hill. Approaching the northern aspect of the hill, I saw the new homestead.

Magnificent, I immediately thought, as the house came into full view. This surely was one of the most grand country homes. I had seen many examples of this style of modern architecture when I was researching my honours thesis in Tasmania, but nothing on such a grand scale as this. The style was often called P&O, because it resembled a P&O (Peninsular and Orient) ocean liner of the period. It was built on three levels, incorporating a lavish use of sandstone on feature walls, with all corners magnificently finished with artfully curved windows. Here, I noticed even the cream-coloured venetians blinds were curved to match the windows. The brick veneer cream brickwork appeared as new as though the bricks had been laid only yesterday.

Harriet was waving a welcome as I parked in the broad and carefully manicured en-tout-cart-surfaced driveway.

'I'll help you with your bags and get somebody to garage your car,' she smiled as she shook my hand. 'Pleasant trip?'

'Yes, thank you very much. You're very kind.'

She led me into the house through one of the many side entrances.

'We have you in here,' she smiled as she opened a door to a guest's bedroom with an ensuite.

'Would you like a shower before we get you a coffee?'

That sounded like a good idea, and I smiled and thanked her.

Twenty minutes later I reappeared in the hallway to find a middle-aged woman, obviously waiting for me, sitting opposite my room on an occasional chair. She introduced herself as 'Betty the housemaid', and led me off to a beautiful north-facing sunny room where Harriet was waiting for me.

'Mother and Father will be here soon,' she said. 'They would like to be present before we start talking about the Fuhi material.'

'That's okay,' I answered. 'I've already done some homework on the Barsden clan ... perhaps dynasty would be a more accurate word.'

She grinned.

'No doubt you read that throughout our history we've had our fair share of crises,' she smiled.

'I trust you haven't any planned ... in the near future, that is,' I smiled. But I left the topic there. 'What are you planning for your career after uni?' I enquired.

'There're plenty of future challenges for me in the company.'

I liked her – her strong character. I wondered how much Fuhi Barsden blood and nature she possessed.

'But I must say, we do appreciate your coming here to talk with us about the Fuhi material. I know you have a very busy research program. How's your research progressing on the *HMAS Sydney* disaster? Your last paper with the Australian Historical Association was well received, I see.'

She's done her research on me, too.

'Oh, okay, but there's much more to be done.'

We spent the next hour or so discussing my research on the affects of the sinking of the *Sydney* – Australia's greatest naval disaster – on the 645 families involved. Indeed, I had organised on my drive back to Sydney to interview, in Lithgow, a sister of one those unfortunate souls drowned with the sinking.

* * *

Sophie and Hugh Barsden were as I expected them to be: polite, and evincing all the characteristics of fine education and family traditions. They insisted on waiting till after dinner to discuss the Fuhi material.

Perhaps not so prominently, Hugh Barsden had that same Pacific Islander complexion, inherited from Fuhi, as did their youngest offspring, Harriet. He had greyed completely, with a thick shock of hair all over his head, as if swept there by some terrible tempest. Thick hair seemed to be the trademark of the Barsdens. Hugh had been a prominent sportsperson – a rugby player with the New South Wales Waratahs – and had been educated at the University of Sydney. Even now, he looked as if he could run onto the Sydney Cricket Ground and put in a top performance.

'Why the University of Adelaide for Harriet?' I asked.

'The Barsdens shop around these days,' Sophie smiled.

'That's good to know,' I said.

'Actually, I'm from Norwood in Adelaide, Girton Girls' School, now Pembroke, and then I went off to the University of Adelaide, with a major in English lit and Australian history,' Sophie added.

'Hence, the interest in Fuhi Barsden?' I asked.

'Yes.'

I studied Sophie. Perhaps, she was the driving force behind this project. She had a very intelligent air, and didn't waste time in idle conversation. I suspected she wouldn't suffer fools easily. She remained very attractive, with a full figure, high cheekbones, and thick, sandy hair that appeared as if it had not as yet been touched by any false colouring.

Sipping our coffees in the warm and sunny room midst furniture that could have seated another twelve people, I sensed Hugh and Sophie were ready to begin to talk about the Fuhi material.

'Harriet will take you to where it's stored in a moment,' Sophie began. 'But just now, I would like to talk about what we expect from your research. However, I should add we'll have a contract for you to sign ... if you wish ... to ensure we satisfy each other's requirement.'

She's no fool. She doesn't want me rushing off and writing my own academic article on this material.

'I'm familiar with your research, Peter. I know you do good stuff. In fact, after Harriet returned home last year waxing enthusiastic about your research on time-slips, I suggested she approach you for this project.'

'I hope I don't disappoint you,' I said. 'But tell me more about what you know about this material before we look at the contract.'

'Oh, I suppose it's simple enough. You know ... pull in and assess all the existing research on Fuhi Barsden ... the *Governor King* tragedy ... her life with the Umbarra ... her revenge on her step-brothers who had caused the *Governor King* tragedy ... her death at the hands of that terrible Jimmy Parkes gang. But particularly, go through her writings. I think we can refer to it as an incomplete autobiography. Annotate it. Assess the value of it all – particularly the artefacts.'

'That sound simple enough,' I said.

'Oh, and I should have added,' she continued, 'forty thousand ... is that okay ... twenty thousand up front and the other twenty thousand on completion.'

'That sounds very reasonable. But I should first examine the material before I make any commitments.'

'I'm sorry to raise the money issue, but I wouldn't wish for any misunderstandings,' Hugh said with a serious expression.

We had finished our coffees. Harriet stood up from the dinner table, and asked if I would like to follow her.

She took me to the southern side of the house, through a side door to an annex.

'When my grandparents made the momentous decision to move out of the old homestead and have this place built, they were faced with the problem of housing the contents of a very, very large library in some other location.'

She was now unlocking the door to the annex, which seemed to me to be the size of a four-car garage.

'The library and other items were stored in large, steel shelving. In the early 1970s my grandfather had these Brownbuilt Compactus units installed. So in effect, all this was re-shelved twice. Consequently, Fuhi's autobiography went unnoticed for decades, although there always was a suggestion such a thing existed. But we had no idea of the existence of her old sea chest with its opossum-skin cloak, her white-feathered yalo and ceremonial walking stick.'

'Until?'

'Until I went searching for some material on nineteenth century Indigenous–European relations during first semester last year.'

'And bingo – jackpot?'

'Exactly. But to begin with I couldn't fully comprehend what I was reading.'

She was now opening the old sea chest.

I looked inside at its contents. My heart pulsed as if hit by a pack of opiates. *My God, what stories exist among this stuff!*

I put on the white archival gloves that had been placed in the box, and picked up Fuhi's autobiography. It was in the old foolscap size, leather-bound – very expensive in her day – with about half the pages written on in an elaborate pen-and-ink style, typical of the era when calligraphy was considered one of the erudite arts.

'I'll start at seven in the morning,' I said, aware my voice was rasping with excitement.

'I'll ask Betty to bring you a coffee later – just to get you going,' Harriet smiled.

* * *

What I was most interested in was Fuhi's description of her time-slip experiences. I began to leaf through the thick, blue-toned pages of the autobiography. *This is clearly*

going to take some time. However, while I was searching for those pages, I was also getting a real feel for what Fuhi Barsden felt important about her life. *What a woman!*

It crossed my mind many times how fortunate we had become with computer software, and its function of Command-Find. It was all so different with longhand, where even to read a sentence was often a chore. But Fuhi wrote well; clearly, she was a person of considerable intelligence. It was just that at first I found her handwriting difficult to read. I began reading the following section of the document.

After several hours I shed my clothes and placed them in a hollow log to collect on my return. All I carried were my staf with its white cockatoo feathers arranged as I had been taught, and the yalo, which hung from my neck. I walked until it was dark, and then on into the night, all the time concentrating my thoughts on the multitude of things that Old Burabin had taught me. I had no particular destination, but simply allowed the great Dreamtime spirits to guide me. About midnight I stopped. I was in the thick forest and on the edge of that great escarpment, embracing a mighty canyon that surrounds the wombeyan. I knew I was where I needed to be. I had come down an old Wiradjuri trading path to a sandstone ledge with a cavernous area. I squatted down and, under the moonlight, continued to concentrate on the things I had been thinking about during my long walk.

I stood erect. Now I was truly a gommera woman. I had learnt how to harness the full power of my yalo. I began the age-old ritual. I first obtained the ochres and other natural colours from the surrounding earth and vegetation. I painted my naked body in the traditional way.

I turned my back on the great precipice lying before me and walked off to a young she-oak tree near the great precipice. I broke off some branches and cut the stem to a sharp point. I returned to the edge of the escarpment and cleared a patch in the sandstone soil and piled it into the shape of two male figures, shaping the earth so it looked as if the she-oak was growing out of their chests. Then I shaped a circle around the figure of my two detested stepbrothers. I squatted over the earthen figures and urinated over them. Now I began the gommera chant and, as I did so, I took hold of my yalo in one hand as I chanted and, with my other hand, I threw small, spindle-shaped pieces of she-oak branches at the earthen figures. I then fell to the ground in a trance and lay there throughout the day and on into the night, into the next day, and into the next.

When I finally awoke, I moved to a spot at the rear of the ledge. I stood there until the Great Spirits moved me to another time and another place where I could comprehend how I had dealt with my dreaded stepbrothers.

I re-read it all. Surely, this is just too amazing to make sense! *But why would she write it if it wasn't something she had really experienced. She doesn't actually say precisely where and when she moved forward into time. But surely she must have. But that's forward in time. What does she say about moving back in time?* There was much more reading to be done.

I started back at the beginning of the document, reading each sentence much more deliberately. By lunchtime I had encountered this strange paragraph towards the very end of the document:

My beloved Caleb had been departed now for more than four years. I had long thought about visiting him, for no other reason than just to see him again, and to experience once more his beauty. So in late February of this year, I travelled to the place of the Great Dreaming where I had been dispatched to bring that terrible justice to my two stepbrothers. I had never before travelled back in time, but Old Burabin had told me exactly how to achieve this end. I would proceed to where the Great Dreaming had directed me. This I did, and soon found myself in the room we often stayed in at the Mt Victoria Inn. My diary had informed me he would be there that night, as he travelled to Sydney. I stood beside his handsome face as he slept. Then I departed before he began to stir.

Despite my intense love and affection for Caleb and the wonderful delight of seeing him once again, I experienced a feeling of intense depression and loneliness as I descended the years to once again see him. I began to feel as if I were walking in my sleep; the heavy dreaminess was oppressive.

I put the document down on the reading table and, as I did so, Betty knocked on the door and told me it was lunch time. It would be served in the family room. I needed the break.

Hugh, Sophie and Harriet were waiting for me. They greeted me with enquiring expressions.

'You look troubled, Peter,' Sophie said.

'If Fuhi returned to visit Caleb to see him once again, wouldn't there then be two Fuhi Barsdens in the colony, although not at the same time, presumably: one in the Mt Victoria Inn, and the other wherever she may have actually been at that time, presumably Twin Rivers?'

'Yes, there's certainly an issue there,' Hugh said. 'Surely. But does she actually move in a physical sense back in time, or in the psychological sense?' he added, shaking his head in disbelief, trying to accommodate these ideas.

'So far I haven't been able to find one questionable statement in the whole document,' I added. 'So why would she write something that at first may appear as being logically nonsense?'

'Other than the issue of the two Fuhis being in New South Wales ... separated by four or so years.' Sophie said. 'Tell me what you have discovered from the document thus far.'

'I've read through it very thoroughly ... once ... and made notes under the following headings: her early life on Tahiti; discovering her biological father, William Barsden in New South Wales; saving her father's life from John Castleman's attempted murder of him during the great fires of 1833; the *Governor King* tragedy; her life with the Umbarra; and her revenge on her stepbrothers who had caused the *Governor King* tragedy.'

'And what is your assessment thus far?' Sophie asked enthusiastically.

'Amazing in its detail and, from what I understand from my readings of the academic literature of the period, I'm convinced she hasn't departed one iota from the truth. Mind you, I have to pursue much triangulation of the evidence.'

'But this time-slip stuff worries you,' she said.

'Well, while I curry enthusiasm in the time-slip genre in my history curriculum students, in order to encourage a more questioning understanding of history, in reality we know it's unproven.'

'Of course.'

Hugh nodded in agreement, his face under that storm of grey hair becoming very serious.

'Paranormal mumbo jumbo. That's all ... surely.'

'Perhaps, but you should read Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain's *An Adventure*, first published back in 1911,' I said.

'Oh, I've heard about that,' Sophie added enthusiastically.

'You mentioned it in your lecture,' Harriet said.

'Yes. If I'm going to make any assessment of Fuhi's claims about experiencing time-slips, I'll have to make reference to this book,' I added.

'Tell me, Peter, about this book you've just mentioned,' Hugh asked.

'It's one of the best-known and earliest examples of a time-slip. Basically, the two women claimed that while visiting the gardens of the Petit Trianon at Versailles in the summer of 1901, they slipped back to the period of the French Revolution.'

'Sounds preposterous,' Sophie broke in, 'but —'

'Well, for me, it's the character of the two women that's significant,' I put in.

'Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain were respectively the principal and vice-principal of St Hugh's College in Oxford, for heaven's sake. Hardly the people you'd expect to be putting out concocted stories for financial gain, or some other form of benefit.'

'Yes, and they published their book on the experience, opening the whole thing up to scientific investigation,' Hugh added. 'It's all fascinating stuff.'

'But for me, Fuhi's description of how her time-slip experience affected her bears a remarkable similarity to that described by Moberly and Jourdain,' I said.

'In what way?' Sophie asked.

'Well, many time-slip witnesses report that, at the start of their experience of the phenomenon, their immediate surroundings take on an oddly flat, underlit and lifeless appearance, and normal sounds seem to be awfully muffled – often accompanied by feelings of depression and unease.'

'That's amazing,' Sophie broke in. 'There must be something in all of this, surely.'

'Yes, if you want more on these paranormal time-slips, just google the subject, and you'll find hosts of examples: not all of them supported and collaborated by such reputable people as Moberly and Jourdain, I might add.'

'Are there any accounts of these time-slips which describe the subjects interacting with people from the past – the people of the period?'

Clearly, Sophie was most fascinated with the topic.

'I believe so. I have spoken with one of our researchers in the Psychology Department at my university, and he has referred me to two incidents recorded by Andrew MacKenzie, of the Society for Psychical Research. MacKenzie investigated several British cases, including an experience in which three naval cadets appeared to travel back in time to Kersey in Suffolk at a time when it was a medieval plague village, and one in which a Scottish woman experienced the aftermath of the Dark Age Battle of Nechtanesmere in 685AD.'

'Amazing!' Hugh exclaimed.

'So, the integrity of Fuhi's claims about her time-slip experiences is very, very important for the overall integrity of her document?' Sophie asked.

'Exactly!'

'How are you going to sort that out?' Harriet asked.

'Well, it's all about triangulation of the evidence, isn't it? I've just mentioned the literature that makes similar claims, and what I need to do now is to test out, if it's possible, her claims.'

'How?' Harriet asked.

'Tomorrow, I'm going to where she says all of this occurred, the Kanangra Walls. I believe it's in the Boyd National Park. I'll see if I can find the sandstone shelf and small cave where she describes she did all of this.'

'Then I'm going with you!' Harriet declared.

'Harriet, tomorrow is Easter Sunday, and we have all the family arriving early in the morning,' Sophie objected.

'I'm sure they won't miss me ... just this once,' Harriet answered firmly.

* * *

So deep was our concentration we were oblivious of the exhilarating sunrise over the Blue Mountains. We had left Twin Rivers at four o'clock in the morning in the family's Land Cruiser. The trip from Twin Rivers to the Kanangra Walls was a little less than an hour. During the journey we talked excitedly about the range of implications of Fuhi's time-slip experiences. We both declared this was a true watershed moment in our lives. But, of course, much depended on finding Fuhi's sandstone shelf and small cave.

Up until now, for me at least, it was much like beginning some completely new science experiment at school. I had never thought of Fuhi's supposed time travel as any more than an academic exercise. The truth of it all was unimaginable. Those other time-slips I had read about were accidental and unplanned events. But here now, it was all becoming very real. I looked to Harriet. She seemed to be locked in thought.

'What happens if this actually works, Harriet?' I asked.

Maybe, there was a quiver in my voice.

'What do you mean?' she answered.

'Well, what happens if we actually dip into a time-slip?'

'Of course it's going to work, Peter. It's all about finding the correct spot, and doing the correct things.'

She seemed so matter-of-fact, and I returned my attention to my immediate surroundings.

Dawn was bringing its own hues to the Australian bush, particularly so with the eucalypts growing from the sandstone soils of these Blue Mountains. This only heightened our state of excitement as we began to appreciate the unbounded beauty about us. By full daylight we were parking the Land Cruiser amongst the Easter campers in the camping area beside the designated Parks and Wildlife carpark.

As we looked out over the mighty canyons of the Walls, there was enormous drama. Ten or so metres in front of us the gigantic grandeur of the mighty canyon began to open up. The thick fog, which had earlier covered the titan-like canyon's floor, was lifting, as if being swept up by a gigantic hand.

The puissant canyon, geologically separated from the Blue Mountains, but geographically just to the west of them, was a majestic timbered feature, tens of kilometres long and some four hundred metres deep, exposing massive cliffs and escarpments. At one end a small creek tumbled hundreds of metres to continue as a small stream at the floor of the magnificent valley. The trees growing on the canyon's floor were so distant from where we were on the huge western edge of the cliff, that they appeared as nothing more than a huge green pile rug.

By the time we parked the car, the morning was losing its autumn coolness, and already the heat of the sun was turning the bush a dark shade of blue. But neither Harriet nor I had time to fully appreciate all this rampant beauty as we walked off in a

south-easterly direction along the face of the gigantic cliff, continuing to search for a path – or more likely what may have once been a path – leading past a sandstone platform backed by a small cave such as Fuhi had described so long ago.

'This is really needle-in-the-haystack stuff,' Harriet sighed, as we sipped at coffee from the thermos flasks we carried in our backpacks.

I could see she was wonderfully engrossed in what we were doing. The more I was getting to know her, and the more I got to know Fuhi Barsden through my research, the more similar they seemed to become. Fuhi would be proud of you Harriet, I thought.

With our coffees finished, we continued scouring the path leading along the top of the mighty canyon for some trail leading down its face.

But now my pulse was beating as if I'd just finished a marathon. I was finding I was short of breath: anxiety probably. She looked so calm.

'Don't worry, Peter,' she teased. 'I will only be a metre or so away from you when we slip into history.'

'We can only keep looking,' Harriet sighed as we finished our second coffee. 'I'm sure it's there somewhere.'

I smiled in agreement.

By mid-afternoon our enthusiasm was wavering and my doubts were increasing. We slowly had edged our way – often to the enquiring comments from Easter campers and hikers – along the face of the colossal ravine. Over our mid-afternoon coffee, we decided to continue through until dark. We were sitting under a huge white-barked eucalypt and looking southwards, perhaps in the direction of the Illawarra coast maybe about sixty or seventy kilometres as the crow flies.

Harriet began to relate to me her understanding of how – before European occupation of these lands – the Wiradjuri had used a well-worn trading path to descend this canyon (now named the Kanangra Walls) to the valley below where they traded with the Yuin nation: inland Aborigines traded goods with coastal Aborigines. This was the path Fuhi had said she had taken to her rock shelf and small cave. The natural landform of the path must still exist, we thought, although it was likely to be overgrown by now. We had spoken about this many times during the day and, on each occasion, Harriet had a wonderful new body of knowledge to relate about the first Australian traders. It seemed as if our chatting in this manner was her way of sustaining our spirits.

'Oh, look,' she exclaimed, pointing to a spot about fifty metres away, closer to the edge of the Walls. 'That's a brush-tailed rock wallaby! I thought they had all but disappeared from here.'

She was pointing to a very sombre wallaby, dark brown in colouring, with a brushed tail. Its appearance for all purposes matched its habitat of muted gorges and rugged environs. Its ears were pricked, as if two upright fingers, and its paws were held loosely in front of its belly as it became aware of our presence. Then in a flash it was gone, apparently over the edge of the great precipice.

Harriet immediately rushed to follow it. I grabbed our backpacks and followed her to the edge of the Walls. She was twenty or thirty metres ahead of me.

'Look!' she blurted.

She was pointing down the precipice towards the edge of the Walls to a path-like formation overgrown by eucalypts. I could just make out about a hundred metres along the path; on the left-hand side was a sandstone ledge backed with a small cavern.

'That's what we're looking for,' she exclaimed. 'That's Fuhi's rock platform.'

I began to follow her down the old path and, in so doing, I found my heart was beating and adrenalin pumping in a manner I had seldom experienced. She seemed to glide down the path, as if she were the rock wallaby we had just witnessed. In contrast, I stumbled, desperately grasping at one piece of vegetation after the next. Mountain climbing was never going to be my forte.

I was five minutes behind her as she reached the rock platform. I found her looking perplexed, with a what-do-we-do-now expression.

'I'm sure we're going to need Fuhi's gommera gear – her yalo and ceremonial walking stick – maybe her possum-skin cloak,' she exclaimed.

We had talked about this during the day, but we had agreed that to have brought such delicate historical artifacts on such an expedition would surely do irreparable harm to the priceless items.

'Let's wait and see,' I answered, attempting to stop the trembling in my voice.

'What do we do?' she asked. 'We're here, and we're hardly slipping into a time-slip. Perhaps we're in the wrong place – or perhaps we need Fuhi's gear. What do you think?'

'Here, take my hand,' I said. 'We're going to walk steadily all around this platform.'

'And the purpose of this holding hands stuff?' she asked with a schoolgirl-like expression.

'I can't have you disappearing into another century. Your parents would never forgive me,' I joked, but my stomach was churning like a washing machine. I wasn't entirely joking. Besides, the holding-hands experience wasn't totally unpleasant. I now seemed to be taking some control over my dire anxiety.

Silently, we began to slowly edge our way around the platform, being sure to cover every square centimetre of it. Finally, we were at a position at the rear of the cavern that backed the platform. It was hardly a cave: maybe three or four metres deep, with a sandstone overhang.

I glanced at my watch. It was 3 56 pm.

Still holding hands and, with our backs to the small cave, we began to slowly edge ourselves backwards and forwards. We believed we had finally found Fuhi's time-slip platform. There was no sense in rushing off until we had explored every possibility. I reckoned we still had another three or four hours of daylight.

Suddenly, I began to experience a most foreign sensation. Deep and terrible darkness began to envelope me. My heart was thumping in a terrible manner. I remember looking to Harriet; her dark eyes were glazing over in a most fearsome reptilian manner.

* * *

Slowly, as if through the lens of a poorly focused camera, I began to be aware of our new environment. I was still holding her hand, but couldn't quite bring her face into focus.

We were still in the Australian bush and, apparently without any cognitive intent, we were walking slowly away from a sandstone platform. With some effort, I stopped, still holding her hand. I looked back from where we had apparently entered this new setting: another sandstone platform, backed by cavernous surroundings. I knew I had to remember what and where this was. This was our gateway back to Easter 2012.

The extraordinary feeling of depression still enshrouded me, in spite of every effort to shake it off. Everything about me appeared terribly unnatural, unpleasant; even the trees beside the narrow path on which we found ourselves seemed to be flat and lifeless,

like a poorly focused photograph – indeed, a heartrending monochrome. There were no effects of light and shade: more frighteningly, no wind stirred the trees. It was all intensely still. I couldn't reach a cognitive level by which I could talk, although I sensed I was making noises of some kind.

As we proceeded to walk hand-in-hand these morbid sensations began to diminish. Now I could focus on her eyes, and they were beginning to resume their lively characteristic.

'Where are we?' she asked.

'I don't know. I'm at a loss.'

We continued walking along the path, and nothing else was spoken between us, as if we fought to regain our natural state. The path appeared to be heading towards a road. *Is that a car I can hear?*

I found we were now moving faster and more purposefully. The dreadful sensation of drowsiness had left me.

'That's certainly the sound of some kind of motor vehicle,' I managed to say.

She released my hand, as if to say 'I'm okay now'. I studied her face.

'How are you?' I asked.

'What a bizarre sensation!' she said. 'But surely similar to that described by Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain.'

'Yes, it seems to be identical.'

Now we were able to quicken our pace, and we pushed on briskly towards what we imagined was a road.

Sure enough, ahead was a gravel road. It was so dusty.

'Where are we?' she asked. 'And I might add, *when* are we?'

'We'll know the answer to both those questions in a moment,' I replied as I looked back over my shoulder to a ball of dust that seemed to signal an approaching motor vehicle.

Soon a red truck, which I reckoned was about a late 1930s vintage, slowed as if responding to my waving hand. The driver stopped the truck – labelled Bedford (I had never heard of them) – and peered out of the window, which was already wound down. He was wearing an old felt hat. A roll-your-own cigarette hung loosely from his mouth. As if a practised art, he didn't bother taking it out of his mouth as he spoke.

'Are youse alright, hey?' he asked.

I looked to the driver's door:

Tom FitzPatrick

General Carrier

Lithgow

Phone 1372

I reckoned he had painted it on himself.

'Yes, thanks, but where does this road lead to?' I asked.

'Blimey,' he responded. 'Are youse sure youse are alright?' he asked again, apparently shocked by my question.

'Yes,' I reassured him.

'Up here about a mile-and-a-half is Mt Victoria, so it is,' he answered with a puzzled expression.

'Thank you.'

'But why are youse dressed like that?' he continued with his perplexed manner.

'Oh, we're from Sydney,' I answered.

He was shaking his head, but my answer seemed to satisfy him a little.

'I'd give youse a lift if I had room here'n,' he said shaking his head.

By now his cigarette was simply a burnt-out butt hanging precariously on the edge of his bottom lip.

'That's okay,' I answered. 'We're not pushed for time.'

I could hear him crunch his gearbox, and then gun his engine.

'You didn't ask him what year it was,' Harriet said. 'Although, I suspect I know why.'

'I reckon it's wartime – probably about 1940,' I answered, with what surely must have been a strange tone in my voice.

We were both staring at the Bedford, loaded with what appeared to be mine props – hardwood timber, all of an even size cut to an even length, and laid lengthways across the truck. But it wasn't the mine props we were studying. It was the untidy contraption between the mine props and the cabin of the truck. There was an assortment of metal frames and a large tarred canvas bag. This was a gas-producing apparatus, which I knew was used during wartime in the face of petrol rationing. During the war here in New

South Wales, coal was converted to charcoal and, with the gases given off and harnessed, was used as a substitute for petrol.

'Amazing,' Harriet exclaimed. 'I've read about them, and I can remember Grandfather telling me about them, but I actually never expected to see one.'

We were feeling quite normal now. We waited at the side of the road for the great ball of white dust to settle, and then quickly set off up the road, which we had been assured led to Mt Victoria, a Blue Mountains township – about twenty minutes out from the Hydro Majestic Hotel – which I had driven through only two days earlier. But apparently that was far off in the future from where we were at this moment. I could feel the hairs at the nape of my neck prickle with apprehension, and my pulse began to race. Suddenly, for me, there was something about this I didn't like.

* * *

I wasn't too sure about how accurate my watch would be with all this time-slip stuff, but from the position of the sun, I guessed we had about two hours of daylight left. And we needed to return to 2012 to the Kanangra Walls carpark by nightfall. I only hoped all of this worked in reverse.

As we approached Mt Victoria, I could see the first building of any substance was the railway station, largely a sandstone structure; it probably was built about eighty years earlier, I thought. I could see it had all the coal-smoke appearance of the bygone era of steam trains. There was a large black-and-white wood and steel sign, the like of which I swear still stands today ... well, in 2012, I mean.

Up the road from the railway station was the Imperial Hotel. The Imperial was a grandiose two-storeyed, redbrick building, with beautiful and intricate latticework on its first-storey verandah. Fuhi had written about this building in her autobiography. The proprietor had ensured the Grand Suite was always available to Fuhi or Omomow Barsden whenever they chose to stay there. But that was long ago. This was wartime Australia. God help us! I hoped we could get back.

We walked up the steps leading to the front entrance of the railway station. I immediately looked to the large railway clock. It was 1 25 pm. There was a small crowd

of people – including young men in Navy and Army uniforms milling about and smoking cigarettes: obviously waiting for a train.

As we walked into the room, several of the people there – young sailors – looked at us, and with crude grins began to nudge each other. Most of the people in the waiting room and adjacent cafeteria were looking at us too. Yes, we were dressed remarkably differently from them. I had never worn any hair oil, but the males here all seemed to be doing so. And their haircuts were short back and sides – very different from my rather long 2012 university fashion. And I was wearing tightly cut jeans. I'm not sure if blue jeans had as yet become a fashion item in this era. Perhaps that was at least ten years away.

It had been a warm day when we left 2012, so I was wearing a tee-shirt, with *Attitude* emblazoned across the front of it. To the people gathered here, I must have looked remarkably different. Even my designer sunglasses must have appeared very foreign to these people. But then I realised many of them weren't staring at me at all. I looked to Harriet.

She appeared very aware she was the centre of attention. Her designer sunglasses were perched on the top of her head; her thick wavy black hair was tied back in a ponytail, and casually scrunched. She wore no makeup. Her loose, plain, red tee-shirt revealed her beautifully formed breasts, and I suspect she wasn't wearing a bra. Added to this, were the tight blue jeans, leaving little to the imagination.

All of this I suddenly realised was quite extraordinary in these times we now found ourselves, but in 2012 wouldn't have raised a mention. We needed to do something to break the stares of these people. I had never experienced such a feeling of being so foreign. It was as if we were complete strangers in this place, a place through which I had driven only yesterday, and had stopped for a coffee at the Hydro Majestic, only a twenty-minute drive back towards Sydney. *This is crazy – bloody crazy, for God's sake!* But no wonder, I thought, as I quickly looked towards them, and began to study their appearance more closely.

As I did so a terrible fear began to envelope me, a kind of fear that I'd never before experienced. It was a slimy kind of terror, not like other kinds of horror, like treading on a tiger snake while out bushwalking, but an all-encompassing panic that grew worse by the second, covering me like some kind of slime. I began to feel panic rise up from my

stomach, and I looked to Harriet to see how she was coping. Her eyes told me she was feeling the same terrible sensation. Then I took a deep breath and made a step forward, as I attempted to shake it off. *Was it just the weirdness of it all that was spooking me?*

All of the non-military people here were wearing very formal clothes. The men were dressed in various forms of suits and were wearing felt hats and ties. The women all wore longish skirts in the fashion of the day. Several were even wearing fox-skin stoles, hats and high-heeled shoes: nothing like stilettos, though. This was all very formal, as if they were going off to some function. But then I was reminded that's how people travelled in this time. *But exactly what time – the exact date – is it?*

Maybe it was the strange all-pervading smell of the place that was spooking me. I couldn't ever remember smelling anything just like this. Coal smoke? Coal cinders? Stale body odours? I wasn't sure, but it certainly didn't smell like Adelaide Railway Station in 2012!

I looked to the small refreshment area. I remembered this was in the days of labour-intensive personalised service, before automated dispensing machines for sandwiches, coke and the like. Girls behind the counter wore crisp green uniforms with dark green trimmings, and strange little caps to match; NSWGR was embroidered across the front.

An abandoned newspaper on a wooden bench – a Sydney Morning Herald – caught my attention. I went to pick it up but, as I was doing so, a young man in naval uniform looked at me, very suspiciously, as if I were some kind of foreign intruder. Clearly, these people were edgy about war news. 'Be suspicious of foreign-looking people' was an example of the kind of warnings being plastered across Australia. I looked to a noticeboard, half-hidden behind a group of sailors. It depicted two elderly Australians, a grey-haired man and a woman, sitting on a bench beside a sign asking Australians to 'Keep Calm and Carry On'.

'Is this yours?' I asked one of the sailors.

He smiled.

'No, matey. Somebody left it there, ten or fifteen minutes ago.'

'Thank you,' Harriet said, as she picked up the paper.

The young man quickly returned her smile, but then focused his attention on her physical attributes. She was pointing to the date of the edition of the paper. I looked at her and whispered '15 April 1940': exactly seventy-two years ago.'

It took several moments for us to comprehend that.

'Jesus,' she breathed. 'What's happening?'

We walked to the table where the young man was seated. I noticed from his cap he was from the *HMAS Sydney*. 'You're on the *Sydney*?' I asked.

He nodded.

The woman seated next to him – who I reckoned was his mother – prompted him to finish his cup of tea and toasted sandwiches because the train was due in.

They were both smoking, and the ashtray at the table was full of butts and ash. I looked around to the people seated at the other table. They all seemed to be smoking. I pushed this to the back of my mind. It was the young man with the *HMAS Sydney* cap that most interested me.

The woman, dressed in a large felt hat, and a type of rabbit-skin stole, was addressing the young girl who was being referred to as Yvonne. She was talking to the young girl, most likely her daughter, probably about twelve years old. *Yvonne Swaby! It couldn't be. Surely not. But she's from Lithgow and that's only a forty-minute drive from here.*

'You're not Milton Swaby, by any chance?' I asked the young sailor standing in the group next to the person who I reckoned was Yvonne Swaby.

'Yes,' he answered. 'Have we met, hey, cobber?'

'No ... I mean perhaps ... maybe a long time ago. I'm very sorry to interrupt you.'

'Why are you dressed like that?' Yvonne asked, in the innocent manner of a twelve-year-old.

'Oh, we're from Sydney,' Harriet responded, taking my hand. 'Some of us in Sydney dress like this,' she smiled reassuringly.

Yvonne didn't seem convinced.

'We should be leaving,' I said to Harriet.

'Let's see if we can get back to 2012,' Harriet said as we scuttled back down the railway station steps. 'Suddenly, I'm not so sure about all of this.'

She took my hand, and I could feel hers was sweaty with apprehension.

'Milton Swaby was one of the souls who went down with the *Sydney*,' I exclaimed, aware my voice was rasping.

'My God, poor soul,' Harriet said, as she squeezed my hand.

'And the little girl is Yvonne Swaby. I'm due to interview her in Lithgow on Tuesday. She's now ... or will be, on Tuesday ... in her eighties.'

'My God,' she repeated, her voice trembling.

I wanted to talk about all of this with Harriet, but not here. For now, I just wanted to get back to Easter 2012. In ten short minutes we were down the gravel road, then the narrow bush track to the sandstone shelf. We were both panting with unease and sheer anxiety as we searched for the spot we hoped would take us back to Easter 2012.

'It just has to be here somewhere,' she whispered, her beautiful face drawn with worry. 'It's just got to be here somewhere. Oh, dear Jesus, what have we done.'

* * *

Our return journey to the Kanangra Walls carpark and to 2012 wasn't without its incidents. Holding hands, we stumbled along the narrow path – no more than an animal track now – leading to the plateau above. I glanced at my watch. It was 4 06 pm. Only twelve minutes had passed since I'd looked at my watch before we departed on the time-slip. And that's how long it would have taken us to scramble this far along the path.

Again both of us were overcome by that terrible melancholy. With great difficulty we stumbled and crawled up the old Wiradjuri trading path. We were at least a half-hour out of the Kanangra Walls before we once more began to feel normal. We discussed what we had experienced, and attempted to make sense of it all. Harriet carried a Monday 15 April 1940 edition of the Sydney Morning Herald in her backpack.

'I have never experienced such a feeling as I did back there,' I said after we had trekked several hundred metres to the carpark. 'Now that we're safely back here, I'm not sure if it was fear or not, but it was a most unnerving sensation. Maybe it was more panic.'

'Yes,' she answered, thoughtfully. 'Panic about the unknown. We just weren't prepared for it all.'

'When we saw the guy in the old Bedford truck on our walk down the dusty road we were lulled into a false sense of reality, you know, a sort of nostalgic walk back into the past. But there was something about the whole business of the crowd at the railway station that brought on a feeling of panic, or whatever the sensation was for me.'

'Yeah,' she murmured. 'Like one of those period dress festivals that people attend on long weekends.'

'I know one thing for sure: I never want to experience it again.'

She took her eyes off the road and looked at me for a moment. Little more was spoken between us until we neared Twin Rivers.

* * *

I was dead tired the next day – Easter Monday. Harriet was the same. After meeting the rest of Harriet's immediate family over breakfast, I spent the day photographing what I needed of Fuhi's material, and making notations on my laptop. Harriet came in to see me several times. We had determined that over dinner we would recount our experiences from the day before. I strongly urged that this not be spoken about outside of Harriet's immediate family.

I was due to leave on Easter Tuesday morning, and promised to submit my report within six months. I had one more research task to perform before my drive to Sydney and my 6 00 pm Qantas flight to Adelaide the following night.

Chapter 3

After five days shore leave from 15 April 1940, Able Seaman Milton Swaby had been at the Mt Victoria Railway Station on his way to return to his ship *HMAS Sydney* berthed at the Port Jackson naval yards. Following an agreement between the Australian Prime Minister Bob Menzies (devotee of the British Empire) and Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister (an even greater devotee of the empire), the *Sydney* was due to join the British Mediterranean Fleet for an eight-month deployment in May 1940. She would sink two Italian warships, participate in multiple shore bombardments, and provide support to the Malta Convoys, suffering minimal damage and no casualties. But then Milton Swaby's luck would begin to run out, as would the luck of his fellow crew, all 645 of them.

I felt a strange sense of anxiety as I drove back to Bathurst and along the Great Western Highway to Lithgow. I remembered sitting at the table beside the great fireplace in the Hydro Majestic only five days previously, thinking that this project may be a watershed moment in my life. I was off to talk with a woman who must be in her mid-eighties and, only two days ago as a twelve-year old, she had asked me why I was dressed as I was. This surely is watershed stuff!

Working from the Australian War Memorial database of the officers and crew of the *HMAS Sydney*, I had been researching every known descendant of the 645 souls who perished on that fateful day 19 November 1941, when the *Sydney* was involved in a mutually destructive engagement with the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran*. I knew Yvonne Swaby was not well. In fact, I suspected she didn't have very long to live. So my interview with her was a priority. I had arranged it as soon as I knew I was travelling to Twin Rivers for the Barsden research.

The outskirts of Lithgow fringed the Great Western Highway about forty kilometres west of the Blue Mountains. Soon my Navman was directing me to take a left-hand turn off the highway into Main Street. I had never visited the city before. From the elevated position of the turnoff I had just taken I looked over the city and was delighted with what I saw.

I had done some homework on it. It was an old industrial town, coal and iron mining and steel production, and had once had a large government factory producing small arms. There had also been a large Berlei women's underwear factory here, which employed many of the local girls at low rates of pay. Perhaps Yvonne had been one of these. Except for some minor underground coal mining, all of that had long gone, and now the city was striving to re-establish itself, particularly as a dormitory suburb for the many employees of Greater Western Sydney – a comfortable two-hour-drive away, or a ninety-minute rail journey.

It all looked pretty good to me. But what about Yvonne Swaby? Her worried face from my encounter with her as a twelve-year old two days ago was indelibly etched on my memory. I wondered how the *Sydney* disaster affected her and her family.

Driving down Main Street, my Navman was directing me to take a left-hand turn across the railway line into Railway Parade. Historically, streets in cities and towns located next to railway lines – particularly during the time of steam – tended to be low socio-economic areas. It usually took a long time for them to recover.

As I drove into Railway Parade, I could see this part of town was well on the road to recovery. Many of the old buildings had been redeveloped and gave the appearance of a prosperous area, but not so the old block of semi-detached buildings that appeared to be the address Yvonne had given me. My navigation device was making noises, instructing me I had reached my destination.

I grabbed my recorder and notepad and walked to the old wooden gate of Yvonne's home. She was slow to answer my knock on her front door and, in a frail voice, repeated several times she was coming.

She finally opened the door and with a tragic smile greeted me.

'Dr St Claire?'

I smiled and shook her hand: the limp hand of a woman surely destined to be soon departing us. It was almost like shaking the wing of a chicken – wafer thin and as light as a tissue.

'Thank you very much for giving me your time,' I said.

'You want to talk with me about poor Milton?'

'Yes, if that's okay with you.'

'I suppose so,' she replied, beckoning me inside.

It was clean enough but when I looked to her kitchen bench I saw a pile of old meals-on-wheels food containers, possibly her Easter deliveries from the previous Thursday, which I hoped she had kept in the refrigerator.

She invited me to take a seat as she shuffled off to the kitchen to make me a cup of tea.

'What would you like to ask me?' she enquired as she placed my cup of tea and a plate of biscuits on a table beside me.

I turned on my recorder.

'Do you mind my recording what you say?'

'Not at all.'

'Can you remember being at the Mt Victoria Railway Station with your mother and Milton during Easter 1940?' I asked.

'Good heavens, how did you know we were there then?' she replied in a frail, but concerned tone.

'I'm not sure. I can't quite remember how,' I lied.

'Yes, of course I can remember. It was the second-last time I saw dear Milton.'

'The second-last?'

'Yes. He was on a five-day shore leave, before the *Sydney* sailed to the Mediterranean.'

'But you said that was the second-last time you saw him? When was the last?'

'He had another five days leave at Easter the following year – 1941 – when the *Sydney* returned from the Mediterranean, and before it went to work in Australian waters.'

'Can you remember speaking with a stranger during the time you were at the railway station in Easter 1940?'

'My memory's not that good,' she laughed, feebly, in reply.

She was racking her brain for some memory of what I was asking. It was really too much to expect. Our next hour of interview revealed the tragic effects of the sinking of the *Sydney* and Milton's loss had had on her family.

'Mother and Father never ... ever ... adjusted to his loss. Father took to the bottle, and Mother took to the church.'

This was a story I had encountered many times before when doing these interviews: tragedy upon tragedy. Only the names and places changed. *Hell, war inflicts a terrible toll on families. When do they ever end?*

She had never married, and had lived with her parents, weighed down by the sadness of their illnesses until they died in the 1950s: her father from lung cancer, and her mother from the related ravages of depression.

'She just wouldn't eat,' Yvonne said, by now clearly hardened to the reality of the way in which her parents had died.

'And Father always had a smoke in his mouth. That must have been what killed him. But we didn't know that then. They didn't live to see my thirtieth birthday, for heavens sake. I've often wondered what it would have been like if dear Milton had lived, and there had been no *Sydney* tragedy.'

Yes! How much of Australia's social history would have changed had there not been a Sydney tragedy. But history is full of what ifs ...

Chapter 4

I found I needed the second week of the mid-semester break, free of students and lectures, to sit back, and really reflect and make sense of my experiences at Twin Rivers. It was one thing for people to stumble into a paranormal experience, such as that described by Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain, but quite another for what Harriet and I had experienced.

We had read Fuhi's account of an event from a hundred and fifty years ago, and had set about recreating that same experience. And apparently, we had achieved much the same thing. But there was much about it that troubled me, apart from the dreadful feelings of nausea during the time-slip, and the awful feelings of fear and terror that had gripped me at the railway station. It was more than simply landing in wartime Australia. It was about the psychological fear of being in an alien environment. There was much about the whole experience I simply didn't understand.

First, there were some obvious differences between Fuhi's account and our experience. She had set out to see her beloved Caleb at a prescribed time and place in the past. She had said that much in her notes. She appeared to have control over *when* she entered a time-slip. But what she didn't say was whether or not she had any control over *where* she entered the time-slip – the place she exited the time-slip tunnel. She appeared to be able to travel directly to her Caleb when she knew he'd be staying at the Imperial Hotel in Mt Victoria. If I attempted to replicate all of that, would it be the same time-slip – the same time and place, I wondered? This question needed answering, at least for Hugh and Sophie's report for which I was being paid forty thousand dollars to write.

But exactly why did Harriet and I cross the threshold into Easter 1940, and why at Mt Victoria? During the weeks after I had left Twin Rivers, I found I was constantly confronting this question. In the end, I couldn't help but conclude there must have been some connection between the thoughts at the back of my mind about seeing Yvonne Swaby on my return from Twin Rivers, and the fact we entered the time-slip in Easter 1940 when she was at the Mt Victoria Railway Station. It had to be this. It couldn't

simply be a coincidence, surely. In other words, my subconscious was driving us to where we emerged from the time-slip.

Then there was the Yvonne Swaby interview. If she had been able to recall that day at Easter 1940 at the Mt Victoria Railway Station, was it possible she would have had some memory of my strange clothes and me? Was it possible for me to have been a part of her life when she was a twelve-year-old – however briefly – at the Mt Victoria Railway Station?

And also there was the strange business of the 1940 edition of the 1940 Sydney Morning Herald now sitting safely in the secured library of the Twin Rivers homestead. I was finding it very difficult, indeed, to get my head around that. The logical extension of it would be what I know now: I could travel back into the past, say to Ancient Egypt, grab some objects out of the pharaoh's treasures and return to 2012. Or, travel to Renaissance Italy, and take some booty from the great Italian Renaissance polymath, Leonardo da Vinci, or some other. *No! Not possible, surely!*

But in the case of Yvonne Swaby, I was becoming increasingly despondent with what I was unearthing. The loss of her brother had had such a terrible impact on her and her family. It seemed to be the same tragic history of every descendent of the men who went down with the *Sydney*. Or at least, it was this way with the forty or so descendants whom I had interviewed. Sometimes the writing of history can be a despairing experience.

Not surprisingly, two weeks later when I opened up my email and found a message from Harriet telling me she would be in Adelaide the following week, and asking if we could have lunch, I jumped at the opportunity. I needed to talk with her.

* * *

She's always on time, I thought. I saw Harriet sitting in a lounge chair, patiently waiting for me at the Drunken Admiral Restaurant in Norwood in Adelaide's eastern suburbs. I had been looking forward to seeing her again even though it had only been three weeks since I had seen her.

As I approached, she stood and kissed my cheek, at the same time squeezing me tightly to her breasts. *That's better than a handshake.*

As the waitress was showing us to our table, Harriet was brimming with questions about my interview with Yvonne Swaby. I told her what a tragic life Yvonne had led since the death of her brother on the *Sydney*.

'Poor thing,' Harriet intoned. 'Just another dreadful tragedy of that terrible war.'

She was shaking her head as she reflected on it. Her face was drawn with anguish.

We tried to lift the mood of our meeting, chatting mindlessly about the menu. In the end, she ordered crumbed whiting, and I ordered the beer-battered garfish. This was by far the best local seafood available in Adelaide.

'Her life is so similar to other relatives I've interviewed who went down with the *Sydney*,' I explained.

I just wanted to finish talking about Yvonne, and close the topic there and then. But there was something that had been raking my mind since that day I saw her as a twelve-year-old with her brother and mother at the Mt Victoria Railway Station.

'What a tragic loss,' Harriet sighed. 'Could it have been prevented?'

'Who knows? There have been dozens of books written on the disaster. There are all kinds of conspiracy theories ... but who knows? *Sydney*'s loss with all hands, compared with the survival of most of the German crew, has contributed to the controversy. Some have alleged the German commander used illegal means to lure *Sydney* into range ... or that a Japanese submarine was involved ... you know ... the true events of the battle are concealed behind a wide-ranging cover up. The Government was not telling the public all of the story.'

'But to change the topic just a little, what do you think of Fuhi's time-slip stuff, now that you've had more time to think about it?'

'For me, there's one significant question remaining. From her notes, Fuhi seems to have nominated the time period for her time-slip. Remember, she wanted to see her beloved Caleb just once more. So she chose a time and a place to do so. And we didn't do that. We simply took a stab in the dark.'

'So, can we do the same?' Harriet asked excitedly. 'We must try again. It's so important to test that out.'

I looked at her with what I'm sure was an expression of agreement. I felt I knew why she wanted to test out Fuhi's notes.

* * *

Two weeks later when I had been able to organise a four-day weekend from my work at the university, once again, mid-afternoon, I was driving an Avis Ford Falcon down the long driveway to the Twin Rivers homestead. Now the many poplars and other deciduous trees had assumed their stunning autumn colouring. Indeed, some already were skeletal in preparation for their winter hibernation.

She was there with her wonderful enthusiastic smile to greet me as I pulled up on the expansive apron to the driveway. Another kiss on the cheek and a warm embrace. It was well worth the trip!

'I've been thinking,' she began even before I had taken my bag from the car, 'about the time of day we should plan on visiting Fuhi's time tunnel. We entered it late in the afternoon last time. What do you think would happen if we entered it next time early in the morning, now that we know exactly where to go?'

I considered it for a few seconds. I could see why she was proposing this.

'Just to see if it's early morning at the other end of the tunnel?' I asked.

'Exactly!'

'Good thinking. We'll leave here at daybreak tomorrow?'

'Fine by me.'

* * *

Hugh was in Canberra with a delegation of graziers, petitioning the government about the live cattle trade to Indonesia. Only Sophie and Harriet were at home. They wanted to talk about my *Sydney* research.

'Well, I'm sure you're familiar with the background of the tragedy,' I said. 'You would remember the enormous publicity associated with the discovery of the wreck just four years ago, now. But I'd recommend Tom Frame's *HMAS: Sydney Loss and Controversy*. It touches on some of the themes I'm attempting to tease out in my research.'

Sophie was nodding her head, and making a note of the book I had suggested. 'Just fill me in on the background to the tragedy,' she asked. 'I think I know some of it, but give me the outline.'

'Briefly, the *HMAS Sydney* was one of three modified Leander-class light cruisers operated by the Royal Australian Navy. Originally, the Brits had ordered her construction as *HMS Phaeton*. But with the growing tension in the Asia-Pacific region during the period, the Commonwealth Government purchased her, and renamed her prior to her 1934 launch.'

'Was her sinking the result of poor and inexperienced command?' Harriet asked.

'Not at all,' I explained, as I opened up my laptop, and went to my *Sydney* file.

As it was booting up, I explained.

'Indeed, during the early part of her operational history, *Sydney* helped enforce sanctions during the Abyssinian crisis. This was good operational experience. At the start of the Second World War she was assigned to convoy escort and patrol duties in Australian waters. All of this was done from Churchill's office, of course.'

'We saw Milton Swaby and some other members of the *Sydney* crew, Easter 1940,' Harriet added.

'Correct. And in the following month – May 1940 – the *Sydney* joined the British Mediterranean Fleet for an eight-month deployment, courtesy of our Menzies sniffing to the Brits.'

'How did this add to her operational experience?' Sophie asked.

'Apparently, very effectively. During this campaign she sank two Italian warships, participated in multiple shore bombardments, and provided support to the Malta Convoys, while receiving minimal damage and no casualties.'

I then flicked up a photograph. The photograph from the Australian War Memorial website showed a commemorative poster produced for the anniversary of the loss of the *Sydney*. It showed the full complement of her company after the successful action against the Italian cruiser, *Bartolomeo*, 19 July 1940. Men were crowded on the deck and standing in the rigging.

'In eighteen months they would all be dead,' I said.

'What a tragedy,' Sophie said, shaking her head.

'Yes, on her return to Australia in February 1941, the *Sydney* resumed convoy escort and patrol duties in home waters. On 19 November 1941, the German raider, *Kormoran* ambushed her off the Western Australian coast, almost certainly advantaged by the surprise nature of it and some very accurate fire.'

'So, there's no suggestion of faulty command?' Sophie asked.

'No, not at all. Captain Joseph Burnett was well experienced, but probably outsmarted here. Surprise was everything. The battle lasted only an hour, with both ships crippled and seriously damaged. The *Sydney* steamed slowly away and sank, losing her full complement. *Kormoran* drifted for several hours before her crew, commanded by Captain Theodor Detmers, abandoned ship with eighty lives lost, and 317 rescued, to spend the rest of the war as POWs in Australian camps.'

'I understand the period following her sinking was riddled with controversy, too' Harriet said.

'It certainly was,' I said. 'And that's what interests me ... or at least the effect that the controversy had on the relatives of the *Sydney*'s crew: the Yvonne Swabys and her ilk.'

Sophie and Harriet were shaking their heads. They encouraged me to continue.

'Oh yes, the incompetence came at administrative and governmental levels. Failure to observe correct censorship procedure led to the leaking of information to the public 25 November, only a few days following the disaster. But Prime Minister, John Curtin, released official news of the action and the presumed loss of the *Sydney* a week or so later. Really, it was the lack of information that led to suspicion of a cover-up, or a conspiracy.'

'We can only imagine what affect this was having on the relatives of the crew,' Harriet sighed.

'Exactly. In fact very little explanatory information and details of the disaster were available until the official history of the Royal Australian Navy in the Second World War was published in 1957.'

'By this time, the huge psychological damage had been done to Yvonne Swaby and all the other relatives of the crew,' Harriet said with disgust.

I knew what she was leading to, and encouraged her to continue. Apparently, her mother supported her views.

'I know we can't reverse a war occurring – history is much too big and complicated for that, but surely we have an opportunity here to do something about one of Australia's great tragedies of the Second World War.'

She was almost pleading with me to intervene on behalf of the generations of people whose friends and kin had gone down with the *Sydney*.

'Knowing what war does to families,' Sophie broke in.

'Exactly,' Harriet continued. 'Given the sufferings of generations, in a sense, wars take generations to end.'

'I had many friends who went to Vietnam,' Sophie added. 'It was a truly dirty war – and I'm sure I don't need to remind you, a teacher of history, that in its latter stages, Australian society was tragically divided about its moral worth and strategic value. Individual instances of the poor mental state of the combatants still continued to haunt the corridors of Australia's institutions which attempt to administer cures for mental illness. Even, now in 2012, individuals and families – the children and grandchildren of veterans – continue to fight the mental anguish born of that terrible war. Increasingly, these stories emerge in the Australian media. When does a war really end?'

'Peter, we mightn't be able to do anything about the big war, but I truly believe we can do something about one of its great tragedies ... at least as far as Australia is concerned.'

She was looking at me, again with that pleading expression in her beautiful, dark, Tahitian eyes.

I didn't comment. I hoped that my body language wasn't signalling any form of encouragement. I knew full well what she was getting at, and there was no doubt it was a crazy idea. Besides, from my brief experience, I knew that time travel was not a cakewalk.

* * *

It was still dark when Harriet and I departed Twin Rivers the next morning for the Kanangra Walls. She seemed to be driving at about 10 kilometres an hour faster than what I remembered was normal for her.

That haste was sustained when we reached the car park at the Walls. With full daylight, she was out of the Land Cruiser in a flash, had grabbed her backpack and was encouraging me to keep pace with her as she paced, almost jogged, in the direction of Fuhi's sandstone shelf. I didn't complain. Her enthusiasm and haste were contagious.

I noticed she was more conservatively dressed today. We had spoken about this. She appeared to be wearing a bra. Certainly, her jeans were of a more conservative cut. I had even thought of wearing an Akubra hat, but then I realised I would appear even more conspicuous. I wore a checked shirt, as did Harriet. This was not likely to stir the attention of anybody we might encounter. But exactly where and when would we emerge from Fuhi's time-slip launching pad?

It was all so much quicker this time now that we knew exactly where to go. Three or four paces ahead of me, she led the way down the old Wiradjuri trading track to Fuhi's sandstone shelf.

'Here,' she said in soft voice. 'Take my hand. I don't want to lose you in time-slip land.'

'No!' I replied in feigned horror.

Then I remembered to check the time on my watch: 8 02.

We quickly positioned ourselves at the rear of the shelf under the ceiling. In a flash I began to experience that dreadfully dark emotion, as if the whole world was ending. But in a blink of an eye we had arrived at what appeared to be exactly the same place we had emerged before. But when?

I looked at her as well as I could with my poorly focused vision. Her eyes were as I remembered them before – glazed over as if a reptile shedding its skin. But she squeezed my hand to reassure me.

Within a few moments we began walking, at first in a zombie-like manner as before, along the dirt track. As my consciousness regained its normality, it became *déjà vu*.

We were returning to our normal cognitive state by the time I saw the road in the distance and heard the sound of a motor vehicle. I looked to her. I sensed what she was thinking. No, it couldn't be!

'Look!' I exclaimed. 'Can you believe it?'

Soon the same driver of the same red Bedford truck was responded to my waving hand. Just as before, he stopped the truck and peered out of the window which, as

before, was already wound down. He was wearing the same old felt hat, and had what appeared to be the same roll-your-own cigarette hanging loosely from his mouth. He spoke in the same manner.

'Are youse alright, hey,' he asked.

'Yes, thanks, but where does this road lead to?' I asked.

'Blimey,' he responded. 'Are youse sure youse are alright?' he asked again, apparently shocked by my question.

'Yes,' I reassured him.

'Up here about a mile-and-a-half is Mt Victoria, so it is,' he answered with a puzzled expression.

'Thank you.'

'But why are youse dressed like that?' he continued with his perplexed manner.

'Oh, we're from Sydney,' I answered.

It was as if all of this had never happened before. Unbelievable! And just as before, he said 'I'd give youse a lift if I had room here'n'.

He was shaking his head, with his cigarette simply a burnt-out butt hanging precariously on the edge of his bottom lip: identical to last time.

'That's okay,' I answered. 'We're not pushed for time.'

I waited for him to crunch his gearbox, and then gun his engine. It all happened as before.

With the red Bedford disappearing in a pall of dust down the Mt Victoria Road, I looked to Harriet.

'What do you make of that Dr St Claire?'

'Unbelievable! I'm lost for words. But let's wait until we get to the railway station.'

'Yes,' she answered enthusiastically, as she quickened her pace.

As we scampered up the steps leading to the front entrance we looked at each other in disbelief.

'Talk about déjà vu ... all over again!' she exclaimed, aping the famous unintended statement from a famous Australian cricket commentator.

It was exactly as before. There was a small crowd of people, many young men in Navy or Army uniforms, all smoking cigarettes, milling about and obviously waiting for a train. I looked to the large railway clock. It was 1 25 pm.

Immediately, all eyes were focused on us. Our more conservative dress was making no difference. The men were staring at Harriet, many of them in the same lewd manner. But that terrible feeling of panic and fear I'd felt when I was last here was not so apparent now. It was weird but it wasn't as bad. I was getting used to the 1940s at Mt Victoria Railway Station, I thought.

Anxiously, I looked to the small refreshment area, then to the wooden seating bench. It was there again – the abandoned newspaper on a wooden bench – the same copy of the Sydney Morning Herald.

'Is this yours?' I asked of the same person as before.

Again he smiled.

'No. Somebody left it there ten or fifteen minutes ago.'

I watched Harriet as she picked up the paper. She looked to me. I thought I knew what she was thinking as she looked at the date of the edition. Again I walked to the table where young man was seated. I noticed from his cap he was from the *Sydney*.

'You're on the *Sydney*?' I asked, just as before.

He nodded in agreement. *Unbelievable*.

Again his mother prompted him to finish his cup of tea and toasted sandwiches because the train was due in. In the middle of the table, the same ashtray sat full of butts and ash. I looked to Yvonne, then to Milton and to his mother. There was no suggestion they knew us, or had met us before.

'You're Milton Swaby?' I asked.

Nothing had changed. I didn't answer.

'Why are you dressed like that?' Yvonne asked, with the same puzzled child-like innocence.

'Oh, we're from Sydney,' Harriet responded as before, taking my hand. 'Some of us in Sydney dress like this,' she smiled reassuringly.

I studied the faces of the Swabys. No déjà vu here!

As before, Yvonne didn't look convinced.

'We should be leaving,' I said to Harriet as we turned to leave the building.

'2012, here we come, right back where we started from,' Harriet breathed, the copy of the Sydney Morning Herald gripped firmly in her hand, as we scuttled back down the railway station steps back to Fuhi's time tunnel.

As soon as I was able to refocus my eyes back on Fuhi's sandstone shelf off the old Wiradjuri trading track, I checked my watch.

'8 02, Peter?' she asked.

'So close to it, it doesn't matter,' I answered, my head still spinning with that strange sensation, but still recognising the significance of the time factor.

Of course, our conversation on the way back to Twin Rivers was full of what we had experienced. But, for the most part, our discussion was excited and often incoherent and inconclusive – no rational conclusions. I needed some lunch and a coffee, and Harriet felt the same.

So, when she drove into the Twin Rivers garage I was pleased to see Betty scamper from the front veranda into the house to announce to Sophie we were home. It had not yet turned 1 00 pm – at least six hours earlier than our last adventure.

* * *

'I really don't think it matters what time – indeed, what date – we set off to the time-slip tunnel. It will always be the same time and place when we emerge from it,' I offered as Sophie, Harriet and I sat over a finished lunch. 'And if we walked at the same pace, given the time we spend with the truck driver, it will always be 1 25 pm when we walk into the railway station.

'It's beginning to look as if that's the case,' Sophie agreed.

'But there are some things I can't quite figure out,' Harriet said.

'I think I know what you're going to say.'

'Obviously, the reason it's the same time and place you emerge from the tunnel. Fuhi travelled at a different time. It's now appearing she could choose whatever particular slice of history and time she wanted,' Sophie contributed.

'Was that because of her gommera know-how?' Harriet asked. 'That's what I can't figure out.'

'Maybe,' Sophie and I agreed, nodding our heads.

'And while we're talking about Fuhi, how do we account for her travelling back in time and her subsequent presence at the hotel in Mt Victoria, while at the same time she

must have been somewhere else in the colony – probably back here at Twin Rivers? Or am I simply thinking about this in the wrong way?’

‘Yes, it’s the problem of the two Fuhis: something I think I alluded to the first time we started to deal with this,’ I said. ‘Just like your two Sydney Morning Heralds from the Mt Victoria Railway Station. I really think there is much more to understand about this time-slip stuff.’

We all sat silently for a few moments, while Betty poured us some more coffee.

‘I’ve been thinking long and hard about this,’ I said. ‘There aren’t really two Fuhis, because of the time the time travel takes. Put it simply: one Fuhi disappears from one place, and in a blink of an eye she reappears back in the same place. During that blink of an eye, she does what she has to do in another spatial and temporal zone – another time and place.’

‘Yes, of course,’ Harriet agreed. ‘In a blink of an eye, we disappeared and reappeared from Fuhi’s sandstone gommer platform at the Kanangra Walls. But in that blink of an eye, in the year 1940, we walked up the narrow bush track, spoke with the truck driver with the cigarette in his mouth, walked up the gravel road to the Mt Victoria Railway Station, collected the copy of the Sydney Morning Herald, spoke to the Swabys, and then walked back to the same sandstone platform where we appeared.’

‘That’s about it, I figure,’ I said.

‘Yes,’ Sophie said. ‘But just how many times can you bring exactly the same newspaper back from the same bench?’

‘Unanswered issues with time-slips – simply things we don’t understand?’ I contributed. ‘Probably, an infinite number of times.’

There was another long silence. This was a lot to get our minds around.

‘Peter,’ Harriet said in a voice I’d had never heard before from her – almost purring, ‘you must realise something – whatever that might be – is steering us towards those poor people: Milton Swaby and the other poor wretches from the *Sydney*. We can do something about what happens to them. They simply don’t have to die, do they?’

I looked to Sophie. Maybe, she and Harriet had talked about this. Sophie was waiting for my reaction. I knew this topic would come up again.

‘What do you propose, HG Wells?’ I asked with an encouraging smile.

'Maybe, it's like HG's time machine, but I really don't think it needs to be so complicated,' she said. 'No need for any time machine here.'

'But tell me exactly what you propose?' I gently insisted.

'We simply warn Milton Swaby what's going to happen to the *Sydney* in November 1942 off the Western Australian coast. You know, warn him about the *Kormoran*,' Harriet challenged. 'He can warn the others.'

'And what's he going to do?' I asked. 'Listen to and believe a total stranger! I don't think so. Even if he listens to us, that doesn't mean Captain Joe Burnett will pay heed to what we say.'

'There must be some way to warn them about the *Kormoran*,' Harriet sighed. 'Some way, surely.'

'Of course, there is,' I answered, aware of the full implications of what she was saying.

'Well?' Harriet asked.

'The plain fact is that history *can* be changed with the blink of an eye,' I said. 'Surely, most people concede that much. What would have happened if you had not chosen to do your study at the University of Adelaide? We wouldn't be sitting here now, would we? And your choosing to do exactly that was an act of free will, was it not.'

'Sure, we know the *Sydney* didn't have to sink,' she insisted. 'It wasn't pre-determined.'

'Indeed!' I said, pleased we were broaching a favourite topic of mine. 'History is chaos. But, sadly it's only when we move from the personal to the national issues, people begin to think it's all determined in some way.'

'History teachers doing their job ... too well ... perhaps,' Harriet said, her mother clearly fascinated with her take on this. 'You know, like looking for the full range of causes for a particular event ... the First World War ... and so on.'

'Yes, idiots and fools making decisions ... completely irrational stuff, and generations of history students have been asked to explain what is often the irrational, often crazy stuff: stuff we call history, in rational terms.'

'As Stephen King has one of his characters saying in his JFK novel:

It's all a perfectly balanced mechanism of shouts and echoes pretending to be wheels and cogs, a dreamclock chiming beneath a mystery glass we call life.'

'Exactly, but what King should have had his character say, is that it is often the history teachers who have encouraged them to think in this manner.'

I looked at them for a response. I knew Harriet's opinion, and her mother was nodding in agreement.

'So what do we do about those poor wretches on the *Sydney*? Surely, we can do something to prevent the horror their families suffered.'

Harriet's expression was now one of grim determination. She wasn't really asking. She was insisting.

'Let's go through the whole thing and tease out possible points of intervention,' I invited.

There was much more I needed to say about this.

'Okay, we know if you go through Fuhi's time tunnel, you're going to emerge Easter 1940,' Sophie said. 'What's the actual date?'

Harriet picked up the copy of the Sydney Morning Herald she had grabbed from the bench at the railway station.

'Monday 15 April 1940,' she said.

'Okay, but we know there's nothing we can really do until February '41 when the *Sydney* returns from her duties in the Mediterranean,' I said.

'So, by necessity, we'll be in the time slot from 15 April until at least November '41,' Harriet said. 'Twenty months is a long time doing nothing.'

'I'm sure you both could find something interesting to do,' Sophie added. 'It was an interesting time in Australian history, wasn't it?'

'Remember how you felt when we first visited Mt Victoria Railway Station. We talked about that: the clammy fear we felt. Time travel back to 1940s wartime Sydney won't be a walk in the park. I'm sure it's not as simple as it sounds.'

'Of course, Peter. But we both agreed that it was as bad the second time. Obviously, it's just a matter of getting used to it all ... you know, adjusting to the times.'

'Okay, but remember towards the end of 1941 just before the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December which of course is just after the sinking of the *Sydney*. They

were tumultuous times, indeed: certainly not a time in which to be discovered as an alien.'

I looked at Sophie and Harriet to be sure they understood the dangers associated with this venture they were proposing.

'An alien in our own country?' Harriet asked in surprise.

'Exactly,' I answered. 'While we might be able to come up with pretty convincing documentation – birth certificates, ID papers and drivers' licences – we'll need to remember there will be no official record of us. We won't be registered with our respective state departments of births, deaths and marriages. We'll be aliens, alright.'

'Yes, I see what you mean,' Sophie responded. 'And if the authorities learn that you're talking to sailors about the sinking of the *Sydney*, the authorities are going to be very, very interested in you.'

There was silence for some time as Sophie and Harriet considered the full implications of what I had said. It was Harriet who spoke first.

'I really think we ought to give it our best shot, Peter. You know, if we succeed we're going to prevent a great deal of suffering – not only of the poor sailors, but of their families. Just remember the poor Swabys.'

'So, we're off to wartime Sydney for twenty months or so,' I said. 'And we're going to save the *Sydney*?'

'Well, you two are. I get the feeling you may need Hugh and me back here as an anchor,' Sophie said. 'And I know secrecy is everything.'

I studied their faces in an attempt to understand their emotions. They appeared, probably, as mine did: a mixture of deep concern and excited anticipation. But it was clear to me they hadn't thought this through.

'If you had attended all of my lectures and tutorials earlier in the year, Harriet,' I said in a very firm voice, 'you would have had the opportunity to view the Butterfly Effect Trilogy DVD. I looked to Harriet.

'Yes, sir, Dr St Claire, sir.'

She was smiling.

'What I'm getting to is this: consider the butterfly effect ... or let us say effects ... of saving the *Sydney*. Say, for example, Milton Swaby lives ... survives the war.'

They were looking at me, and considering what I was getting at.

'And say, for example,' Sophie said in a thoughtful tone, 'that Milton becomes an axe murderer ... or something terrible like that. Is that what you're saying, Peter?'

'Exactly. Save the *Sydney* and what will be the multiple butterfly effects of all that?'

'History is like that; you've said so yourself, Peter, many times.'

Harriet didn't appear to be moved by the argument.

'History is full of what ifs. It's something we need to live with.'

'Yes, suppose that after the war Milton Swaby becomes a famous surgeon and saves many, many lives.'

Sophie moved her chair a little closer to her daughter's, subconsciously demonstrating her support for what Harriet was saying. They were very determined women by nature. Clearly, Harriet had inherited many of Fuhi Barsden's attributes.

I had to concede they had a point.

Chapter 5

Before I drove out of Twin Rivers, we had discussed and made a list of things we had to do before we set off for wartime Sydney. Would I be away for months, for years, or simply a split second in 2012 time? I began to realise I knew so little about time travel. And there simply wasn't anything on the web about it. But our evidence seemed to suggest we would be away from 2012 for simply a few seconds. The issue of money – the necessary stuff to live on during the twenty months – gave the three of us considerable angst for a short time. But suddenly a thought struck me: we'd only need twenty or so pounds.'

'Oh,' Harriet exclaimed. 'What are we going to do? Print some money?'

'No, just visit Royal Randwick Racecourse several times when we arrive. The 1940 Sydney Morning Herald ... it was a Monday edition, I believe ... will have a list of the winners from the previous Saturday's race meeting. It won't be really gambling: simply collecting funds ... won't it?'

'Brilliant, Peter,' Harriet said. 'I just love a Randwick race meeting. I must make sure I have the right clothes.'

In a flash, Sophie returned with two ten pounds notes from the 1930s from an old family money collection.

With these practicalities out of the way, my enthusiasm for the venture was rapidly approaching that of Harriet's. Clothes and baggage: not a problem because there were at least three websites advertising wartime clothing. Bloody amazing! We could take time to select everything during the next few week and leave, each with a travel case of what we need.

'Documentation?' Harriet asked.

I immediately went to my MacBook Pro and googled *Australian wartime restrictions*.

'Okay, we'll need a birth certificate each. Even though we'll have them, we won't exist on government records,' I reminded them.

'Identity cards?' Sophie asked.

'No. They weren't introduced until 1942, and we should be home by then.'

'Drivers' licences?' Harriet checked.

'Most certainly. But no photo IDs in those days.'

'Ration cards?' Sophie asked. 'I can remember my parents telling me about those dreadful things.'

I checked the website.

'Yes, ration cards, but only for petrol – or motor spirits as it was often called then. Rationing of clothing and food was not introduced until 1942, so that won't be an issue.'

'Will there be any difficulty in getting those things – birth certificates, drivers' licences and petrol rationing cards?' Sophie asked.

'I should imagine not,' I answered. 'These days, forging Australian wartime documents could hardly be considered illegal. I think a colleague of mine at uni from Graphic Arts will look after us.'

'But we should remember what kind of society we're slipping into for these twenty months,' I said, not forgetting that feeling of slimy fear I felt when we first walked into the 1940s Mt Victoria Railway Station. I really was concerned about what lay ahead of us.

'It's not without a lot of danger.'

Sophie and Harriet looked at me with concerned expressions. I knew they understood this, but I sensed they would appreciate being reminded of the detail – particularly Sophie. Mothers like to be reassured that their daughters are safe.

'First, we should remember we're aliens. While we have Australian papers, we may as well be Nazi spies because, as we have said before, the various Australian governments – local, state and commonwealth – will have absolutely no record of us.'

'Sure,' Harriet said. 'We just have to be careful.'

'And we're going to land in wartime Sydney, smack bang in the middle of the phony war,' I continued. 'As our two trips to 1940s Mt Victoria Railway Station would remind us, this was still a pretty relaxed time in Australia. This was a time of the 'phoney war', when there was little actual combat for our troops and life at home for Australians at this stage was fairly normal, despite the greatly increased military activity.'

'Sure.' They nodded their heads in agreement. 'But things soon took a nose-dive for the worse.'

'Exactly. Within two months of our two visits, in 1940, the German war machine will strike, and all hell will break loose over Europe. European countries will rapidly fall to the German Blitzkrieg. By September only Britain will stand undefeated and even then it will be badly mauled at Dunkirk, and will suffer the impact of the bombing of its industrial cities. The war will become increasingly desperate and serious, not least for Australians.'

'Yes, with the looming Nazi invasion of the old country, I'd imagine Australians were beginning to feel very isolated and vulnerable,' Harriet said.

Of course, she knew the history as well as I did, but we needed to remind ourselves of what we were up against in this little venture.

'As in the Great War, the Commonwealth Government had imposed a large number of new controls over people's lives. The Menzies government did this through the authority of the National Security Act of 1939. We know this did two major things: first, it effectively overrode the Constitution for the duration of the war, giving the Commonwealth power to make laws in areas where it did not have that power under the Constitution; and it effectively overrode the power of parliament by giving the government power to make regulations. It was basically government by decree: laws requiring only the signatures of some ministers and the Governor-General.'

'So, you're going to need to be very, very circumspect in what you do, and watch your daily behaviour. Be very careful not to draw attention to yourselves,' Sophie insisted with the concern of any mother.

'Well, I don't expect we'll be rushing off to join the Communist Party, or the Australia First Movement, because they were banned for opposition to the war,' I joked.

'Or advertising ourselves as conscientious objectors. Such people were jailed,' Harriet added.

But we all knew this was deadly serious, and no laughing matter.

'Have we forgotten anything?' Sophie was looking at us, still the worried mother.

'Yes,' Harriet said.

'What darling?' Sophie asked.

'Hairstyle ... for us both.'

Harriet smiled as she looked at my hair.

I would need to look for a decent short-back-and-sides barber.

'There must be one in Adelaide somewhere.'

'I'll get mine done as soon as we're in 1940 Sydney,' Harriet smiled. 'I don't trust the locals.'

Chapter 6

Three weeks later Harriet and I had journeyed off from Twin Rivers to once more visit Fuhi's time-slip platform on the Kanangra Walls escarpment. It didn't seem to matter when we departed: we would always reappear in 1940 at the same time at the same sandstone platform near Mt Victoria.

During our drive to the Walls, we chatted about the ripple effect the *Sydney* disaster had had and, indeed, was still having on many sections of Australian society. When does a war begin and end? We had discussed this vexed question no end, and we were still attempting to fathom it out. No wonder post-modernists were now mulling over wars in history. Perhaps, the ripple effect never ceases. For example, people continue to debate, research and write about the First World War. Books are published in order to satisfy an insatiable demand.

She took a long sip of the café latte she had in her thermos cup, and then looked to me. 'What do you think?' she asked.

I enjoyed these discussions. It was as if our lecturer–student relationship had passed. Now, we were two adults, discussing something of mutual interest at the centre of our common objective.

'I once had a PhD student who explored these questions in her thesis on the Vietnam War, and the Australian MIAs.'

'Troops who were missing in action?'

'Yes. It was a damned good thesis, Harriet. It asked the reader to think carefully about the war and how decisions were made about it and, by implication, all wars. The simple question was: when does a war begin, and when does it end?'

'I might do one of those, myself,' she smiled.

Harriet was a highly intelligent person with determination, who could easily manage a PhD thesis.

'You should,' I smiled encouragingly.

'Tell me more about this thesis.'

'Well, I remember in her introduction when introducing this idea, she drew the comparison with a football match.'

'Yes,' she smiled.

'Does the football match begin with the opening siren, and end with the closing siren?' I continued. 'Or does it enrich and deepen our analysis to think of the football match beginning with the events during the preceding weeks ... the television footy shows, the newspaper articles, and so on and ending when the television footy shows, the newspaper articles and so on cease writing about it?'

'Yes, I can see the similarity with wars,' she smiled, her eyes locking on mine. 'Wars can be thought of as beginning, not with the formal declaration of war and ending with the formality of a peace treaty, or whatever, but with such events as the rhetoric in the media leading up to hostilities, and ending when the media no longer pays attention to the war – when there is no longer anything to be said.'

'What I find interesting,' I answered, 'is that according to that particular thesis, whoever publishes anything on the Vietnam War, or even takes part in a commemoration service, is participating in the Vietnam War.'

'Exactly,' she smiled.

'So according to that particular thesis, you're as much a participant in the Second World War as Milton Swaby.'

'Mmm.'

She was deep in thought as we approached the Kanangra Walls parking area.

We weren't sure we'd be away from 2012 for twenty months or twenty minutes, but our time-slip evidence suggested it would only be twenty minutes or so. She parked the land cruiser in a conspicuous position in the carpark, in fact, alongside another vehicle of the same make.

Hurriedly, we grabbed our jam-packed backpacks from the back of the vehicle.

'Are you two off to a party?' a male voice from the other Cruiser asked. 'Strange place for a party!'

We burst into laughter. Of course, anybody seeing us in 2012, would make a similar comment. We must have looked a little anachronistic, dressed in our 1940s fashionable gear, and me with my Brylcreamed short-back-and-sides hairstyle.

I looked to find the person who had made the comment. He was deep in the rear compartment of his vehicle. Seated in the front was a woman who was admiring Harriet's blue floral dress. Harriet's dress, and her 2012 backpack, formed an interesting contrast. The three kids in the back seat were also obviously intrigued with our get-up.

'I couldn't possibly borrow your jack?' the male voice pleaded. 'I don't know what's happened to mine.'

I looked at his tyres. The rear passenger one was as flat as it could possibly be.

'No worries,' I answered, as I watched the man wriggle out of the rear compartment.

I could see he was a big man – most probably from one of the local Wiradjuri groups. He had a broad smile. Our appearing alongside his vehicle was answering his prayers. We introduced ourselves. He was Laurie Junee; his wife was Margie.

As I assisted Laurie exchange his spare for his flat tyre, we swapped stories about inconvenient flat tyres, while Harriet chatted with his wife and kids. In fifteen minutes, Harriet and I were heading off down the gravel track towards Fuhi's time-slip platform. I swear I could still hear them giggling about the manner in which we were dressed, and where we could possibly be heading.

* * *

Very soon, we were walking towards the Mt Victoria Railway Station. We were carrying our leather bags – known then as ports. We both knew the language of the time would be a challenge to us. And there were a thousand other things we had to be alert to.

We were first reminded of that when the driver of the red Bedford truck stopped beside us on the gravel road.

'Are youse okay?' he asked. 'You look as though youse have got some heavy ports there. But nutten I can do to help youse. I've got no space to give youse a lift.'

'Well, that was different from the two previous times,' Harriet exclaimed in surprise.

'Yes, it's reassuring to know that history does change, albeit in the most miniscule ways.'

'If it butterflies in small ways, then it must do so in larger ways,' she said reassuringly. I understood what she was referring to.

Once again, we waited for the dust from the red Bedford to settle, and we quickly paced up the road to the railway station. By the time we arrived we were feeling the weight of our baggage. *We must remember to call them ports.*

The station was exactly as we expected it to be – the same people as before. But I looked to the small dining room to be sure Milton Swaby was there. He was. Harriet had already gone to the ticket window to buy our tickets to Sydney Central. Behind the grilled window opening, I could see a man in a navy blue uniform dispensing the tickets. In a moment she was back with me, holding up two dark green, thick cardboard tickets.

'Two shillings each,' she smiled. 'Daylight robbery!'

Strangely, that previous feeling of fright and apprehension were hardly with us during this visit to 1940. *Was it something we would adapt to?*

As a child in Tasmania, steam engines had been a hobby of mine. So, it was with some level of anticipation and excitement I waited on the platform beside Harriet for the Central West Express to pull in. With steam billowing all about its mighty engine and up onto the platform, the green-and-red-coloured Garratt G42 which headed the express, pulled into the station at 1 55 pm.

We waited to see what carriage Milton got into, and we followed him. He gave no indication he had spoken to us before. *Time travel is a marvellous thing, and I'm getting to understand more of it each time I do it!*

These were the modern carriages for 1940, with a corridor on one side, and a sliding glazed door. The seats opposite Milton were unoccupied and, after throwing our bags up on the rack, we sat opposite him, talking quietly to each other. He didn't seem to notice our presence.

I smiled.

'You're from the *Sydney*?'

'Yes, but tell me, what country are you from?' he asked.

His question shook me for a moment.

'Why do you ask?'

'It's just that you have a very funny way of spoken!'

'Adelaide.'

'Oh, I see,' he said. 'That makes sense, so it does.'

But I sensed he didn't entirely believe me.

'How do you find the *Sydney*?' I asked.

'Fine.'

A guarded reply.

I allowed him to settle for several minutes. I noticed several times he stole some furtive glances towards Harriet. *Understandable enough. She's damned attractive.* Then to my utter surprise Harriet took out the Australian War Memorial photograph she had printed off from my laptop – the one showing a group portrait of the ship's company after the successful action against the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July 1940 – showing men crowded on the deck and stand in the rigging. *This could be a mistake, Harriet!*

'That's taken in July in three months time,' she said deliberately.

'Ah, don't bullshit me,' he exclaimed. 'What country are you really bloody from!'

'I'm sorry, but if you look closely, you'll see yourself there. You may even recognise some of your mates.'

She chose to ignore his question about her country of origin.

'Ah, bullshit,' he snapped. 'Who are youse ... anyway?'

There were several minutes of silence.

'Give me a look at that friggin' thing,' he snapped.

He took the photograph and studied it for several minutes.

'Here,' Harriet said. 'This may help.'

She handed him a magnifying glass.

He took it with a grunt for a thank you. Obviously, he had recognised himself and some of his mates.

'Where did you get this,' he snapped, looking at us as if we were Martians.

Harriet looked to me. *I wish we had spoken more about this!*

'At this stage, we can't tell you,' I said in an encouraging voice, hoping to get him back on side.

But perhaps I should have let Harriet do the talking. She seemed to have a more calming affect on him than I had.

'I can assure you it's genuine,' she said softly.

'Exactly who are youse?' he demanded, his face lined with concern.

'Wartime produces unusual circumstances,' Harriet exclaimed with a beckoning smile. 'Extraordinary times ... extraordinary circumstances.'

'Yeh, but how do I know it's not bullshit. And you're not some friggin' foreign spies. We've been warned to look out for you lot, so we have.'

She took the photograph back from him. I could see she was worried about Milton's reaction, as I certainly was. We didn't plan for this. I wished she had mentioned she was going to show him the photograph.

'What's the photo all about, anyhow!' he demanded. 'What's this bullshit all friggin' about?'

'It's just after the *Sydney* sank the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July later this year,' she explained.

'Bullshit! Who are youse people? What's going on here! Hey?'

'In February next year, the *Sydney* will be back in port. We'll write to you, and ask you if we were bullshitting or not,' Harriet said. 'We'd like to talk with you again when you're back in port.'

I could tell she was trying to gain his confidence, and retrieve the situation.

'You don't even know my name, so youse don't!' he blurted.

'Sure, we do, Milton.'

Harriet smiled softly.

Harriet and I read our copies of the Sydney Morning Herald, and there was nothing more said between Milton and us. But I noticed him again stealing furtive glances at us, until the express pulled up at Central.

'We hope to see you in February, Milton,' Harriet said with a warm smile. 'Oh, and I should say, it will be much more rewarding for you if you don't say a word about this to anybody.'

Of course, with the strong possibility of being thrown into the loony bin, we knew he wouldn't be talking to many people outside of the Navy about his recent experiences. But what he said about the Navy warning the sailors on the *Sydney* about foreign spies really worried me. He seemed to be more concerned about our country of origin than the news we were giving him about his forthcoming tour of duty to the Mediterranean. *Maybe, we haven't thought this through well enough!*

We had hoped to establish a better rapport with him than what we apparently had, so that when the *Sydney* returned from her Mediterranean tour of duty early the next year, we could re-establish contact with him, and use some vital evidence to show what was in store for the *Sydney* off Carnarvon 19 November the following year. I had obtained from the War Museum online archives of a copy of the memorial service held for the *Sydney* at Sydney's St Andrew's Cathedral on 4 December the following year.

* * *

'Oh, that's not too bad,' she sighed, looking across the Sydney Central Railway Station taxi rank.

I looked to her. I was wondering what she was expecting.

'We do have a taxi service.'

'What was the war's impact on that, I wonder,' I asked.

'By 1944 it became really bad,' she explained. 'What with petrol rationing, the influx of servicemen – particularly Americans – in large numbers, and war service demands on taxi drivers, shortages were really acute by the end of the war, when taxis were like the proverbial hens' teeth. The state government even enacted legislation limiting their use to the sick or infirm, persons on urgent business.'

'Another one of your research projects?' I asked.

She smiled as we walked to the nearest taxi. I was really looking forward to these next twenty months with her. She was one very intelligent person.

If this sample was any indication, Sydney taxis in 1940 came in three colours: black, dark green and brown. And they were all Fords or Chevies, and at least four years old. We jumped in the back seat of one of the cabs, a Ford.

'Where to?' the driver – Aussie, male, middle-aged – demanded in a gruff voice, a roll-your-own cigarette hanging from the mouth. The cab stank of cigarettes.

'Petty's Hotel, please.'

She looked to me for my reaction.

I looked at her, and she smiled, as if to suggest she would explain later the reason for our staying at Petty's.

The driver touched a mechanical device with a flag-like appearance positioned on the dashboard. Like a clock it began ticking over the fare – when the flag fell – in pounds, shillings and pence, a currency that ceased to exist in Australia nearly ten years before I was born. But I knew one pound equalled two dollars, roughly, and a shilling roughly equalled ten cents. I reminded myself to refer to pounds as quids.

I began to choke on the intense cigarette smell in the taxi. The rear-seat ashtray was overflowing with butts, and the front-seat tray was in a similar dreadful mess. There were even stamped-out butts on the floor. The driver's hands – lazily grasping the steering – were covered in nicotine stains almost to his wrists. *If only this guy knew his fate smoking those things!*

Harriet looked to me. She was disgusted. But she knew as well as I did that at this time public health was a huge problem in Australia. Each Australian city had an institution called Health Week which, in fact, ran for several weeks with massive public displays and programs, in an attempt to bring some public awareness to the problems facing people, particularly those who lived in cities. Strangely, there were no campaigns against tobacco smoking. It would be a half-century before policy makers began to look to the affect smoking tobacco had on people's health.

'Here ya are,' the driver announced as he drove into York Street, just north of Wynyard Square, and Clarence and Jamieson streets.

He parked the taxi outside the large sandstone and brick building that was Petty's Hotel. *As yet, no parking metres here.*

Harriet handed over the two-shillings-and-sixpence fare. The taxi driver was shaking his head.

'She controls the purse strings then,' he said.

We walked off in the direction of the front entrance.

'I've always wondered what Petty's Hotel was like. Although, by 1940 I expect it had long passed its heyday.'

'Never heard of it,' I answered.

'I've always had an interest in the history of Sydney architecture. I think it comes from some history I did at school.'

'Where did you go to school?'

'The Barsden girls have a tradition of attending Abbotsleigh on the North Shore.'

'So, Abbotsleigh it was?'

'Yes.'

'And the boys, where were they destined to go?'

'The Kings School, and they've done so for more than a hundred and fifty years.'

'Amazing!'

'I suspect it's seen better days,' she said, as we stood on the front steps of the hotel. 'It was given over to the war effort late in the war, and then taken over by the Red Cross Blood Bank in 1950.'

Momentarily, we stood there looking at the building. I could appreciate her reasoning for choosing to stay here, apart from her interest in the old hotel. We didn't want to draw attention to ourselves by staying in one of the more salubrious establishments – the Hotel Australia or its ilk.

'But for decades, particularly in the 1890s, it was the prince of Sydney hotels: the first choice of distinguished overseas visitors and favoured by eminent up-country squatters.'

She was gazing at the front of the building and its entrance foyer.

'That includes the Barsdens, no doubt?'

'No doubt,' she smiled, touching my hand and suggesting we should be organising rooms.

A doorman rushed to us, smiling and greeting us and taking our bags. We walked to the large oaken front desk.

'Your single room tariff?' Harriet asked before I had a chance to open my mouth.

Despite Harriett asking the question, the middle-aged desk attendant addressed his answer to me.

'Fifteen shillings a night,' he smiled.

That's a dollar fifty! I couldn't believe it. But, then I thought of what the basic wage would have been about then – no more than five pounds a week.

Harriet looked to me with a quizzical expression, and I sensed she was about to say something. But I gave my eyes a little roll. I knew she was referring to the male chauvinism from the guy behind the large desk. She seemed to understand what I was suggesting. Remember, this is 1940 Australia – and male-dominated!

She paid for the two rooms for one night in advance, and we signed the tenants' book.

'You're papers please?' the attendant asked, without an explanation of why he would be asking for our papers.

I suppose he simply took it for granted we understood the rules. We obliged, and he examined and compared our signatures – those in the tenants' book with those on our papers. He seemed satisfied. He nodded to the pageboy whom we followed to our respective rooms.

'You said you were going to the hairdresser.'

She nodded.

'And you?'

I held up my copy of Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*. It had been published in 1938, and she was one of the most popular authors of the day. This novel was considered to be one of her best works to date. A good read seemed assured, so I was looking forward to it while Harriet was away for the afternoon.

* * *

At about five o'clock there was a gentle knock on my door.

'Be honest, and tell me what you think,' she asked as I opened the door.

I was touched she would ask my opinion about her hair.

'It looks wonderful, Harriet.'

Indeed, it did – similar to the most enticing photographs of Marlene Dietrich – absolutely alluring. Her thick, wavy, dark hair was really suited to this styling – that beautiful and attractive rolled-up-at-the-sides style we always see on the screen with a period movie.

'You're very kind,' she answered.

I could tell she appreciated my opinion.

'Would you like a drink before dinner?' I asked.

'I'd love one.'

'Give me thirty minutes to shower and dress up.'

I'd been wearing this 1940s gear since we came through Fuhi's time tunnel that morning: polished plain black shoes, grey, pin-striped trousers (inclined to bell-bottom), white shirt and tie (rather broad at the base), and a darker grey jacket (called a sports jacket). My father had been a school teacher in Hobart, and I can remember him telling me stories of teachers who dressed like this, with what was commonly called a 'sports suit', being sent home from school to dress in a 'proper suit, and not as if they were heading off to the beach'. So, now, going downstairs here at Petty's Hotel this evening with Harriet I felt as though I was 'going to the beach'.

Indeed, when we arrived at the doorway to the dining room, I quickly discovered I was the only male dressed in a 'sports suit'. All the others were in 'proper' lounge suits. *I'll get it right soon, I guess.*

A stiffly starched waitress in white and cream and green with a lovely little highly starched cap soon attended to us.

'What would you like?' she asked.

'What do you have?'

'All of the usual.'

She handed us a large menu, which included a little section on available drinks.

'For ladies?'

'The usual mixes,' she explained, pointing to the section on the menu.

Now I understood. No wine list here. That would be another forty or fifty years. The mixes were scotch and soda, brandy and dry ginger, and so on. I looked to Harriet, who seemed to understand.

'Napoleon Brandy and dry,' she offered.

'And you, sir?'

'What kind of beer do you have?' I asked.

'Only Resch's. This is a Resch's hotel,' she explained.

I tried to remember the names of the New South Wales beer glasses.

'A middy or schooner?' she asked.

'A middy, thank you.'

When the drinks arrived, I tasted my beer. I could barely swallow it. It was the strongest beer I had ever tasted. No light beers here. They, too, would be another forty or fifty years away. Then I remembered Dad telling me about the shandies.

'Could I have a touch of lemonade in it?' I asked. That was the 1940s equivalent to a mid-strength or light beer.

'How do you think we're going so far?' Harriet asked.

I told her of my fears of being discovered and declared aliens, or even worse.

'We simply must get a small flat somewhere, and lie low.'

'I agree,' she said. 'I know they're rounding up Germans and Italians. But who is actually doing that?'

'I think it's the local police. I don't think they have organised any Federal security agency at this stage.'

I was cursing the fact I didn't know the exact date of the formation of the Commonwealth security office. But I was sure it came after Japan joined the war which would be after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour 7 December in the early hours the following year, American time.

'So we shouldn't be expecting a visit from ASIO quite yet,' she grinned cheekily.

'No, but we could be expecting a visit from the local Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB)!'

'Yes, I see what you mean.'

We talked about all of this over several drinks.

'As soon as we collect our money from the bookies at tomorrow's Randwick race meeting, we need to buy a car,' I said.

'Just how much are you thinking of collecting?' she smiled.

I knew she was looking forward to the day at Royal Randwick.

'It's in the middle of the Autumn Carnival,' she said in a delighted tone.

I took out the results which I had googled from the Sydney Morning Herald for tomorrow's race meeting at Randwick, kindly provided by the Trove website.

'Well?' she asked.

'You'll be pleased to know, it's a big day tomorrow at Randwick' I said.

'Okay, but who are the winners?'

'I'll give them all to you in a moment, but the big race tomorrow is the AJC Oaks for three-year-old fillies at set weights and run over two miles.'

'What did it pay? I know there was no totaliser agency board in those ... I mean *these* days,' she said with a smile as she corrected herself.

'Climax will win it at 6 to 1.'

'What about the other races?'

Her enthusiasm for this project tomorrow now was very obvious. I passed the Sydney Morning Herald results to her.

'In a sense, this is not very ethical is it?' she said with a little frown.

'Probably not,' I confessed. 'But, remember, the bookies at Randwick tomorrow are hardly the benchmark for morality. Besides, some of them may have relatives or friends on the *Sydney* when it's ambushed by the *Kormoran*.'

'Yes, true,' she sighed. 'And I'm sure they'll thank us then.'

* * *

The next day we had an early lunch, and then caught a taxi to Randwick. As it took us down Allison Road in Randwick, masses of people were moving towards the racecourse in cars, taxis, trams, buses, with many walking. There were even a few horse-drawn vehicles which I suppose they had facilities for at the back of the course.

When the driver stopped his cigarette smoke-filled taxi about a hundred metres from the main gate, with a brisk 'Will this do yer, cobber?', I realised this was as close as we would get to the main gate. I paid the fare while Harriet looked on with a dark scowl across her face.

As the taxi moved off, and we began to walk towards the gate, she looked at me.

'Don't the males of Sydney in 1940 address their comments to women?'

She was furious at the taxi driver, and I could well appreciate why. It was certainly a chauvinistic society we had landed in.

'I'll try to make up for them,' I said.

'Thank heavens I'm with you, otherwise I'd biff some of these characters on the gob,' she fumed.

I really did believe she would.

'God, look at that!' she exclaimed as she stopped in her tracks and looked at the mass of people in the stands and in the paddock. Then the enormity of the crowd here for the Doncaster became obvious to us. There was an ocean of people – mostly males, white Europeans, and all wearing felt hats, most of them smoking – pushing and shouldering

their way through the turnstiles. They were all wearing some form of suit, and most of them wore a necktie.

'Guess what?' she said, now smiling.

'What?'

'I reckon you're the only male here today without a hat.'

'God, I am, too. I'd forgotten all about buying a hat.'

'You'll have to buy one tomorrow.'

To my amazement, she dug deep into her 1940s handbag and pulled out a digital camera, and proceeded to take a dozen or so photographs. She looked at me with a grin. She knew what I was thinking.

'Another item of technology from 2012.'

I looked at her. She knew of the dangers of this for our operation. If we were ever searched, these things would be impossible to explain.

'It's just too wonderful an opportunity to miss,' she answered calmly.

I had to agree with her, but as I watched several passers-by look at what she was doing, I was jolted back to reality. *Is it worth it?*

Now through the gates, we looked to the Members' Pavillion. There were thousands there – or even tens of thousand of people – packed onto its three levels. I gathered that piece of architecture had long disappeared. In appearance it looked a little like the old Women's Stand at the nearby Sydney Cricket Ground.

Looking about at the swarming mass of people, I was immediately struck with the lack of variety in their clothing. They all seemed to be wearing grey, fawn or brown trousers and coats. Some were wearing cardigans, but it made me appreciate the developments of fashion which followed the war.

'Where are we going to sit?' she sighed.

After much searching, and being shouldered and shoved by the mass of people, we finally found somewhere. It wasn't actually a seat, but this piece of landscaping served its purpose.

I was starting to feel my first outing to Royal Randwick wasn't going to be so enjoyable as I'd first anticipated.

She looked to me, and shrugged her shoulders. I looked at the sea of people, mostly males, all wearing felt hats.

'Maybe, enjoying ourselves is only going to be a secondary reason for being here,' she said.

'Exactly. We're here to finance our mission to save the *Sydney*: not necessarily to enjoy ourselves.'

As we settled down, and began to take in our new surroundings, Harriet dug deep into her handbag, and this time drew out a camcorder, and began to record this incredible vista. Within a second people nearby were staring at her. This could return to bite us, I thought. We chatted for a while, before I moved off to place my ten-pound bet on Friardcon at 5 to 1 to win the Hurdle. She smiled at me as I left. I began to prepare myself to shoulder my way to a bookie. She understood the bookies' stands in the Paddock were no place for a woman.

I was away for about twenty minutes, and returned to find Harriet had bought us a meat pie each, and a small bottle of soft drink.

'Here, you'll find this different,' she said.

Indeed, it was easily the most tasty meat pie I had ever tasted. Apparently, there was a guy in a little cart who moved around this part of the racecourse – his territory – selling meat pies of rabbit, beef and pork.

'Even the soft drink tastes different from the stuff we get in 2012. It's amazing how a little food and drink can elevate the mood,' I sighed.

'What's going to win the next?' she asked.

I could sense her mood was also more elevated.

'Rubicon, at 4 to 1.'

'No surprises, then,' she said.

So the day passed, like none other I'd ever experienced at the track. I was sure to place my bets with various bookies, so they wouldn't get to know me, and maybe I also felt sorry for them. This was particularly so when I placed four thousand, two hundred pounds with four bookies on Hawkeye in the last at 3 to 1. There was no doubting we'd have enough money to live on until December next year. My money belt was now stuffed with notes – all filthy and dog-eared – of all denominations.

During the day we chatted about renting a unit (they were referred to as flats here) as soon as we could – in Manly, she insisted, in order to keep a very low profile, and be

sure to raise absolutely no suspicions. But first we had to buy a motor vehicle. Perhaps, this might prove to be fun, we thought.

* * *

The taxi we now sat in was no cleaner than the previous two. It seemed tobacco-addicted drivers and overflowing ashtrays were as necessary for 1940 Sydney taxis as was the mechanical flag-fall metre.

On our right-hand side was the Grace Bros Building on Broadway, maybe the largest retail outlet in Australia, now in 2012 in the hub of Sydney's population distribution. The westward march of the city's population was underway. Such long-settled suburbs as Haberfield and Strathfield with their wide leafy streets, boulevards, art deco houses and public buildings now represented the upmarket and populace suburbs.

We were now passing Peek Frean's Biscuit Factory, a huge edifice to art deco factory architecture in Annandale, along Parramatta Road. In 2012, with the crumbling of Australia's manufacturing industries, I remember its being occupied by a huge hardware and DIY gardening complex, selling goods from all over the world, but particularly China and South-east Asia. But here now in 1940 we were headed to the second-hand car yards down Parramatta Road.

'This will do,' I instructed the driver.

We braked. I paid the driver, and we strolled over to the caryard. In flashing neon lights the sign read: *Parramatta Road Buick Motor Vehicles.*

'What do you fancy, dear?' Harriet said in a soft sexy voice.

I'm enjoying this!

'What do *you* fancy?'

'Let's just have a stroll around,' she answered.

Before we had kicked no more than four sets of tyres, a spiv appeared. He was done out in a blue-striped suit, a very broad red tie, and sported a magnificent pencil-thin moustache. As he approached, Harriet began whistling the tune of Jimmy Buffett's Pencil Thin Moustache.

As Pencil-Thin approached, Harriet continued strolling around the yard, occasionally kicking tyres. I imagined this chauvinist would have little conversation to direct to her,

judging by the gross sexism we had encountered thus far here in 1940 Sydney. But, perhaps I was stereotyping him. She turned and smiled at me, and with a gentle shrug of her shoulder, suggested I should choose.

As soon as he opened his mouth, I knew I hadn't misjudged Pencil-Thin.

'Slashin' sheila, cobber,' he commented with his eyes glued on Harriet's backside, but directing his conversation to me. 'What's yer fancy – I'm talkin' about motor vehicles,' he added..

I can't allow this guy to get between that Dodge and me.

'What will you take for this one?' I asked, patting a navy blue 1939 Dodge Town Coup on its front mudguard.

'It's a bloody bewdy, isn't it,' he answered, with his eyes still on Harriet's backside.

It was, indeed. Nine months rego, tyres barely touched, no signs of any prangs, and unmarked duco, spotless upholstery, whitewall tyres, miles of chrome with that big charging chrome ram as a mascot.

I'd need to take it around the block before I did a deal, I thought.

'Askin' five-hundred 'n' ten quid,' he said.

'Four hundred and ninety?' I responded.

'Nah. It owes me too much ... so it does ... this one.'

'Cash?'

'Nah. Even five-hundred 'n' ten is too low, so it is,' he said, shaking his head.

'Cash. No trade-ins.'

'I'll have to talk wit' the boss.'

'Okay. How long?'

'Give me an hour.'

'Okay. We'll be back to take it for a spin around the block before we sign on the dotted line.'

'Anyhow, where yer from? Youse have got a queer way of talkin' so you do,' he asked, leering at Harriet's breasts.

'South Africa,' I joked.

'I thought you did. I'm not often wrong, so I'm not.'

'Come on, Harriet, let's take it for a spin around the block now,' I said, with Harriet taking the keys from Pencil-Thin.

'Who's drivin'?' he demanded, looking aghast at Harriet confidently assuming the driver's seat.

She sat at the steering wheel, with the three-speed transmission on the left-hand side of the steering wheel, and the clutch coming through the floorboards. 'I've never driven one of these before,' she said under her breath.

'Who's drivin' ', he demanded again.

'I am, darling,' she purred defiantly, with a twinkle in her eye for me, which quickly turned to a challenge for Pencil-Thin.

'You'll need to give it some choke, luv. It hasn't been started in days,' Pencil-Thin smirked.

Jesus, what in the bloody hell is a choke? But I think I can remember my father telling me about them. She looked at me with a quizzical expression, pleading for me to do something. Then I saw a white button with the word choke imprinted on it.

'Don't they have chokes in South Africa?' he scoffed.

'This one's a little hard to find,' she said, as she fiddled with the white button.

'Just pull it out a little, as you hit the ignition switch! God 'elp me. Are you sure you've got a licence, luv.'

He continued ogling her breasts.

She hit the ignition button, and seemed to have some kind of mechanical instinct to push in the choke button as the huge six cylinders spluttered to life. *Thank God.* I was sitting on the large bench seat next to her. I saw her reach for an invisible seatbelt. There was none and there wouldn't be, not for another thirty or more years.

She looked to me for encouragement, as she began to edge the car out of the yard, and onto Parramatta Road. Encouragingly, I moved a little closer to her. She smiled.

'What a dick-head he was,' she said, her voice loaded with disgust.

As we motored westward along Parramatta Road, and we began to feel more at ease, I noticed some other cars driven by males and with their female companions, almost sitting on top of them in the front bucket seats. *I bet these are habits governments found difficult to eradicate with the onset of safety belts.*

So, with a satisfactory drive around several blocks, we headed back to the car yard. Nothing wrong with it, that I could tell. It steered okay, and the engine seemed smooth enough – no knocks or untoward noises. Then it was back to Pencil-Thin for him to talk

to his boss about a price, and for the paperwork to be done. Soon Harriet and I would be the proud owners of a navy blue 1939 Dodge Town Coup. Engine: inline L-head 6-cylinder; displacement: 217.8 cu.in; 87 bhp at 3600 rpm. It truly was, as Pencil-Thin described it: 'a little bloody bewdy'.

* * *

Pencil-Thin was still working out the deal with his boss so we strolled down Parramatta Road further into Homebush, until we came to a fine-looking building. The sign above the front entrance informed us we were at the Vogue Theatre.

'I've seen it before,' Harriet gasped in delight at the magnificent art deco architecture. 'I can't wait to drive down here some time in another time to see how it's being used today. I'm sure it's still in use ... in 2012, I mean.'

'In another time?' I smiled. 'I love your turn of phrase.'

But on a more serious plane, I was reminded of the surrealistic feel of all of this, a feeling that had been flashing across my mind since we had arrived back here in 1940s Sydney. It was both exciting and worrying. I suspected something dark and foreboding: something more than bizarre, something downright dangerous. Where would it lead us? I wondered

Now I was beginning to feel very, very exposed, and fragile to outside forces. I wasn't surprised. This is exactly how I felt when we walked into Mt Victoria Railway Station for the first time. I think these were the first times in my life I had ever felt like this. I knew how important having that car was going to be for Harriet and me. One day we might need to escape wartime Sydney, back to our time-slip launching pad, and to the safety of the world of 2012 or 2013. I knew our greatest danger came from being detained by the authorities. Essentially, we were aliens, and I knew how they were being rounded up and interned. And it was more than the internment: it was the constant surveillance that preceded the internment that could prove to be our greatest danger.

'How are you?' Harriet asked.

She seemed to sense my deep worries.

'Okay.'

I forced a smile.

The theatre area was a little busy with patrons, apparently watching Greta Garbo's *Camille*. Enticing billboards advertised Greta with a young and very handsome Robert Taylor. We studied them for a moment. This was all part of the wonderful movie culture of the time. Even the beguiling smell of the glue on the billboards was memorable in itself.

There was a restaurant next door, and we wandered in for Devonshire tea. They were advertised as. No cappuccinos or café latte here. However, with the arrival of the American troops in two or three years, and then the post-war migration boom from Europe, the coffee culture was just around the corner.

Harriet's smiling enthusiasm helped to allay my fears for the moment. I was feeling a little more positive as we strolled back to Pencil-Thin.

'What's the deal?' I asked. 'Four hundred and ninety?'

'Nah. The boss says five-hundred 'n' ten or nutten.'

'Five-hundred? Surely! Cash!'

He walked around in little circles several times.

'Orright,' he finally agreed, with his eyes set hard on Harriet's chest.

'Do you want to drive?' she asked.

'You've done well, and you'll get used to it, but I'll give it a go if you want.'

I put it in neutral, turned on the ignition, and hit the big, green starter button, on the left-hand side of the large dish steering wheel. I felt for the gear stick, and got used to its being on the right-hand side of the steering column. I put it in first gear, and started to get used to its heavy steering.

* * *

Soon we were driving back to Sydney, past the University of Sydney, with its beautiful sandstone buildings and main gatehouse on our right-hand side.

'The only university in Sydney: only one of two in the whole state,' she murmured as we drove past. 'I often wonder what my life would have been like had I accepted an enrolment here, instead of the University of Adelaide,' she added in that wistful voice.

'The what ifs ... in our own life,' I responded. 'We wouldn't be sitting here together now in this time-slip, now, would we?'

By the time I had reached Broadway, Harriet had insisted on having another go at driving the Dodge.

'I know the Sydney streets!' she said, jokingly.

'Not the 1940 Sydney streets. A few changes?'

'Well, just a few,' she answered. 'Parramatta Road certainly looks different. Now, it's the main western road out of Sydney. No M4s here.'

I must admit I was enjoying this – being driven by a very good-looking young lady in an absolutely schmick motor vehicle. With the petrol rationing, there were very few vehicles on the road. Males, mostly with a cigarette in their mouth and with a felt hat, were driving these. Certainly, we were getting our fair share of attention. I'm sure most thought Harriet was my chauffeur. I was reminded that in 1940 not many women had claimed their right to drive a motor vehicle.

'Was it your idea to break the family tradition by attending the University of Adelaide, rather than Sydney?'

'As you know, Mum's an Adelaide girl. That may have had something to do with it. But I really think it was about destiny.'

She had a faint evocative smile.

'Destiny? What do you mean?'

'If I hadn't decided to go there, I wouldn't be sitting here driving you along Parramatta Road in the late autumn of 1940, would I?.'

I liked her sentiment, and her smile. She really did look elegant in her light, floral dress and her stylish 1940 hairstyle. She was spot-on about destiny. What if she hadn't decided to attend the University of Adelaide? Indeed, history is full of what ifs.

But then I refocused my attention on 1940 Sydney. We were now driving along Broadway, with the elegant sandstone structure of Central Railway Station – covered as it was in the grime of generations of steam trains – looming on our right-hand side. Our next stop needed to be the Commonwealth Bank in Martin Place. The large amount of money I was carrying in my money belt was adding to my worries.

'Why the Commonwealth Bank?' she asked.

'During this time it's the government bank ... the central bank ... owned by the Commonwealth,' I said. 'And during the war, the Commonwealth Bank was actively involved in the war effort both as an agent of the Federal Government and as banker for

numerous scattered Australian and allied service people. But most importantly for us, the Commonwealth Bank did a huge amount for the war effort.

'So they should benefit from our ill-gotten gains,' she said.

I liked her humour.

There was a parking space outside of the bank in Martin Place!

'This will be interesting,' she answered. 'I imagine it's not every day somebody walks in, opens an account, and deposits twelve thousand pounds in dirty and assorted denominations.'

She was right. This was bound to provoke a little interest from the bank. But there was no other way. I couldn't have this amount of money tied around my waist in a money belt until December next year.

We walked to the enquiries desk and explained we wanted to open a cheque account and deposit a large amount of cash.

The attendant smiled, asked our names, and invited us to take a seat. He went off to find a senior staff member.

I looked around the bank. There was an army of bank clerks behind the huge counter, all males, and most of them middle-aged and dressed in grey suits. Of course, I remembered from my reading, banking was a purely male domain – no careers for women here. Even wartime imperatives hadn't brought women into this stout commercial enterprise. Behind them, I imagined an army of other clerks at work on their ledgers. No ATMs, no computers, indeed apparently very few mechanical calculators, and only a few telephones.

After about thirty minutes, a middle-aged gentleman came out from an office and approached us.

'Mr and Mrs St Claire,' he said. 'Charles Upton,' he said offering his right hand.

'Dr St Claire and Miss Harriet Barsden,' I corrected him, shaking his hand, aware Harriet had given her name to the attendant at the enquiries desk. Upton didn't offer to shake Harriet's hand.

'Of course,' he said. 'How can I help you?'

I briefly studied the man's appearance. He seemed more like an undertaker than a bank officer. He had a few strands of grey hair and was of very slender build, round-shouldered and had a slightly hunched back. He had a long, clean-shaven face, with

eyes resembling those of a beagle hound. His dark suit seemed only to emphasise the gloom of his generally tragic-looking demeanour.

'We'd like to open a cheque account and deposit twelve thousand pounds in cash,' I answered.

'Can you come with me?'

He was beckoning us to his office.

With Upton sitting behind a highly polished desk, and we two in the chairs opposite he asked:

'You're from South Africa?'

'Certainly not, but why do you say that?'

'Your accent.'

I was becoming increasingly aware of how not only accents had altered over the generations but idioms and pronunciation.

'I'm from Adelaide, and before that Hobart,' I explained.

'And I'm from Adelaide, and before that Sydney and Bathurst,' Harriet added.

'Oh, one of the Bathurst Barsdens ... the pastoral family?' he responded, his expression taking on a new level of interest in us.

Harriet's last statement worried me. *That won't stand checking!* I looked to Upton, and studied his face. *I'm not sure.* There was a moment's silence. On the wall behind him hung a huge portrait of King George VI. That was a stark reminder of the times. I then decided it was unlikely he'd be checking on the Barsdens at Twin Rivers for Harriet's identity.

'May I ask exactly how you came by such a large amount of cash?' Upton asked, without lifting his eyes to look at us.

'It's been in the family ... Barsden family ... for some time,' Harriet said in her most enchanting voice, at the same time wriggling her upper body in a schoolgirlish manner in order to draw attention to her very full breasts. 'Peter and I are ... what you might say ... starting out on a new life together.'

Now she was sitting facing me in the most charming and loving manner. As far as Upton was concerned, we were lovers. I could see he was hooked with the idea.

'And you're seeking to open a cheque account with us?'

'Most certainly,' I responded sincerely. 'But we have just today arrived in Sydney, and we haven't yet got a permanent address.'

'Have you got any place in mind?'

'Manly.'

Harriet and I had talked about this. Harriet gave me a cynical and furtive look.

After we had signed the papers and, as we shook hands goodbye, he asked,

'Have you got accommodation for tonight?'

'Yes. We're staying at Petty's.'

'A wise choice. I'm sure you will enjoy it. I'll use that as your address, but as soon as you get more permanent accommodation, you should attend the Commonwealth Bank in Manly, and notify them. They will contact us here. He then pushed the paperwork over to me to sign.

I looked to Harriet. I was horrified as was she.

'Do I get to draw a cheque?' she demanded.

'Well, that is a very unusual request, madam,' Upton replied, still not giving us eye contact.

'Well, that's the way it's going to have to be,' demanded Harriet. 'I'm sorry, but I own half of that money, and I expect to be able to draw a cheque to obtain it. And that's all there is to it. We can easily arrange to take our money to Westpac.'

'To where?' Upton asked, looking towards us.

Harriet realised her mistake. The Bank of New South Wales was only renamed Westpac back in the early '80s.

'I mean the Bank of New South Wales,' she answered. 'But I want my signature on those cheques,' she demanded.

Upton made some changes to his paperwork; in a few minutes we stood, and shook his hand. I had the feeling he was pleased to be rid of this troublesome woman. I wondered what he would tell his colleagues.

We returned to the Dodge, with Harriet still fuming. I felt very uneasy about all of that. Upton would certainly remember who we were. *Did I have any real cause for concern, or were my doubts simply a product of my deep unease about our conversation with Milton Swaby?* Again, I was feeling very vulnerable in this city at this time in its

history. I sensed Harriet was beginning to feel the same. *Are we getting ourselves into something that will devour us?*

Chapter 7

We drove over the Harbour Bridge and then across to Neutral Bay, along Sydney Road through Mosman. The sparse traffic by 2012 standards came to an abrupt end. Evidently, we had arrived down at the Spit Bridge. We looked at each other and smiled. This could take hours. The bridge was in the process of opening to allow tall sailing yachts to pass through.

While we were waiting, I noticed tram travellers alighting, and queuing up to walk across the bridge to catch the Manly tram on the other side. This was becoming mayhem. I could hear other motorists talking among themselves, complaining about other motorists who rarely had correct change, which led to long queues of cars and frustrated, angry tollgate attendants. I found myself shaking my head in disbelief.

'This bridge was built in 1924,' she smiled. 'And it wasn't replaced until 1958!'

We chatted about how petrol rationing was affecting motor vehicle traffic and transport between Manly and the city. Apparently, the ferries were doing a big trade now, departing every thirty minutes. Her next question took me completely by surprise.

'Have you ever been married?' she asked. 'I take it you're not married now?'

'No ... never. Why do you ask?'

'Just interested. Ever come close?'

'Once ... maybe. If living with a person for eighteen months can be close.'

'When was that?'

'Back in Tassie ... five or six years ago.'

'Didn't work out?'

'No, but it took some time for me to discover that.'

She looked at me and smiled. I sensed she had been wanting to ask that question for some time.

* * *

'We're arriving during Manly's heyday,' she explained. 'The 1930s through to the 1950s were its halcyon years. It was once a tourist resort of the kind Surfers Paradise and the Sunshine Coast became in the 1960s. Even during the late nineteenth century, colonials were describing it as the Australian equivalent of Brighton in England. By the late 1800s, crowds were flocking to the seaside resort of Manly – weekend excursions on steam ferries, bonnets and bows, picnic baskets – marvellous stuff.'

A paradise, indeed, I was soon to learn, even in 1940. Isolated from the rest of Sydney by the deep waters and ravines of Middle Harbour and Cowan Creek, Manly and District – often referred to simply as the Peninsula – had its own unique character and role in greater Sydney.

Harriet again surprised me as we waited at the Spit Bridge when she again took out her compact digital camera from her handbag. She simply smiled and looked at me.

'Well, it's too much of a wonderful opportunity to miss out on some pics,' she smiled.

Perhaps I was being over-cautious. Not even exercising caution, holding it the way she was, with her handkerchief partly covering the camera, it was all very conspicuous. And that's what I was frightened of: somebody noticing her, and a crowd of people gathering about. Later as we still waited in the long line of traffic, she took out her camcorder. She looked at me with that challenging provocative smile as she took some video of the bridge opening. We would download these later to our laptops, and I knew exactly how valuable they would be in our real time, particularly in my work with students. The camera and camcorder were so foreign to these times; surely they would be noticed.

I knew a little of the history of Manly but Harriet was a mine of information on the place. I could understand how she was a straight HD student. Her work with the camera and the camcorder would be of fantastic value to her later in her real life. I was sure she would share the results of her work. I was sure too, she was more expert in their use than I.

'Governor Phillip named it such during the first three days of the First Fleet anchoring in Port Jackson,' she explained. 'The name derived from Phillip's description of the local Aboriginal men.'

We chatted away to fill in time. We looked to the bridge. After at least an hour, it appeared to be closing. The patience of the people! I couldn't imagine the 2012 Sydney residents tolerating this.

With the dissolving lines of traffic, Harriet gunned the Dodge onto Sydney Road, and eventually onto North Steyne, which was a part of the narrow peninsular separating the ocean from Middle Harbour. With parking not being a problem, she parked right outside The Steyne Hotel which faced Ocean Beach and stood on The Corso.

'It hasn't always had this art deco front,' she explained. 'It was remodelled a few years ago. What do you think?'

'Very 1930s.'

Soon we had accommodation in two rooms, directions to a Manly real estate agency and a meeting with a Mr Keith Bath.

* * *

It was approaching five o'clock in the afternoon, and here in The Steyne we both knew it was impossible to have a quiet social drink together before our evening meal. The patrons – all males, mostly smoking, and most with felt hats – were five and six deep at the smoke-shrouded bar. Few would leave their positions to urinate in the toilets. The sawdust on the floor would take care of that.

We took to going for long walks about Manly. Harriet seemed to know an awful lot about this place, her detailed knowledge increasingly fascinating me. I will always remember standing with her on the corner of West Esplanade and Belgrave Street outside Hotel Manly with her as she rattled off its history.

I knew she was waiting for me to ask about this Henry Gilbert Smith who founded Manly as a resort. She obliged, informing me about the great entrepreneur who founded the Manly resorts back in the middle of the nineteenth century, as Sydney's very own Brighton.

I'm going to enjoy my stay here in 1940 Manly with you, Harriet, my dear. You're one fascinating person.

We returned to The Steyne for dinner – after six o'clock, of course, when the dreadful mess of the alcohol-fuelled madness had abated.

'I wish I could show some of my history students what we have witnessed here,' I insisted. 'I really had no idea it was this bad.'

We discussed how office workers travelling home from the city on the ferries would run to The Steyne from the ferry terminal to take up a position where they could fight for a beer or two before six o'clock before it was time to go home.

'It's like a pig sty,' she sighed.

Indeed, the public bar at The Steyne had twelve different beer taps and there were no seats or stools in the bar at all – just tiled walls, from which the vomit, cigarette butts and filth could be hosed down each morning. Everyone stood at the bar, five and six deep.

'I was talking to the two young boys whom I've noticed about the pub,' I told her. 'Their father owns the place. One of them explained to me he and his brother get paid to sweep up the sawdust and hose out the mess after closing time.'

'Gracious! Imagine the health authorities allowing that in 2012?'

She was smiling at the thought of it all.

'The boys laughed about it. They thought it was just great. As their payment, they get to keep all the money they find on the floor among the sawdust and its contents. They sweep it up with two broad brooms. Their father comes along behind with a hose and sponges the water out until the bar is all nice and clean and ready for opening the next day.'

'How anybody could stand in the bar when it's so busy, I simply don't know. The cigarette smoke is terrible. They must all be candidates for lung cancer, surely!'

* * *

Mr Keith Bath from Manly Real Estate was indeed a congenial character.

'How are you Mr and Mrs St Claire?' he asked, as he vigorously shook hands, hardly looking in Harriet's direction. *Another bloody male chauvinist! But this one seems the worst yet.*

We were standing in his small office on Whistler Street. Momentarily, I considered the manner in which he addressed us. *Why bother. If he wants to address us in that manner, let him. We simply want a decent flat, and we want it quickly.*

'No, Mrs St Claire. I have very little on our books that would interest you at the moment,' he answered, when Harriet described the kind of place we were after. 'But I do think I may have something in a week or so. Something around ten shillings a week, a northerly outlook and a view of our magnificent ocean?'

We both smiled agreeably.

He was a likeable enough person. But I suppose he's practised at that. At least he's not like Pencil-Thin back at the Annandale car yard. His greying hair was clipped in the short-back-and-sides style, and slicked down with some cheap hair oil. His middle-age spread, and watered eyes suggested to me overindulgence in alcohol. He wore a navy blue pin-striped suit with flared bottoms, a fashion that would not reappear for another thirty years.

'We are in a little hurry for some suitable accommodation,' Harriet responded.

'Yes, of course. You're visitors? South Africa? The Cape, surely, Mrs St Claire.'

He was studying our faces, and addressing Harriet for the first time.

We shook our heads.

'Adelaide,' I responded.

'Oh, yes, but a peculiar accent,' he answered.

I smiled in return. I was getting the feeling he was fishing for something other than our expressed need for a flat here in Manly.

'Where are you staying?'

'The Steyne,' Harriet answered.

'Oh good. I'll need to contact you soon, I imagine.'

He was looking to me, again in that puzzled manner.

'Thank you, very much,' I smiled. 'Do you mind if we contact some other real estate agents here in Manly?'

'By all means. But I have the most extensive listings here on the Peninsular.'

He reached inside his coat pocket, and drew out what appeared to be a small piece of light-green coloured paper, a kind of leaflet, and passed it to me.

'If you're not otherwise engaged on Saturday evening, you will find this gathering fascinating company,' he smiled invitingly.

'Thank you, Mr Bath,' I answered. 'We hope to hear from you very soon.'

We walked to where the Dodge was parked. I had handed the leaflet to Harriet.

'Good God,' she answered. 'He's from Australia First.'

'Fascinating. I wonder how much the organisation was represented here in Manly and throughout the Peninsular.'

'The leaflet is advertising a Yabber gathering at the Shalimar Café in Park Street on Saturday at six o'clock.'

'Hell!'

'I wonder who, exactly, will be there. What luminaries?'

She was looking at me with that inquisitive expression I was now growing used to. She seemed to understand as much about Australia First as I did. I knew there was a popular course in the History Department back at the University of Adelaide about the history of right-wing politics in Australia during the inter-war years. Knowing her as I was beginning to, I could imagine that was an area of study she'd be most interested in. She well understood these Yabba gatherings were the very core – indeed, the epicentre – of pro-Nazi activities in Australia. So her suggestion didn't surprise me.

'We should go!' she exclaimed. 'What a wonderful opportunity. Oh, my heavens, I simply can't believe our good fortune.'

As soon as we arrived back at our room at The Steyne, she opened up her laptop and began searching her files.

'Have you read this?' she asked. 'I'll have it in a minute. It's a fascinating read. Look,' she said as she finally found what she was after.

She had a digital copy of David S Bird's *Nazi Dreamtime* 2011 book. It was a study of the Australian mid-war enthusiasts for Hitler's Germany. I hadn't read it, but I knew it had had fantastic reviews.

'You've got to read it,' she said excitedly.

I could see her searching the book's index.

'What are you after?' I asked.

'Some reference to the Yabber gatherings at the Shalimar Café. And I wondered if Inky Stephenson was about during this time. I think he was. Oh, Peter, we just have to go. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.'

* * *

So, on Saturday we caught the 5 o'clock ferry to Circular Quay. I hardly had the opportunity for a word in the conversation as she enthused about what she expected to see and hear at the Yabba gathering. Of course, national socialism, or Nazism, had no attraction for either of us. But as twenty-first century students and researchers of Australian history, we were intrigued with how Nazism had flourished in Australia during the 1930s, especially among some literary groups, some intelligentsia, and particularly veterans from the Great War, especially among the professional classes: doctors, lawyers, engineers and the like. *Just who are we going to see here this evening?* Perhaps, even the infamous Major Francis de Groot who, only eight years previously, had been involved in one of the most famous incidents in Australian history.

As if reading my mind, Harriet asked, 'I wonder if we'll see anybody from the New Guard there tonight?'

I think I understood what was behind her question. Of course, the New Guard and Australia First were not one and the same group. As the title *New Guard* implied, they were militaristic in outlook, comprised mainly of the veterans from the Great War. They paraded and trained down in the northern Illawarra region somewhere in their secret bush camps. In the event of an Australian socialist revolution back in the dark days of the Depression, they would have been in the vanguard of the defence of what they believed to be Australian civilisation. Their great bogeyman was Stalin, and his Soviet communist regime. But as an organisation, by now – late April 1940 – it was no more. In the minds of many of its former members, the old pro-Nazi, pro-Fascist ideals were still alive and well.

The Australia First, on the other hand, tended to be literary types – authors, bookworms and armchair political idealists, who admired Hitler for what they believed he was able to achieve in such a short time in Germany. But what united the ideals of the New Guard and Australia First was a disdain for democracy and what they believed to be the pathetic nadir it had brought to Australia – a terrible economic depression, and a corruption of the Australian way of life. For both groups, what Australia needed, they believed, as Germany had shown, was a strong leader who espoused the ideals of national socialism.

These thoughts were whirling through my mind as Harriet excitedly chatted about what our evening with the Yabber group at the Shalimar Café might offer.

Disembarking from the *Curl Curl*, our Manly ferry, we hailed a taxi and, bracing ourselves for the cigarette-smoke filled taxi interior, we asked to be taken to the Shalimar Café. Off down George Street we motored.

'The Yabba mob?' the taxi driver asked, half turning around to speak to us.

Harriet nodded her head.

'Damned pity our politicians aren't there,' the driver said.

'What do you mean?' Harriet asked.

'Well, if they attended these meetings I think they'd realise we're fighting the wrong damned mob,' he answered. 'The real enemies are gathered around that rotten Stalin in Moscow, so they are.'

We didn't answer. We were turning left out of George Street into Park Street, with the Shalimar Café quickly approaching. We paid our two-shilling fare, thanked the driver, and breathed in the fresh Sydney air, pleased to be outside the taxi. I took her hand as we stepped down the steps towards the Shalimar Café. I could feel my pulse quickening with expectation.

As I opened the smoked glass double door to the café, I looked to the middle-aged man who was seated at the reception desk, and who was possibly the manager of the café.

'Yabber?' he asked in a pleasant voice.

'Yes, please.'

The head waitress was at hand to take us to a table. As we walked to wards our table, Mr Bath from Manly Real Estate stepped forward to greet us.

'Please join us at our table,' he offered.

Sitting with him was a compact, trim, dapper man, good-looking, silver haired, with a certain panache. Next to him was a woman, most likely his wife. She was well-groomed, with a rather severe face. She smiled weakly – a smile which I guessed didn't come readily to her.

'May I introduce Major Francis de Groot and Mrs de Groot,' Mr Bath said, with an obvious degree of pleasure. 'Mr and Mrs St Claire, from Adelaide,' he added.

As we shook hands, I could feel the hair at the back of my neck begin to stand on end. Harriet and I shook their hands. I noticed Harriet, for once was almost speechless. We were sitting at a table with one of the most memorable and infamous characters of

the 1930s. Even in 2012, few people would mention the 1932 opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge without mentioning his name. It was as if Harriet's and my discussion in the taxi concerning de Groot had somehow predetermined he would be present here tonight. *Bloody amazing stuff.*

I had been so taken aback by de Groot's presence I had not begun to appreciate the surroundings of the Shalimar Café. I realised now just how the interior was so elegantly 1930s. This was the very height of art deco décor: wonderfully graceful light fittings and curtains, with those captivating horizontal and contrasting vertical lines; fashionable furniture; neatly and tastefully positioned palms; beautifully moulded and shaded glass; and soft alluring curtains – all of this amazingly seductive, the like of which I had only seen in Hollywood period movies. No wonder the Shalimar Café during this period in Sydney's history was the place to be seen.

As de Groot was engaging me in conversation, I began to feel just how difficult it was to be a time traveller and take part in conversation: to converse with somebody across the boundaries of class, society, culture and history. De Groot was an Irish aristocrat and Sydney antique dealer. I could see some of my responses to his questions were leaving him not only curious of my real origins, but of my mental wellbeing. For many of his questions, I simply didn't know how to respond.

'Mr Bath said you come from Adelaide?' he asked. 'Surely, you have spent some considerable time overseas of late? Your accent suggests that.'

'No, indeed, but perhaps too much time engrossed in my research,' I answered.

'And exactly what might your area of research be?' he asked, with a very dubious expression in his eyes.

How could I respond? Back at the University of Adelaide I was a teacher-educator and historian researching new pedagogical methods in the teaching of history in our schools. I responded by explaining just that. His following question stunned me.

'And what are the best Adelaide schools for the teaching of history?'

I could have answered the question had it referred to the year 2012, but took a stab in the dark.

'Oh, I suppose Prince Alfred College.'

'And who is the present headmaster at Prince Alfred?'

I didn't have a clue who the headmaster of PAC was in 1940. I tried desperately and, I'm afraid very awkwardly and unconvincingly, to change the topic. I could sense Harriet was experiencing the same difficulty with Bessie de Groot. I overheard her explain to her she had just completed an honours degree in history at the University of Adelaide.

'Oh, wonderful. What did you study?'

How would Harriet respond? The fate of Fascism and Nazism? The decline of the Soviet Union? All of this was what students were learning in university history courses in 2012. *This is proving to be very difficult, indeed.*

So, with some furtive glances between Harriet and myself, while nibbling at our sandwiches and sipping our tea, we listened to the guest speaker, a Mr Cecil Salier, a retired AMP executive, address the gathering, perhaps numbering forty or fifty people.

He unashamedly explained the appeal of Mein Kampf, and concluded by stating the topic and speakers for next month's gathering of the Yabba group. Next month Percy (Inky) Stephenson and Miles Franklin would be present to explain the national imperatives of sustaining national socialist thought in Australia during these present challenging times. *God, Miles Franklin, one of our country's greatest literary figures, and after whom our most significant literary award is named. The dreadful irony of all this!* In 2012, this award went to the author of a novel dealing with Sydney's anti-Nazi groups during the mid-war years. History is truly a toss of the dice.

With a copy of the Australia First's mouthpiece, the *Publicist*, of which there were an abundance of free copies available at the meeting, Harriet and I said our goodbyes to the people at our table. We hardly turned back to look at the gathering as we almost scampered out of the café.

'Oh, I'd love to be here at the next meeting,' she said taking hold of my hand as we waited out on Park Street for a taxi come. 'But I fear, it's simply just too difficult to mix with these people.'

'Yes, and remember what's about to happen to Inky,' I answered.

'Yes, in a very short time, he'll be locked up in an internment camp until the end of the war.'

I could feel her hand give a little quiver at the thought.

'Yes, Inky was never charged with any national security offence – simply taken one night and whisked off to Tatura Internment Camp: one of the many great injustices committed in the name of national security during the years we now find ourselves in,' I said.

During our taxi trip back to Circular Quay, and then the *Curl Curl*, Harriet and I discussed the almost surrealistic experience of sitting next to de Groot and his wife. De Groot and his sword became famous when on 19 March 1932, he upstaged left-wing Labor Premier Lang at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He was not a member of the official party but, dressed in his military uniform, he was able to blend in with other soldiers on horseback who were guarding the dignitaries. Lang was about to cut the ribbon to formally open the bridge, when de Groot rode forward, drew his ceremonial sword and, reaching down from his mount, flamboyantly slashed the ribbon, declaring the bridge open in the name of the decent and respectable people of New South Wales. Much to the delight of historians and the Australian public the incident was preserved on Cinesound Movietone and shown repeatedly throughout Australian movie theatres.

'It's a horribly polarised society,' Harriet murmured, as she sat wonderfully, almost intimately, close to me on the bench of the Manly ferry.

'Yes, de Groot basked in both public adulation and condemnation. Everybody had an opinion on him.'

We talked about how poems and songs with a humorous flavour eulogised his gesture of contempt. The minutiae of the incident, irregularities in his uniform and the choice of horse – apparently an inelegant steed – commanded obsessive attention in all walks of Australian society. Pranksters 'doing a de Groot' became a frequent accompaniment to the opening of roads and bridges throughout the country.

But, it was only when Harriet and I finally escaped from this hellhole to our flat, we soon discovered something of interest. I opened up my laptop. I needed to find out more about de Groot. I suspected he was more than a simple publicist and fanatical right-winger.

'Look!' I said to Harriet. 'We've just been talking with a spy for the Australian military!'

Harriet put down the cup of tea she was sipping and rushed to my shoulder. I was staring at a page of a PDF file of David Bird's book on Nazism in wartime Australia.

'How damned stupid we've been!' I moaned. 'Despite De Groot's legendary position in the New Guard, he'd regularly been providing information to military intelligence. He has a patron high up in the Australian military bureaucracy.'

'Exactly what notes has he made on us, and what will he do with them? We should have done more homework on him.'

'Shit!' Harriet blurted.

'I suspect this evening is going to come back to bite us on the bum. Talk about stupidity and butterfly affects.'

* * *

It was another six days before Mr Bath found us a two-bedroom furnished flat to rent in Bower Lane, off Bower Street, opposite Manly's Shelley Beach. I entered the front door with Harriet, prepared for a quiet life until the *Sydney* was due back from its Mediterranean tour of duty the next February. I threw my bag onto the bed in the smaller of the two bedrooms, and turned around. She was watching me.

'I really thought you would ask if you could sleep with me,' she smiled, speaking in a husky voice. 'We have at least ten months here ... together.'

Chapter 8

It was as Harriet and I had feared. Of course, we had no idea of the people involved, but we shouldn't have been surprised something like this was going to happen.

Detective Sergeant Desmond McFawn from the Sydney CIB sat alone on his usual stool at the bar of the Duke of Cleveland Hotel, on Cleveland Street in Surry Hills – because of its proximity to the Sydney Cricket Ground. It was later renamed the Bat and Ball Hotel, home to generations of yuppies and cricket fans. It was a beautiful old pub, and he always enjoyed coming here, not because of its inherent beautiful architecture, but because of its proximity to some of his greatest sporting triumphs. Most of the clientele knew who he was, and they left him alone; he liked it that way, because he was here on business, and most of the clientele also knew that.

He sat on his stool, his cold, steely grey eyes staring at nothing in particular, but thinking about this damned war and the extra work it was bringing him. He was early for his appointment. He always was. He was a big man, nearly six feet five, raw-boned, with a large untidy face, a huge roman nose badly pressed out of shape. He had held the New South Wales heavyweight boxing title for four years. Most of his left ear was missing, given up in a scrum while he was playing for his much-loved South Sydney Rugby League team at Redfern Oval – the home of his Rabbitohs. I later read in the rugby league encyclopaedia the incident where he lost his ear involved a long-standing rivalry between his opposing prop forward from the Balmain Tigers, the legendary Bumper Lewis. Apparently, the referee was an interested, if not partisan, observer.

The recorded history was that McFawn had grabbed his opposite number's scrotum while engaging in a scrum. His opponent had replied by latching on to McFawn's ear. The two hookers prolonged the sadistic battle. It was their responsibility to gain possession of the ball in the scrum, and hook it back to the scrum half in order that the field play could continue. The referee was happy for this merciless battle between the two great gladiators of the sport to continue until the matter was settled, one way or the other. It was said at the time that this was all for the good of the game. And so it eventuated that way.

Evidently, the Balmain hooker's scrotum was almost torn from his body before the ref called for the two hookers to release the ball from the scrum. When the St John's medical people removed Bumper from the field on a stretcher, it was recorded they found part of McFawn's ear still in his mouth. Nobody thought to return it to McFawn. Although Bumper was married, the rugby league encyclopaedia records showed he never fathered any children.

McFawn's reputation had it that he once defended his state heavyweight title in the Horden Pavillion – just around the corner from where he sat now – one Saturday night, going fifteen rounds; the next day he played for his beloved Rabbitohs at the Sydney Cricket Ground in a Sydney first-grade rugby league grand final.

He was a tough man by any standards, and his appearance attested to the fact, with his mauled ears and hanging eyebrows rendered so from repeated stitching and general repairs. His nickname on the rugby league paddock and the boxing ring of Bull McFawn stuck with him as he graduated through the ranks of the New South Wales Police Force. Although, in later years, people would argue as to whether his nickname came from his appearance or his personality.

Police Commissioner John MacKay had allowed his senior men to build up a highly complex network of paid police agents throughout Sydney. McFawn had sponsored several of these, all in key positions in Sydney's daily life: pimps, publicans, opium traders, cat burglars, but also people such as the man he was now waiting for. This one, particularly, often had valuable information for him.

When Upton from the Commonwealth Bank had phoned him yesterday, briefly saying he would enjoy a beer with him, he knew he would most likely have something important to tell him.

Now McFawn was staring at the clock (in a central position above the bar), the most watched object in the pub because of the six o'clock closing laws. It was about to turn over to one o'clock – the beginning of Upton's lunch hour.

'How do you do, Sergeant?' Upton said, putting out his hand and pulling in a stool close to the detective.

'Well, thank you, Mr Upton. Can I buy you a beer?'

Any visitor new to the pub would have considered Bull McFawn and Upton a strange contrast in appearance.

Chapter 9

Here now in Manly in mid-April 1940, for all intents and purposes, the war was a universe away. We read about it in the newspapers, and we watched the Cinesound Movietone News screenings at the Britannia De Luxe Theatre on Sydney Road. But there was even a growing number of people in uniform to remind Manlyites there was a war building up in Europe.

We had indulged ourselves by bringing along our laptops for this time travel. Of course, there was no access to ISPs, but we could do our writing – mine on social life in wartime Sydney. And there was the report on the Fuhi Barsden document that had to be completed. Indeed, Sophie and Hugh would be expecting that when I returned to their world. And we both had a mass of various files which we thought may serve to be useful during this adventure.

Security? If our flat was ever broken into, we had secured our work with coded access, and when we had finished for the day, we saved and backed up our work. But in reality, it was highly unlikely anybody from 1940s Sydney would recognise what these laptops were, let alone be able to turn them on.

Harriet was working on a project she termed 'Australia's children of the Vietnam War'. She was fascinated with the topic, and appeared to have plenty to work. Of course, her research and writings simply were a hobby, a recreational pastime, but one, nevertheless, she was very good at. At the end of it all she would have a book with the theme '... that a single war's shockwaves reverberate down through a country's social history from generation to generation'. *Maybe, this is why she's so passionate about saving the Sydney.*

My work was a professional activity, and as far as my work on wartime Sydney and the *Sydney* disaster and its aftermath were concerned, the university would expect some publication from me when I returned to that world. But that world was one which was day-by-day becoming a world away.

Most mornings I would bring her in a cup of tea, and we would lie on the bed talking about the world we had just left. Between us we had a mass of material stored on PDF

files on our laptops. We wondered what was happening with the Canberra political scene? Was Julia still Prime Minister? What was happening with the asylum seekers from Indonesia? We had so many questions, and we found we needed to talk about these things in order to maintain our sense of reality.

She was much younger than I but, as each day passed, I knew I was becoming increasingly emotionally bonded to her. Perhaps, this was so-called love, which had hitherto evaded me.

During the first weeks, we would scamper down the street to the waiting bread cart to buy freshly baked bread wrapped up in tissue paper by a little partly bald red-headed man we simply called Phil. Then we would spend the mornings writing and, often after lunch, we would go for long walks about the Peninsular, holding hands like adolescents who had just discovered sex.

The Corso was the hub of everything, with loads of day-trippers – only some in uniform – making their way from the ferry down to Ocean Beach. We could see children in their heavy woollen bathers experiencing the joys of Manly before the approaching winter. There were many, too, in the swimming pool at the wharf with its huge slippery-dip, high diving board and the pontoon. Holding hands, and with occasional affectionate touches, we thrilled to watch this generation of young Australians, many of whom would have died by our year of 2012.

We were approaching the boardwalk connecting the wharf and the Fairlight pathway. Harriet snuggled into my shoulder. We watched highly polished plywood speedboats coming and going from a little jetty somewhere in the distance. Young boys dived into the harbour for pennies thrown by some visiting British airman.

'They're here to train our young men for their airforce,' she commented.

She was referring to the Empire Air Training Scheme. It reminded us that Dunkirk – and the Battle for Britain – was just around corner. We knew the phony war was rapidly coming to an end.

Before returning to our Bower Lane flat we turned with a quickened pace to Burt's Milk Bar – a Javana Sling for me and an ice-cream soda for Harriet – sheer indulgence for two adults from the year 2012.

But sometimes we would go for our walk early in the mornings along East Esplanade. We watched fishermen gutting the fish on the sand, surrounded by hundreds

of squawking silver gulls. Sometimes we would stroll along to the beachside Manly Aquarium, which sported the jawbone of a large shark at its entrance. We watched school children, apparently on holidays and most likely from the country, in little knots of horror and make-believe as they pointed to the huge monster.

Some evenings, if the weather was kind we would go to the Amusement Pier to watch people riding dodgem cars, the magical merry-go-round with its beautifully painted horses, the ferris wheel and the ghost train. We watched the fake – or maybe not so fake – terror of the young riders at the heart-stopping moment when the train burst out of the dark to seemingly dangle over the water before plunging back into the darkness.

Just around the corner from the Amusement Pier was George's Fish 'n' Chips. On our first visit here, I was reminded of one reason the average life expectancy of people in 2012 was so much higher than it was in 1940; it had as much to do with public health – preventative medicine – as it did with improvements in medical science.

We had both fancied some fish and chips for dinner, and had sauntered into George's shop. There were three kids there with a great pile of old newspapers – probably gathered from the vacated ferry seats – loaded high on an old billy cart. They were unloading them onto the counter, and George was weighing them. 'Five bob' he announced.

'Come on. I don't fancy fish and chips tonight,' Harriet moaned.

George used the newspapers to wrap the fish and chips. I soon learnt it was common practice, even in butcher shops.

'One can only imagine where the newspapers had been, apart from the lead content,' I sighed as we set off home.

* * *

We made ferry trips to town to buy some clothes, which I knew would soon become very scarce with the vagaries of rationing. I had my felt hat, and wore it in that fashionable jaunty way I noticed so many others do. I always wore a tie and a suit. Harriet always wore a fashionable hat. I was getting to know and appreciate Australia's premier city.

Hobart had been my city of birth, and I had been educated there through to my doctorate; I had spent most of my working life in Adelaide. But I always fancied living in Sydney, especially before it was to grow in such proportions.

How the topography of a city influences its character, and its inhabitants! The River Derwent dominates Hobart, and there is that giant of a monolith-like thing standing behind the city, as if a grotesque overseer, Mount Wellington. Its streets are narrow, as the city is squashed in between the river and the mountain, and the people move about, particularly on winter days, as if feeling their way through a maze. This seems to simply add to their love for the private and for conservatism.

On the other hand, Adelaide is beautifully spacious. Built on flat country, with the Adelaide Hills in the distance, its streets are wide, blending in with the parklands defining its four terraces surrounding the city. But its beaches are few, and nothing like Sydney's ocean beaches. Adelaide's spaciousness seems to complement the openness and friendliness of its inhabitants, its homogeneity. No wonder they have such a vigorous café culture – well, at least it does in 2012.

Sydney, I was discovering, with its breaks and barriers caused by its hills and massive harbour stretching so far inland, causes magnificent interruptions to daily life, giving character, and even determining the nature of its many delightful districts. There are a hundred districts, all with their own character: tired, tough suburbs such as Balmain; the up-market areas alongside The Boulevard in Strathfield; the vice dens of Woolloomooloo; and now for Harriet and me, the delights of Manly.

But we sometimes talked about this chaotic butterfly effect that we now called the many little waves of consequences and effects that would result from our saving the *Sydney*. It was all too difficult to imagine, but I often recited this old 17th century proverb:

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For a want of a shoe, the horse was lost;
For the want of a horse, the rider was lost;
For the want of a rider, the battle was lost;
For the want of a battle, the kingdom was lost!
And all for the want of a nail!

From little things, big things follow, if saving the *Sydney* and her 645 hands can be considered a little thing. Just what would be the ultimate consequences of averting this terrible tragedy? What lay ahead of us in our endeavours to save her?

Each year at my university, I had my students read John Merriman's *For the Want of a Horse* to bring home the message of the huge role of chance in history. I kept telling my students history turns on a five-cent piece, that chance is everything. *The vagaries of history!*

'We simply don't know, but there's little doubt that if we manage to save the *Sydney*, there will be consequences we haven't dreamt of,' I said, as we lay in bed.

'But they don't necessarily have to be bad, do they?'

'No, indeed, they don't,' I said. 'And our situation here now, is an example of that,' I answered, realising this was the first time I'd thought about our relationship in that manner.

But deep down in my concerns about this mission, I was convinced that the butterfly effects were not all going to be as pleasant as our relationship.

Chapter 10

Had we thought this through more thoroughly, Harriet and I might have suspected Able seaman Milton Swaby was a troubled young man as *HMAS Sydney* sailed out of the Sydney Heads in April 1940. He needed to talk with one of his mates. That queer bloke and sheila on the train worried him, as nothing had ever worried him. *That photograph! God! Who were they? I've got to talk with somebody about those bastards.*

Donnie FitzPatrick was his closest mate. As soon as they were together on the *Sydney*, he told him the lot – the train trip, and his meeting with the strange bloke and sheila with the photograph.

'A sheila showed me a photograph showing the full complement of the ship's company following some successful action against some Italian cruiser in July ... later this year ... for God's sake. In the photo we were all crowded on the deck and standing in the rigging. I swear I could see you and me, matey.'

Milton's pale and pimply face was twisted with concern as he told his story. He seemed to be pleading for advice or help.

'In the Mediterranean ... you say. The rumours about our next assignment must be correct. Bloody strange that some bloke and sheila on a train ... complete bloody strangers, for God's sake ... would know about it and approach you about it.'

Donnie was now becoming as alarmed as Milton.

* * *

Petty Officer James Cresswell listened with amazement to Able seaman Milton Swaby's story of his encounter with the strangers on the train from Mt Victoria. As was his habit, he thought about it for a long time, indeed, for many days. He wrote a full report of the conversation he had had with Swaby, and then signed and dated it, and had Swaby do the same. There could only be one answer to this: wait and see if such an incident occurred and a photograph taken. Then, if it did happen, hand his report to his senior officer, Lieutenant Dick Blackmore.

Chapter 11

I had photographed every page of the Fuhi document, and was painstakingly going through it word-by-word. Gradually, I was becoming very puzzled. The more I read it, the more questions it posed for me. I found myself going back over what I had read, and I could find nothing in her writing that referred to her statement. Bloody strange. What does she mean when she writes 'following my trance-like state'?

I went through the whole document again, methodically searching for other instances of her use of this expression. Eventually, I found she had used it on a total of five occasions. Was it simply her way of expressing something – her unique turn of phrase? Or was she referring to a document that had actually once existed, or still existed somewhere? What would such a document reveal?

It was all becoming too much. There could only be one answer. I walked to Harriet who was at her laptop, absorbed in something.

'What do you think about a drive to Twin Rivers, darling? Or does that pose too many problems?

She looked up at me. I could tell this would require some thought because meeting her grandparents wouldn't be easy for her.

In the end, the promise of another Fuhi document, and what it might reveal was sufficient for Harriet to agree. However, there were some logistical problems to which we needed to give much thought. Harriet was convinced her grandfather, Charles Barsden, had lived in the old Twin Rivers homestead for all of the war years. Certainly, her father, Hugh, wasn't as yet born.

'He was a 1948 drop,' she laughed, using an old rural expression.

'Obviously, we can't just turn up at Twin Rivers in 1940, and have you claim to be a Barsden from two generations in the future,' I said.

'Yes, we need to give this plenty of thought. I think we should wait until we have the phone connected.'

* * *

When we first moved into Bower Lane, I went down to the Manly Post Office and applied to have the phone connected. The man – I think he was called a postal clerk – behind the counter told us that a connection could take months. Besides, they required an enormous amount of personal details. It was wartime.

For our first 1940s telephone call, Harriet and I walked towards The Corso, where I had remembered seeing a telephone box. It was, indeed, a red box, maintained by the Postmaster General's Department – the PMG. We had pockets full of coins: two-shilling pieces down to halfpennies. As if school children first attempting some simple thing, we looked at each other, smiled, and pushed into the phone box. The phone apparatus comprised a heavy, black, bakelite earpiece with a thick cord attached to a wooden box. Jutting out from the front of the box was a heavy horn-shaped mouthpiece. I remembered seeing them in the old war movies. Operating instructions were on the wall behind the phone.

Long Distance Calls: Dial 10
Wait for Operator
Request the town and phone number

I watched Harriet do just that.

'Twin Rivers via Bathurst, please.'

Twin Rivers was still a small township of workers, with its own post office and postmaster.

'That will be one and sixpence.'

I watched Harriet pick out a shilling piece and a sixpenny piece then insert them in the coin slot.

'Go ahead please,' I could hear the operator say.

We listened, waiting for somebody to answer the phone. Soon I could hear a voice at the other end.

'Good morning. Twin Rivers Post Office. Postmaster Robinson speaking. Who would you like to speak to?'

'Mr or Mrs Barsden, please.'

'Please hold the line.'

I could hear another ringing sound. Then 'Margaret Barsden speaking'.

'Good morning Mrs Barsden. My name is Harriet Barsden.'

She paused for a moment, and looked to me with a 'what now' expression.

'Are you one of us?'

'Yes ... indeed ... very much so.'

'Wonderful! But we haven't met. And I haven't even heard your name mentioned.'

'That's understandable.'

'Oh, I do wish Charles were here.'

I could hear an excited voice.

'I'd like to meet you.'

'I have my partner with me.'

'I'd like to meet her, too.'

'It's a him.'

'Fine. Bring him along.'

She looked at me and smiled.

'Where are you?'

'Manly. Could my partner and I take up your kind invitation and visit you some time in the near future? I'd love to meet you both. And I'm particularly interested in a document written by Fuhi Barsden – one of our ancestors. We think it may be located somewhere in your library.'

'When would you like to come?'

'As soon as possible. But when Charles is home, please. I'd like you to meet him, too.'

'Would this coming weekend suit you both?'

'Excellent. About mid-day Saturday?'

'Wonderful. This is going to be a surprise for Charles.'

* * *

'Any climate change cynics from 2012 should have to see this,' Harriet sighed as she looked out on the heavy snow which had covered the Great Western Highway since we had last travelled through Leura and Katoomba.

We were now approaching Medlow Bath and the Hydro Majestic Hotel, and the snow seemed to be intensifying, coming down from the south-east in dense waves. It was only late April.

'A coffee?' she suggested.

'Devonshire tea, you mean. '

We parked in a snow-covered gravel parking area with a few other cars and then strolled inside.

'I was only here a few months ago,' I said, surprised how little the interior had changed in the period through to 2012.

Of course, we had talked about her paternal grandparents on several previous occasions. Both had died before she had left school, and most of her memories were from what her parents had told her.

At this time – April 1940 – her grandfather Charles had no siblings, being born when his parents were in their late thirties – a very rare event in those days. And apparently, Charles and Margaret had their own children late in their married life. But they did have two children other than Hugh, both girls who were married and lived on Sydney's northern beaches. Except for receiving dividends from their rather large inherited share portfolios, they played no role in the vast Barsden pastoral empire.

Harriet smiled and said 'Peter, Father always says his two sisters were mirror-images of Grandmother in appearance and their personal values.'

I smiled, encouraging her to continue. I enjoyed listening to people's accounts of their family histories, particularly now, because this was telling me much about Harriet.

'Evidently, Margaret had spent much of her younger days living in an artists' commune in Springwood,' she continued.

My mind immediately flashed to what I had read about some of these artists' communes scattered across the Blue Mountain during the 1930s. They were considered very risqué during their time.

'In her time, she was considered very, very Bohemian,' Harriet explained.

'And her marriage, Harriet? How did that work out?' I asked

'From all accounts, they were very close. Although, for a number of years, I suspect, a fair amount of Barsden money went to supporting the arts in Australia.'

'We'll, if that's the case, she's likely to be sympathetic to Fuhi Barsden, and what she stood for. I understand she was a little *left field*.

'Perhaps, if having a passion for understanding the Wiradjuri and other Indigenous cultures qualifies for being left field. For many people, Fuhi's values in this regard were simply commonsense.'

'Yes, of course, you're correct,' I replied quickly, aware one does not need to be left field to be passionate about protecting the culture of First Australians.

'But granted, Fuhi's passion in this regard, certainly was unusual, to say the least for the mid-1800s,' Harriet said.

'Yes. I think that's what I was attempting to say.'

* * *

The snow intensified as we approached Bathurst. Passing through a district known as Yetholme the drifts exceeded a metre in depth. Fortunately, there was a grader being pulled by an old tractor on hand clearing the highway. I'm sure, for the year 2012, and probably thirty years previously, there had been nothing like this. *Climate change? Get real. Just ask a time traveller!*

With much slipping and sliding on gravel roads – especially as we passed through Bathurst – we finally reached the front entrance to Twin Rivers.

She turned and looked at me, smiling.

'We just need to be honest with them, don't you think?'

'It will be difficult to explain, but I agree. Let's not get caught up in a web of lies.'

We parked the Dodge at the front steps of the homestead and, as we stepped out of the car, somebody quickly appeared – a groundsperson, most probably.

'I'll garage her, sir.' He spoke in country drawl.

At least that's one custom they maintained when they moved house.

Then a woman appeared: a handsome woman. She quickly introduced herself.

'Oh, you really are a Barsden. I can see straight away,' Margaret enthused as she ushered us inside.

'This is very kind of you,' Harriet said, having given Margaret a big kiss on the cheek.

'Yes, thank you very much for giving us your time,' I said. 'I'm Peter St Claire. In ordinary times, I'm an academic at the University of Adelaide.'

'But your voice is different ... both of you,' Margaret exclaimed with a rather shocked tone. 'You're from New Zealand or South Africa, surely.'

'It's wartime, Nan,' Harriet answered in a soft tone.

'Nan?' Margaret answered, her hands to her cheeks. 'Good gracious. Just who are you?'

'On 24 April 1948, you will give birth to Hugh Charles Barsden, who will be your only child. In 1980 he will marry Sophie Gladewright from Adelaide. One of their children ... their youngest ... will be Harriet Margaret, who will be born in 1987. I am that child.'

'Good God, Harriet. Shirley?' she called. 'I think we all need a Bex powder and a cup of strong tea.'

Immediately, Shirley the maid appeared.

'Yes, ma'am.'

We were sitting in a large room, clearly mostly used as a living room. Within minutes Shirley reappeared bearing a tray with a steaming pot of tea, creamy milk and sugar, and a yellow and black little package with Bex printed on it. I thought she was joking about the powders.

Shirley immediately asked if she could pour Harriet and me our cup of tea.

We thanked her, but balked at the Bex powders.

'Charles will be home soon,' Margaret said. 'He's been in at the Bathurst cattle yards organising for next week's sales. I do hope you can stay the night.'

'Thank you very much. That would be wonderful. I don't fancy a drive out of here at night in that.'

We looked out of the window. It was continuing to snow heavily. *In fact, we may not get out of here tomorrow.*

'We're very sorry to come here like this,' Harriet said. 'But, as I said before, it's wartime, and Australia is about to face some terrible tragedies. And we're here in an attempt to prevent one such tragedy.'

'What's that?' Margaret asked.

Margaret was looking decidedly puzzled.

'We can't say at this very moment,' Harriet broke in. 'But believe me, our mission here is deadly serious. Remember, it's wartime, and about to get much more serious for our nation?'

'For Britain, you mean?' Margaret asked.

I was reminded that even in 1940 most Australians thought of themselves as being firstly British. In this respect, change was just around the corner, as Australia would look to America for its security needs.

'No, Australia,' Harriet answered. 'By the end of next year, we'll be attacked by Japan ... Japanese bombers over Darwin ... Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour ... Japanese naval vessels shelling Sydney's eastern suburbs and Newcastle. Believe me, Nan, this is serious stuff.'

'But you can't possibly know all this in advance of its happening ... time travellers indeed ... and you're saying you can prevent these tragedies?' Margaret said. 'I really don't know what to think.'

'No, certainly not all of them, but we think we can prevent at least one of them,' Harriet insisted, trying desperately to gain her grandmother's confidence.

I dared not interfere in the conversation, in the light of Nan Margaret's scepticism.

'And you say you're an academic at the University of Adelaide,' Margaret challenged, looking at me a bit dubiously.

'Well, I did say in ordinary times. That is, in the year 2012. You see, in 2012 we would be known as time travellers.'

'Oh, gracious, that can't be,' she declared. 'But thank God Charles is home.'

I could hear some dogs beginning to bark out in the yard somewhere. I looked out the window. It was becoming ominously dark. I looked at my watch. It was only 2 30 in the afternoon. I saw a vehicle pull up to the front steps. I couldn't make out what make, possible a Fargo utility, which I had seen in motor museums. It was covered in snow and muddy ice. I saw it had chains on the rear wheels. *God, how are Harriet and I going to drive out of here? We have no chains for our wheels.*

In a few minutes, Charles entered the room. He had come in through a side entrance where he had discarded his coat, hat and boots. Harriet and I stood to greet Harriet's grandfather, Charles.

As we shook hands and greeted each other, Charles seemed to notice Margaret's worried expression. His own pleased expression quickly turned to obvious concern. But soon his apparent joy at meeting one of his own seemed to take precedence over his concerns. I could tell he was a little confused.

'Well, you're certainly a Barsden,' Charles said. 'That's obvious.'

'She claims she's our granddaughter,' Margaret broke in.

Margaret repeated what Harriet had told her about the birth of Hugh on 24 April 1948, his marriage to Sophie Gladewright from Adelaide in 1980, and Harriet's birth in 1987.

'What's more, they say they are time travellers from the year 2012 ... whatever that means.'

Charles' expression made it clear he was not convinced about any of this.

'What's the purpose of your visit here?' he asked. 'You said on the phone you want to look at a document written by Fuhi Barsden?'

'Yes, that's correct,' Harriet broke in, pleased to get the conversation back to the purpose of our visit.

'Have you any identification?' Charles asked. 'I think you'll agree we at least need that before we can allow you into our library.'

'We only have these forgeries which we had done for the purpose of our mission here,' Harriet confessed. 'They were done to keep the authorities off our backs.'

'We have nothing to substantiate our claims about where we have actually come from,' I added, with what I imagine was a rather sheepish expression.

'Well, I think we have some time to sort this out,' Charles said, walking towards the window. 'With that snow, you won't be leaving here for a while ... possibly a day or two, I'd say.'

Margaret had us in separate bedrooms. No wedding ring, no shared bedroom. This was despite her own Bohemian background. I desperately wanted to talk with Harriet, but I didn't feel inclined to break Harriet's grandparents' trust in slipping into her bedroom in the middle of the night. *What was Harriet thinking?* I hadn't had an opportunity to talk with her alone since we had arrived.

I had glanced across to her on several occasions as the four of us had sat and talked earlier in the night. It was all so surrealistic. It was as if from Harriet's perspective she

had had a normal granddaughter/grandparent relationship all her life. Harriet certainly was an unusual person. The more I saw of this family, the more I was convinced she carried one huge amount of Fuhi Barsden's genes. And her grandparents at least seemed to understand this. Somewhere else in the house I suspected a perplexed Margaret and Charles were talking about these very things.

* * *

Shirley had served us tea and scones with blackberry jam. I immediately sensed the tension was dissipating. Charles and Margaret could see there was really no doubt about Harriet being a Barsden. I had seen a portrait of Fuhi Barsden hanging amongst a group of other portraits in the hallway. Harriet was a taller version of Fuhi. From their appearance, they could have been sisters, except Fuhi's Tahitian features were more prominent.

'You say you have read one of Fuhi's documents?' Charles asked with a challenging expression. 'Are you going to tell us how that was possible?'

'Some time in the early 1960s, following the disruptions of the war, you had a new homestead built ... up there further on Telescope Hill,' Harriet said.

'Amazing! Amazing for two reasons,' Charles exclaimed. 'Only the family and the people who work around here refer to that as Telescope Hill. And for the past twelve months Margaret and I have been mulling over the idea of one day building a new homestead up there.'

'Well, you will, I can assure you,' Harriet said with a smile. 'What's more, you will transfer your huge family library to an annex ... all secured and packed away ... but, I'm afraid, not so well labelled and catalogued.'

'I'm intrigued,' Charles said, nodding his head in obvious amazement.

'So, when I wanted to do some research on Fuhi and went looking for her document and eventually located it ... I was attending the University of Adelaide ... and I involved Peter ... my lecturer ... in what seemed to be Fuhi's paranormal time-shift experience.'

'And?' Margaret asked, now seeming to be won over with Harriet's story.

'Well, what Fuhi had said and described was correct. We went to the physical location where she had described her time-shift beginnings. And we soon found ourselves near a road leading to the Mt Victoria Railway Station in the year 1940 ... about two months ago in our time.'

Charles and Margaret were now wide-eyed and open-mouthed, as if two children, as they attempted to comprehend what Harriet was saying.

'We tried it again, tested it and sure enough the same thing: same place, same time.'

'And the war?' Charles asked.

'Okay, you may notice in some of the papers what's going on with Hitler and his Nazis and Britain and the rest of Europe is being referred to as the Phony War. Well, all of that in a few weeks time is about to take a rapid change for the worse.'

They were still agog with what she was saying.

'France, the Netherlands, hell, all of Europe will fall like a pack of cards.'

'And Britain?' Margaret asked with deep concern.

'It just hangs on, but a lot of Australians lose their lives as we come to the help of Britain,' Harriet continued.

'God, I can't believe this,' Charles gasped.

'But there's much worse to come,' Harriet continued. 'Only weeks before Japan enters the war on the side of Germany and Italy by obliterating the American Pacific Fleet while it's anchored in Pearl Harbour, Australia will experience our worst ever naval disaster.'

Clearly, they couldn't believe what they were hearing.

'And what was that?' Charles asked.

'The sinking of the *HMAS Sydney* in the Indian Ocean off Carnarvon on Western Australian coast by a German raider on 19 November next year, your time.'

'That's only about sixteen months away,' I broke in. 'And Harriet and I are convinced we have a good chance of preventing the disaster.'

'That's why we're here,' Harriet said firmly. 'Six-hundred and forty-five Aussies, all hands, go down with the *Sydney*.'

'I've been researching the long-term affect of this disaster on the families left behind. And there are some dreadful stories, some terrible wasted lives. This is one disaster of the war that is preventable! Well, we have the opportunity to achieve just that.'

'How?' Charles asked.

'Warn the *Sydney* about the German ambush,' Harriet replied.

'And just how to you propose to do that?' Charles was looking at Harriet with some disquiet.

'We've already spoken to one of the sailors on the ship, and planned to speak with him when the ship returns from its current tour of duty in the Mediterranean. But now we have grave doubts about that idea.'

Harriet sat with her arms folded. She was very careful with her choice of words.

'And what was his reaction?' Margaret asked.

'Not exactly what we expected,' Harriet said. 'He became very suspicious, accusing us of being foreign agents.'

'Mmm,' Charles looked very worried. 'I can understand why.'

It was now dark outside.

'Shirley will show you your bedrooms,' Margaret said.

'Thank you,' I said but I really suspected Margaret and Charles wanted some time by themselves before dinner. I wondered what questions they'd be putting to us when we returned?

* * *

Over sherries – something called Chestnut Teal – we chatted light-heartedly, but I sensed those expected questions were not far away. Shirley served us large plates of roasted Barsden beef and vegetables. I had never tasted anything quite as agreeable as this. Then came a huge dish of rich trifle. I'd forgotten people ate like this. But more importantly, I was wondering when the questions were going to come.

'You referred to Telescope Hill as being the place where we are to have our new home built,' Charles said in a lowered and deliberate tone. 'Do you know anything about the history of that hill – why it's called such?'

'Only that it was named after a terrible incident that occurred there,' Harriet began. 'The person responsible – or so the story goes – for Fuhi Barsden's murder back in the middle of the early eighteen seventies is said to have planted himself in the high branches of the tall gum trees on the brow of the hill, using a telescope to spy on Hilary

Barsden, Omomow Barsden's wife, and Fuhi's daughter-in-law. Was his name Julius Makepeace, one of the ancestors of the Makepeaces up Mudjee way? They are still there in 2012. I've always thought he had an unusual surname for somebody who was responsible for such terrible deeds.'

Harriet's answer had shocked Margaret and Charles. All of this was news to me. But, of course I knew Fuhi had been killed in the Twin Rivers atrocities. Harriet had told me that much back in Aroma Coffee Shop in Adelaide at the beginning of this little adventure.

'Indeed,' Charles nodded in agreement. 'And what were those terrible deeds?'

'Forgive us for asking such questions, but Charles and I are interested to know what you know of the Barsden family history,' Margaret said.

'That's fine,' Harriet answered. 'Naturally, when I was researching Fuhi's statements on time-slips, I also was interested to learn what happened to her.'

'And what did actually happen?' Charles asked, in a challenging tone, his brow furrowed. 'What happened to Julius Makepeace after he had my grandmother, Fuhi Barsden, murdered?'

'Well, the so-called renegade Wiradjuris, whom Julius Makepeace had hired, murdered her and Hilary Barsden with an axe at what's now commonly called Fuhi's Hole up along the Fish River,' she said. 'I can go on and tell you how Omomow tracked the murderers down and killed them at what is now known as the Kanangra Walls, but I'm sure you know the story as well as I do.'

Intrigued, I asked, 'And what happened to Julius Makepeace, for heaven's sake?'

'Oh, still pretending to be Omomow's friend. Omomow and Julius went off as young lieutenants with the New South Wales Sudan Contingent in 1885. Julius had killed Omomow, or at least he had thought so, in the middle of the desert, and confessed his crimes as he thought Omomow was dying. Omomow returned from the desert and named Julius Makepeace as Fuhi and Hilary's murderer at a public gathering when Julius was being recognised for his supposed gallantry in the Sudan.'

'You're a Barsden, alright! There can be no doubting that. A true descendant of Fuhi Barsden, I declare,' Charles said in a shocked tone.

I felt a wave of relief sweep over me. I looked to Harriet who gave me a gentle and private smile.

'But exactly which Fuhi document are you referring to?' asked Charles. 'Let's go to the library. I think there are in fact three of those documents.'

'In 2011, I could only locate one of them,' Harriet answered. 'If there are another two of them, you've answered the reason we've come to Twin Rivers.'

* * *

Somebody must have had an eye for good archival practice, because neatly stacked vertically in a prominent section of the massive Barsden library were assorted handwritten foolscap volumes of memoirs written by various members of the Barsdens, dating from William Barsden (1799–1856), the founder of the dynasty, to those of only the past generation. It was not difficult to locate the three Fuhi Barsden volumes. I could see Harriet immediately recognised the apparent third volume; at once I could feel the adrenalin throb through me as she handed me one of the two volumes I had not as yet read.

Shirley served Harriet and me breakfast early the next morning so we could make an early start on examining our treasure. We beavered away all day in the library, with Margaret and Charles constantly reminding us we would be welcome to once again stay overnight. In the finish we accepted their offer. Outside, the weather conditions were terrible.

Occasionally, Margaret and Charles would come into the library to ask about our progress. Usually, we were busy with Harriet's camera taking copies of what appeared to be important pages.

'I notice you never wind your film forward, or put new film in your camera,' Margaret finally remarked.

'Digital,' I answered, before I realised she wouldn't understand the meaning of my answer.

'By 2012, cameras using film are as dead as dodos,' Harriet explained. 'They simply don't exist anymore. Even Kodak is a dead company.'

'Good gracious.'

I hesitated to explain about the further use of digital technology in 2012. Our modest MacBook Pros we had secured away back at Bower Lane would certainly trouble Margaret and Charles.

Chapter 12

Much later, indeed, in the year 2012 when my life became normal once more, I learnt through the State Library of NSW website that Froggy Small carried his nickname because of his frog-like facial appearance. But his last name also was most apt.

Now almost completely bald and in his late thirties, the only clothes he could find that fitted him were boys' sizes. That's what embarrassed him the most. Many would say he should have been a jockey. He had heard that remark a thousand times. But it was the hard and relentless work demanded by the vocation he chose that persuaded him to engage in what he believed to be his true calling.

He was only a little more than a boy when he started dabbling in the art of the cat burglar. At first it was only harmless stuff – various flats around Darlo. When a child, Darlinghurst had been his world, and he knew just about every residence there. But his real failing came when he simply became too good at his work, eventually coming under the notice of Bull McFawn who was about to have him thrown into Sydney's notorious Long Bay State Penitentiary. McFawn realised the New South Wales Police and, in particular the CIB, could make use of his unparalleled talents. So Bull had him placed on his complex network of paid police agents.

A vital part of the deal was that he would consult Bull if he planned on doing any other freelance cat burglary about Sydney. Interstate activities, however, would be okay, only if he made himself contactable and was immediately available for any work that Bull may require him to do. This necessitated him phoning into Bull's office daily if he were ever on interstate freelance work.

So, he did what Bull suggested, and hung out at the back of one of Tilly Devine's brothels – Makeup Mary's – in Palmer Street Woolloomooloo, where he could pick up ample information on the Sydney underworld. Here at Makeup Mary's brothel, he did odd jobs and generally looked after 'the girls', while acting as a police agent, ensuring he did enough to satisfy McFawn in having his retainer paid. He desperately needed that money because he was a chain smoker of Camel cigarettes. His dark brown nicotine stains extended from his fingers almost to his wrists.

Being always available irked Froggy sometimes, but he knew it was a much better arrangement than trying to survive at the notorious Long Bay Penitentiary.

At the moment, he was being jostled about like a cork on a stormy Bondi Beach surf. It was just past five o'clock in the afternoon – peak hour for Sydney's pubs – and he was standing deep in a cesspool of humanity in the Burdekin Hotel, long a landmark building on the corner of Sydney's Liverpool and Oxford Streets. He was here on business, waiting for Bull McFawn and, despite the raucous atmosphere of the hotel, he waited patiently, smoking his Camels, with his schooner of Tooth's beer in his boy-sized nicotine-stained hand.

'Busy?' Bull asked, reaching down and tapping Froggy on the shoulder with his huge, bear-like hand.

'I have a schooner for you, Sergeant, sir,' Froggy said as he reached to a nearby narrow tiled shelf, and handed Bull his beer. 'I'm never busy when you require my assistance, sir.'

Froggy was always sure to address his employer as sergeant or sir, ensuring their strict employer–employee relationship.

Bull quickly got to the purpose of his meeting. He didn't like this place. But at this time of the day it served its purpose well. It was so crowded and noisy that nobody could possibly overhear their conversation and, because of their vast difference in height, no one would even recognise they were talking to each other. They were simply two pieces of flotsam in a chaotic sea of humanity. Froggy's height didn't extend much further than Bull's waistline.

'Intelligence from government sources has it that there are at least two suspected foreign agents operating in Sydney,' Bull said. 'Probably living in Bower Lane in Manly.'

'Dangerous?' he asked.

This was important information, and defined his *modus operandi*.

'We don't know. But we're treating them that way.'

What Bull didn't tell him was that his intelligence had also stated the source of it was none other than Captain John Collins, Commander of the Royal Australian Navy cruiser *HMAS Sydney*, and that it had been processed through the Royal Australian Navy, Naval Intelligence Division. Bull didn't mention Upton's concerns about this couple, nor

did he even refer to Upton in any way whatsoever. Certainly, he didn't mention the couple's possible connection with the fabulous Barsden Pastoral Empire. Then there was additional information coming from high up in the Army about these foreign agents attending an Australia First soirée at the Shalimar Café.

The information he gave Froggy was simply on a need-to-know basis. He didn't explain how the CIB had tracked down Harriet and Peter to their rented Bower Lane flat. Upton knew they were staying at Petty's Hotel, and the front desk attendant there remembered they were spending the next night at The Steyne in Manly. The front desk attendant at The Steyne remembered them asking about the locations of Manly's real estate agencies, and then it was simply a matter of going to the various agencies and asking questions. Bull McFawn checked to see if they had the phone on or had mail deliveries. There was a negative to these last enquiries, which was simply another indication of their clandestine operation.

His task was simple and clear: he had to break into the foreign agents' flat and photograph anything that may be of interest, particularly evidence that might be used in establishing they were indeed foreign agents. Bull had provided him with the latest sub-miniature spy camera: Walter Zapp's Riga Minox which had first appeared in 1938. Now a new generation of spies and snoops was bringing these fascinating instruments into play in deadly espionage and reconnaissance in Europe. For Froggy, this brought a new dimension to his artistry, and he delighted in it. In a wartime world, perhaps bigger roles would be just around the corner.

So, each morning he took the short walk from his small room at the rear of Makeup Mary's Palmer Street Brothel in Woolloomooloo to the Circular Quay Ferry Terminal to catch the 6 o'clock Manly ferry, then a brisk walk to Bower Lane. Discovering whether they owned a car or not, and its make and model, was one of his first tasks. The tell-tale sign was a navy blue 1939 Dodge Town Coup or, more accurately, the absence thereof.

But he noticed they seldom used it while they were in Manly. He had followed them discreetly on some of their walks, and soon assumed they were lovers as well as being foreign agents. Some discreet questions of the local Manlyites had confirmed they certainly were foreigners.

At one stage, he thought of entering their flat while they were on one of these walks. They seemed to be away for an hour or more. But that was irregular, and he decided

against the idea. At worst, he might be caught out or, at best, he would be too rushed. No! He would wait for them to drive off in the Dodge. This way, he could reasonably be sure they would be away for some time. The queues alone at the Spit Bridge would ensure that.

Finally, one freezing winter's day with a brutally cold south-westerly blowing across the harbour whipping up an army of white-tops, he felt in his bones today was to be the day. He had been waiting for weeks, and he knew Detective Sergeant McFawn was growing impatient. He never referred to McFawn by his nickname, not even in his most private thoughts.

He disembarked the ferry, crossed onto East Esplanade, on to Victoria Parade, down Bower Street, and then quickly into Bower Lane. His heart was now thumping with excitement, and little balls of perspiration were gathering on his brow. His adrenalin pulsed. The hairs on the nape of his neck were tingling with anticipation. God, he loved this, even more than Makeup Mary's private pleasures. He just knew today was the day. As he approached the Bower Lane flat, he knew all his instincts were correct. The Dodge was gone. To go now, or wait until dark? The professional, the true artist, would wait until dark.

At nightfall, with a practised use of some wire on a rear laundry window, he was in.

Chapter 13

The snow kept us at Twin Rivers for two nights. We departed, however, after the third day. As it turned out, we were confident Margaret and Charles now trusted us, and accepted our story of being time travellers. Indeed, they seemed to truly delight in having their adult granddaughter with them. Charles never tired of asking her how Hugh was managing the Barsden pastoral business, what he was doing, in what directions he was taking the companies. The live cattle trade from the Northern Territory fascinated him. He never imagined there would be such markets in South-east Asia, or that vessels could be developed to transport such huge numbers of stock.

Naturally, we discussed this on our drive home to Bower Lane. But our central concern was the new information we had been able to gather from Fuhi's other two documents. We had photographed every page we hadn't previously seen. Now we needed to transfer those images to our laptops, and carefully study them.

As soon as Harriet opened the front door to the flat, she seemed to sense something was wrong. She looked to me with an enquiring expression.

'I smell cigarettes!' she said. 'Whoever has been in here reeked of cigarettes.'

'The laptops!' I responded, quickly stepping off to our bedroom.

I lifted the mattress off our double bed.

'Maybe they've been touched,' I said.

I quickly opened mine, and turned it on. It opened just fine.

'How's yours?' I asked anxiously.

'It seems okay, but I just get the feeling it was not exactly where I left it under the mattress. But I can't be sure.'

She then opened up the top drawer of her bedside chest of drawers.

'God!' she exclaimed. 'Somebody has been touching these.'

She was holding up her packet of contraceptive pills.

'Are you sure?' I asked full of anxiety and shock.

'Yes, absolutely sure ... damned certain. I always keep the pack for the current month beside the full box. She was showing me how she always had placed the current

pack – the usual clear celluloid push-through pack, silver-coloured backing, with each tablet placed for each day of the month. Beside it was a full box with her pharmacist's label on it.

'Show me that ... the box,' I said, my voice breaking with tension.

The box contained a use-by date of January 2013.

'What else?' she gasped, as she rushed off to her wardrobe.

In a minute, she was turning and facing me holding a pair of her lacy, pink g-string knickers in her hand.

'These have been disturbed. They're certainly not as I had left them. And they stink of cigarettes. I'll never get them clean.'

'Either a chain-smoking pervert, or somebody with some more sinister motives,' I answered. 'Now we need to consider very carefully exactly how we're going to handle this.'

'What am I going to do about these?' she asked, still with a disgusted expression, waving her knickers.

'You'll just have to buy some 1940 versions, Harriet,' I replied, tongue-in-cheek.

'Oh, Peter,' she answered in disgust. 'Have you seen those disgusting things? They'll do nothing to turn you on.'

'Come on! What did they call them – gorgeous gussies? You're not tempted?'

'Could you ever imagine me in those things!'

'I can't frankly, but I don't know where you're going to buy g-strings in 1940 Sydney.'

Chapter 14

Detective Sergeant Desmond (Bull) McFawn had collected the camera and its images from a meeting he had with Froggy at the Burdekin Hotel the day following the Bower Lane reconnaissance.

'There's some bloody strange stuff there,' Froggy said excitedly.

He had spent the night thinking about this meeting. Following such success, his future in international spying and surveillance seemed assured.

McFawn nodded his head, indicating for him to continue.

'You'll see some photos of some things that look like women's underwear. Bloody strange stuff! Their definitely foreigners. I've never seen anything like them.'

Indeed, the underwear had been constantly on his mind, tormenting him, since he had touched them. They seem to have been the stimulus for some of the most erotic dreams he had ever experienced. He had to seek out Makeup Mary's favours for relief.

'And what else?' McFawn asked.

'They had two things that looked like radio receivers, or transmitters of some kind, hidden under their mattress. They appear to be called MacBook Pros. The back of them show they are designed by Apple in California. They have a kind of keyboard ... like a typewriter. But the interesting thing with these is that it also says that they are manufactured in China.'

'China! *They* only make rice cakes and in fact do a shithouse job with them.'

'And the year of manufacture of these things is 2011.'

'Rubbish,' McFawn said dismissing it and moving on to his next question. 'It's obviously some kind of code. And you have plenty of photographs of those?'

'Of course. You pay me well, and I make sure I do my job well, Detective Sergeant, sir.'

'Yes, of course. You tell me that most times we meet. And what else?'

'There's some photographs of some tablets in very strange packaging. The printed instruction on the packaging states it has to be used by January 2013.'

'Rubbish. What sort of tablets are they? Drugs?'

'I don't think so. They have the word Adelaide on them. What's a pharmacy?'

'A chemist shop I think ... I don't know.'

'And what else?' McFawn challenged.

As he looked to more photographs, the little man was pushing towards him.

'What do you make of these, Detective Sergeant, sir?' he smiled with unrestrained satisfaction.

'What in the hell is it ... for God's sake? It looks like a fuckin' camera – spy camera.'

'It is, indeed, Detective Sergeant. I've never seen anything like it.'

'Where was it manufactured ... any clues?'

'It's hard to see, but I've written it down here.'

Froggy breathed in deep, in the manner of a man who had just unearthed a treasure of a lifetime. He pushed a piece of paper to the big man. Roughly written in thick pencil was *Canon HD camcorder* made in Japan.

'Jesus, the fuckin' Japs. They're supposed to be in with the bloody Nazis,' McFawn blurted. 'It's got to be some bloody kind of spy camera ... for sure, hey? It has a sealed compartment for its film, you say? Some secret friggin' way of opening the damned thing!'

Froggy was nodding his head in agreement.

'Anything else?' the big man asked.

'Just about the weirdest thing of all. There was some kind of photograph of a memorial service held at St Andrews Cathedral.'

'What's weird about that?'

'Nothing ... 'cept that it shows the service was held on 4 December 1941 ... next year for God's sake!'

'What?' McFawn was shaking his head in disbelief. 'What's the memorial service in aid of?'

'The officers and men of the *HMAS Sydney* ... for God's sake.'

'God! Anything else?'

'Only this photograph of the latest edition of the *Publicist*. I though you might be interested in what they're reading.'

'Bloody right-wing stuff. This is very, very dangerous. They're obviously making contact with pro-Nazi organisations – damned fifth columnist groups. Be sure not to say a word of this to anybody ... or you're in Long Bay!'

'Yes, sir ... Detective Sergeant ... not a single word. I promise you, sir.'

Chapter 15

Harriet and I had to deal with the vexed issue of the invasion of our flat. This needed a thorough talking through. It was extremely unpleasant, but how vital was it to our safety? Was the government about to intern us as suspect aliens? Would we spend the remainder of the war in some godforsaken internment camp?

'Look,' she said with a worried expression. 'When you go around this place, there's enough evidence to point to the fact that we don't belong to 1940 Sydney. My knickers, for God's sake: I'd forgotten about them!'

'You *will* insist on wearing those sexy things,' I smiled.

'I've had no complaints from you so far,' she laughed. 'On the outside, I'm dressed in my very fashionable Sydney 1940s gear which I bought online a few months ago. Under that there is just a very randy 2012 Aussie girl, with knickers to match: randy as a tart on heat, I can assure you.'

She was smiling at me in a most becoming way, and her voice adopted that characteristic purring sound.

'The knickers are hardly incriminating evidence,' I answered more seriously, encouraging her to refocus her mind back to our most pressing problem of the break-in.

'The laptops and my camcorder?' she offered, her voice returning to a more normal tone. 'Thank God I had the camera with us at Twin Rivers!'

'Maybe, but would somebody from 1940 know the difference between a camcorder and a digital camera?' I asked.

I really doubted it. To somebody from 1940 it would appear as a spy camera.

She nodded.

'Of course, any sleuth from 1940 Sydney wouldn't have a clue what they were ... what their use is, and probably wouldn't even know how to turn them on,' I continued.

'But, of course, the fact that whoever did this wouldn't know what they are used for, might simply raise further issues ... you know, communications stuff in wartime.'

'And my pills?' she challenged. 'I should have thrown the pack away. Look at the date on it.'

'Yes, it also carries the label of the family pharmacy in the Adelaide Rundle Mall. That would hardly point to our being aliens. But no doubt, it certainly would have worried them ... whoever they are.'

'Just who do you think is responsible?' she asked.

'It would have to be some branch of the Commonwealth, but I know very little about the Commonwealth's system of security during the early months of the war. It could even be the local CIB. Who knows? But remember what's about to happen to Inky Stephenson.'

'Yes, we must remember that all hell's about to break loose in Europe,' she reminded me. 'And what we take for granted as being civil liberties here in Australia is about to be thrown out the window. Witness poor Inky Stephenson.'

'Yes, exactly. What's the date today?

'Thursday 3 May. So, the invasion of France ... the end of the Phony War ... begins exactly in a week's time.' She looked at me with some alarm. 'I bet Hitler and his generals are busy now, right at this moment, eight months after Britain and France declared war on Germany. German troops are about to march into Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.'

'Let's first get this break-in sorted out. Things are going to heat up for us during the coming months as Hitler wages war against Britain and all hell breaks loose over Western Europe. So, I think the most worrying aspect for us is the copy of the St Andrew's memorial service for the *Sydney*.'

'Yes, we should remember that for most Australians, they're British, and for many of them, British first, Australian second.'

'Exactly.'

'What do you think we should do, Peter?'

'I think we can rightly assume they will have us under observation, anticipating more damning evidence. So I think we should just go on and do what we had planned.'

'Okay, that's fine with me,' she answered. 'You can bet we'll smell them before we see them.'

She was smiling. She hated cigarette smoking as much as I did.

We both agreed the first attempt at investigating us was a little amateurish, to say the least.

We withdrew to the bedroom. We lay in bed, as we listened to the ABC 2FC on the AWA Radiola we had bought at the local pawnshop. It was a mantelpiece model, a magnificent piece of art deco design – dark brown bakelite – that I yearned to take with me back to 2012. But when I looked to Harriet, I could see she had other things on her mind. The news of the war in Europe would have to wait.

* * *

With the photographed copies of Fuhi's first two journals we set about methodically trying to discover the full extent of her hidden knowledge of her Wiradjuri-inspired time travel. It was slow and laborious work, but work with a high intrinsic level of interest to us both, and it held a vital practical application for us.

I kept coming back to this passage in her second volume of memoirs:

Night and day I learnt from Old Burabin. He taught me how to visit the Land Beyond the Sky, how to harness the power of life and death. I learnt how these secrets lay in special incantations, which gave the gommera power over the elements: rain, tempest, snowstorms and other elements. I learnt how to embrace the spirits of the living and dead. I learnt how to see movements of enemies and sources of food, to be all-knowing.

I had gone off alone for many days to visit the mysteries of the Land Beyond the Sky and to understand what I must do to harness these great forces in order to avenge the death of Caleb, my father, Esther, Philip and all the other souls who had perished with them. Following my trance-like state that lasted for many days, I had departed from this excruciatingly emotion-sapping experience knowing I must visit the Dhirrayn and consult with their Gommera to understand the steps I must take.

'What do you think?' I asked as she peered over my shoulder.

'She's referring to those who went down with the *Governor King* tragedy,' Harriet explained.

I had highlighted the phrase 'Following my trance-like state'.

'What do you think she's referring to?'

There was a moment's silence between us.

'She can only be referring to some form of self-hypnotism, surely,' she answered.

We read through the whole passage again.

'I think we need to learn, and master, self-hypnotism,' she said smiling with satisfaction.

'Then place ourselves on Fuhi's time-slip entry platform at the Kanangra Walls, self-hypnotise —'

'And be sure to concentrate on a time and place we want to travel to,' she broke in excitedly.

Already, we had pushed our concerns about the intrusion into our flat to the back of our minds as we grappled with the challenges of Fuhi's journal.

Chapter 16

I imagine McFawn was aware of the pressure on him from his Chief Inspector who, in turn, was responding from pressure from the military bureaucracy concerning these foreign agents operating out of Bower Lane, Manly. He couldn't allow this to grow to a point whereby he may be left with egg on his face. He picked up his copy of the afternoon's edition of the *Daily Mirror*. The first three pages were full of news from Europe. Hitler and his Nazis were on the march.

'Damn it,' he hissed once more. 'This is going to get much, much worse before it gets better. And we have foreign bastards operating out of Manly,' he whispered to two of his subordinates.

He had convened several meetings with his senior men. They had examined the photographs taken by Froggy. Mostly, their concern was centred on the photograph copy of the 4 December 1941 memorial service held at St Andrew's Cathedral.

Now, McFawn and detectives Van De Beer and Rowe were shaking their heads.

'The Officers and Men of *HMAS Sydney*.'

McFawn was repeating what he was reading on the front of the notice for the memorial service.

'How many officers and men in the ship?' Detective Hank Van De Beer asked in his heavy Dutch accent. 'Exactly how many?'

Sometimes the Dutchman's mental ability worried McFawn, and he often regretted recommending the man for promotion to the CIB. He had made mistakes before with this kind of thing, but the mistake with the Dutchman was the daddy of them all.

'Of course, that's important,' McFawn said looking at the Dutchman, 'but what is of even greater importance is the date on the friggin' document ... and what our alien friends in Bower Lane were intending to do with the bloody thing.'

Detective Collins was nodding his head in agreement with his superior officer.

'Then there's this!' McFawn hissed.

He was holding the photograph of Harriet's contraceptive pills pack, and pointing to the date on it. Look, January 2013, for Christ's sake. What in the hell does that mean?

We really don't need any of this at this time, when I'm losing men to the war effort head-over-fist. Christ, as if I didn't have enough to worry about!

'Tell us again what the chemist said about the ingredients of these pills,' Harold Rowe asked.

'He said it's all bullshit.'

McFawn looked to the report.

'According to what's on the back of the pack, the pills are supposed to be some form of synthetic hormones that mimic the way these things called oestrogen and progesterone work in a women's body. It says that the pill prevents ovulation – no new eggs are released by a women taking this pill, since her body is tricked into believing she is already pregnant.'

'So what does that mean?' Rowe asked.

Clearly, he didn't understand what McFawn had just read from the report.

'I don't understand it either,' McFawn sighed. 'But I think it refers to some kind of contraceptive tablet.'

'A fancy kind of French letter you mean, sarge,' the Dutchman broke in.

'Something like that,' McFawn said. 'But our chemist says it's all bullshit any way. Impossible!'

'But what about the other stuff?'

Rowe was pointing to the photographs of the two laptops and the camcorder.

'I think we can take it for certain they're some new kind of radio device – receivers, transmitters, or both,' McFawn answered in an authoritative voice, pointing to the photographs of the MacBook Pros. 'We just don't know. But for sure they're some kind of secret transmitting device,' he said thumping his index finger on the photograph.

'We're up against some very tricky bastards here. What they say about Hitler's secret weapons now seems very friggin' real, so it does. And this camera thing without any film has me fucked, so it has.'

'Bloody oath, just look at it for, Christ's sake', McFawn breathed, with anxiety writ large across his face as he pointed his large, dirty index finger towards another photograph. 'This bloody spy camera's made in friggin' Japan, would you believe?'

'I think you're right there, sarge,' Rowe said, nodding his head in agreement. 'And what about these?'

'Obviously they're some form of bloody women's underpants, for Christ's sake,' McFawn said, shaking his head.

The Dutchman and Rowe's eyes were glued to the photograph.

'So, out of all of that, what have we got?' McFawn asked. 'A photograph of some future memorial service to the officers and crew of the *Sydney*; a packet of pills that has a date on them way into the future; and — '

'And some pills that our chemist says are impossible bullshit,' the Dutchman added, to remind the others he was still in the room.

'Spy cameras and some secret transmitting devices, and a pair of sheila's flash bloody underpants that seem to belong to the future, for God's sake,' Rowe said, again leering at the photograph.

'There's a lot of stuff about the future here, don't you think?' McFawn asked, looking to his two junior officers.

'So what do you suggest?' Rowe asked.

'I suggest you and the Dutchman visit Twin Rivers to find out what you can about this Harriet Barsden.'

The other two were nodding their heads in agreement. They liked Bathurst. There were some good pubs in that town.

'Oh, I should add that when you do start asking questions out at Twin Rivers, do so with some care. Remember, the Barsdens are powerful people – lots of friends in high places. Don't fuck this up, for Christ's sake.'

Chapter 17

We took the early morning ferry – the *Dee Why* at Jetty No 3 – from Manly Pier to Circular Quay, and then a brisk walk up into Sydney's Macquarie Street. That way, we were always at the New South Wales State Library when it opened at 9 am. At closing time, we would return quickly to Circular Quay No 2 Jetty to catch the *Curl Curl* for the return to Manly.

I was really enjoying this ferry travel. The wartime Manly ferries were magnificent old wooden vessels, and there was a wonderful feeling about travelling on them, if I could only get used to the damned cigarette smoke. The passengers were friendly, often engaging us in conversation, mostly about the war.

Then, there was the marvellous walk, in our hats and long gabardine overcoats from Circular Quay up through Woolloomooloo to Macquarie Street to the Mitchell Library, a striking colonial sandstone building, appearing very much as it does in 2012.

All of this research was a steep learning curve for us both. Neither of us had researched without the internet. Before we had started, I had commented to Harriet that from my recollection in 1940, self-hypnosis as a therapy and area of research was still in its infancy. Indeed, it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that self-hypnosis began to gain the attention of serious researchers and practitioners.

'If only we were back in our time and had access to the internet,' I complained as we nibbled at our scones and sipped our tea at the café opposite the State Library.

'I know there's a plethora of material on self-hypnosis there.'

'If only, if only,' she sighed. 'We're really trying to find something in the literature that's as scarce as hens' teeth.'

'Exactly. No self-respecting editor of any medical or psychological journal would even consider publishing something on self-hypnosis until the late 1960s or even the 1970s.'

We soon discovered there was a mass of material scattered throughout the works of the various pioneers in the area – Franz Mesm and Sigmund Freud to begin with. But this was in the area of hypnosis, generally. Self-hypnosis was something entirely

different. We slowly accumulated a list of authors whose works we needed to work on. This was research at a snail's pace.

On the second week of our research, James Braid, a nineteenth-century pioneer in self-hypnosis, gave us the first clue:

When I returned home for dinner I could neither turn my head, lift my arm, nor draw a breath, without suffering extreme pain. In this condition I resolved to try the effects of hypnotism. I requested two friends, who were present, and who both understood the system, to watch the effects, and arouse me when I had passed sufficiently into the condition and, with their assurance that they would give strict attention to their charge, I sat down and hypnotised myself ...

This, indeed, was something to work on, but it had taken days of both of us searching, and the prospect of finding something of value was becoming very slim. Harriet was becoming as despondent as I was. We were at a loss to find any form of instructions for self-hypnosis. But we knew we couldn't waste time. If it were some branch of the Commonwealth Government's general security operation, or the Sydney CIB, which was taking an interest in us, they would be driven by new imperatives from today onwards.

* * *

Today was Thursday 3 May 1940 – the day after Hitler's army began its westward march into Europe. We bought a *Daily Mirror* from a newsboy at the steps of the library, and couldn't wait to get two seats on the *Curl Curl* for the return to Manly so we could read them.

'God, look!' I exclaimed.

The upper and lower decks of the ferry were a sea of people with their absorbed faces in morning newspapers. I needed to remind myself this was the great age of the newspaper. Most people were literate, and the only form of electronic media, the radio, was firmly imbedded in the home. Here now on the *Curl Curl*, there was a sea of males – no Asians, all Caucasian – mostly smoking some form of tobacco, most with felt hats and grey or fawn gabardine overcoats. They were all reading the one thing. No doubt,

for most, there would be less time spent this evening at their respective pubs for the rush hour, as they slipped home to hear on their radios more of the relentless march of Hitler's armies across Western Europe.

Today, a new word – with dire connotations – would enter the English language. From today the word *blitzkrieg* – German for 'lightning war' – would strike terror into European, and later, Soviet armies. We were beginning to understand that the blitzkrieg was a way of trying to unbalance the enemy by surprise attacks making it hard for the enemy to respond in an effective manner. This had as much psychological, as well as actual effect. It was as much about hideous mass fear, terror and mayhem as it was about military objectives. As the Nazi war machine concentrated overwhelming force at high speed to break through enemy lines, they proceeded without any regard to its flank once the lines were broken. At last for Hitler and his fellow Nazis, this war would avenge the humiliations of the Treaty of Versailles, and the world would be forever changed.

Sitting that day in our seats on the *Curl Curl*, reading our copies of the Daily Mirror, Harriet and I knew that chasing up aliens from now on in Australia would have fresh urgency for the authorities, whoever they might be. It was, perhaps, no strange coincidence that while we were considering these things, Harriet looked at me in alarm.

'I think that man has just taken a photograph of us from behind his newspaper!'

'What man?' I asked.

But there was no way of knowing because everybody seemed to have a newspaper in front of their faces.

Chapter 18

Set back in Liverpool Street, between Pitt and George streets, Sydney's Central Police Station – an old building of sandstone and brick – was tucked away from the street and not seen by passers-by until they were truly in front of it. It was as if the planners wanted to somehow hide it from public view. But here were located the offices of the Sydney branch of the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

Detectives Hank Van De Beer and Harold Rowe had signed the attendance book before the mandatory 8 30 am deadline when the station manager had ruled his red line through it. They sat in the building's front office with their little battered tin lunch boxes tucked away under their arms. Any minute now, they would walk outside to George Street to catch the 8 45 tram to Central Railway Station. With child-like enthusiasm, they very much eagerly anticipated these kinds of assignments.

They were dressed in almost ankle-length gabardine overcoats over striped grey suits, both badly in need of a cleaning and pressing and, of course, the obligatory felt hats. There was a general swagger about their gait as they left Central Police Station to catch their tram. They showed their CIB badges to the tram conductor for their gratis tickets.

Perhaps subconsciously, their swagger even increased as they alighted their tram and walked up to the front steps of Central Railway Station. They again flashed their badges at the ticket office as they collected their gratis tickets on the Central West Express through to Bathurst.

Apart from their strong body odour, they shared an addiction to nicotine. They smoked Ardath cork-tipped cigarettes; their nicotine-stained fingers told the story of their addiction. Now, tucked away in the railway carriage, with their feet on the sand-filled metal heater on the floor, they smoked their Ardaths, nibbled at their bacon and lard sandwiches, and drank heavily from the double-sized flasks of Hennessy Brandy, both of which they had emptied well before the train stopped at Bathurst Station. Life was sweet.

They had authority for one night's accommodation at the Railway Hotel in Bathurst's Havannah Street, a block away from the station. The freezing cold southerly wind blowing in their faces helped sober them a little as they trudged up the slight rise to their hotel. It was a sandstone building with attractive, tall, arched windows, gracefully laced by a light veranda. It had a proud history of providing overnight accommodation for rail travellers, as indeed it was now for the Dutchman and Harold Rowe.

Harriet knew this graceful building in 2012 as the Chifley Hotel. For the sake of tourism, many decades later the grand old lady's name would be changed in favour of Bathurst's favourite son and wartime Prime Minister from 13 July 1945 through to 19 December 1949 – Joseph Benedict Chifley, adoringly referred to throughout this district as simply, Chif – who lived in a humble working man's semi-detached cottage only a hundred yards or so away from the hotel. But now in May 1940, Chifley was still on the Opposition Front Bench as Shadow Treasurer, with Robert Menzies from the United Australia Party governing the country.

They elbowed their way through the throng of drinkers to the bar, ostentatiously flashed their CIB badges, checked to see that their double room was still available, and asked for two schooners of Tooth's beer before closing time at 6 o'clock. As bona fide travellers, the drinking laws allowed them to settle into many more schooners, and a counter meal of agreeable, fat-laced lamb curry, before they retired to bed.

* * *

They had arranged for one of the two police cars from Bathurst Police Station to collect them at 8 30 am to take them out to the Twin Rivers homestead. It arrived on time; it was a mud-splattered, black 1938 Ford Fordor Sedan, with a young uniformed constable driver. He seemed to be in awe of the CIB officers, paying ample due deference to them.

Despite being hard drinkers, Rowe and the Dutchman had drunk far too much the night before, so they spoke little in an attempt to collect their wits for their approaching interview with the Barsdens. The desk sergeant at the Bathurst Police had phoned through the previous day to ensure the Barsdens would be home about 10 00 am.

* * *

The interview didn't go well from the very beginning. Margaret Barsden kept them at the front door, with no indication she was going to invite them into the residence.

'Of course, we know Harriet Barsden,' Charles replied to a poorly phrased question from the Dutchman. 'She's one of ours – a Barsden.'

'Her partner, sir? A Mr Peter St Claire?' the Dutchman asked.

'I think his correct title is Dr Peter St Claire,' Margaret broke in, in a cold and indifferent voice, her face without any expression. 'Yes, we are very pleased to know him, too, Detective Van De Beer'.

Then Rowe asked when they had last seen her.

'About a week ago, during the heavy snowfall. They stayed with us for two nights,' Charles replied. 'But what you haven't done as yet, is to explain to us exactly why you are making these enquiries – other than your need to verify that we know these people. Surely, that would be a polite and sensible start to your enquiries!'

Christ! Rowe didn't want the interview to proceed in this manner. Already, he had visions of this powerful Barsden man phoning the Minister for Police to complain about the manner the interview was conducted.

'Would you mind if we have any more questions we could return to visit you?'

'I'm interested to know why this interview couldn't have been done over the phone. Certainly, it would have saved some money. I imagine you have had travel and accommodation expenses – money that could well have gone to the war effort!'

Margaret was clearly annoyed with their visit, and wanted to dispatch them immediately.

As soon as they were gone, she looked to Charles, and exclaimed,

'I'm really annoyed, Charles. Really! What's wrong with the New South Wales police? Haven't they got phones? Or are they simply too stupid to know how to use them? What should we do?'

'Complain to Chif. We donate enough money to his party. I'm sure he'd also be horrified at these two.'

* * *

They had a great deal of time to kill before their train was due at 5 30 that afternoon when the police driver dropped them off at the railway station at mid-day. They decided to do their waiting at the Railway Hotel. Within a very short time they were bickering, and blaming each other for the mess they had made of the interview.

'We should have spent some time yesterday discussing precisely how we wanted the interview to proceed,' Rowe snarled, drawing deeply on his cigarette.

'Daah, and whose idea was it to hit the piss,' the Dutchman replied.

'Okay, but how are we going to explain this to the boss?' Rowe replied.

This was what truly worried him. He would have to make some move to get away from partnering the Dutchman, otherwise his career would be ruined.

Chapter 19

'Peter, Peter.'

She was whispering in my ear and shaking my shoulder.

'Yes, darling. What time is it?'

'I'm not sure.'

She was searching for her watch.

'Nearly two-thirty,' she said excitedly. 'I've just remembered something.'

She had done this before. While laying awake in the early hours of the morning, she would suddenly remember something that had been playing on her mind all day.

'What have you remembered?' I asked, kissing her softly on the neck.

'I'm sure ... somewhere on my laptop ... there's something on self-hypnosis.'

'What made you think of that, darling?'

'I was thinking of an old friend at uni – Marie Gersbach – and the things we used to do together.'

'And?'

'She once flicked me an email with a PDF attachment. I'm sure it had something to do with self-hypnosis.'

'Don't tell me you think it's still on your laptop!'

Suddenly, my despondent mood, which had been clouding me since yesterday, was disappearing. Could there be hope just around the corner? Then I thought of her filing system. It was far from perfect – no better than my own.

She had already turned on the light and was opening up her laptop.

'Now where might it be?' she sighed.

'Try your Search command, with some smart key words!' I said as I got out of bed.

She was already doing just that. Her laptop was loaded with documents of all kinds and, like mine, many needed much more careful filing. In fact, her desktop and hard disk were a mess. But after a half-hour of desperate searching we had exhausted all the possible search words we could muster. *What to do now?*

She looked to me with a miserable expression.

'We need to get smart,' she answered. 'I really feel that guy who was taking our photographs on the ferry yesterday afternoon will already have handed them over to his fellow sleuths.'

* * *

We were less rushed in the morning. I brought her a cup of tea and some toast as she lay in bed. She was much less anxious now, as was I. Our library-based research was not such an imperative now. Just maybe, the answer to our problems was on her laptop somewhere. But where? Even if we spent the whole day methodically opening each of the files, it seemed as if it would be much better time spent than catching a ferry and spending the day in the State Library searching for something that was becoming increasingly clear did not exist on the shelves. Do-it-yourself hypnosis was something of the late twentieth century, not 1940.

By mid-afternoon she had clicked on a PDF file labelled 10 steps to DIY self-hypnosis.

'This is it!' she screamed in delight.

Sure enough, I could see she had exactly what we needed. But, of course, I suspected there was much more work to be done before we could successfully self-hypnotise.

We began reading through it step-by-step:

Step 1: Find a comfortable and suitable position and get your self relaxed and settled. Get into a position that you will be able to maintain easily for the time you are going to hypnotise yourself. Centre yourself, just looking in front of you. Breathe slowly easily and very, very regularly. Relax. Relax ...

'Okay, but this is hardly the stuff that Old Burabin taught Fuhi!' she said as she looked up to me from her laptop.

I smiled, encouraging her to continue.

Step 2: Concentrate on the length of time that you intend to spend in this state. Make a mental statement to yourself about what length of time you intend this self-hypnosis to last.

'Presumably, I imagine in our case, if we are located on one of Fuhi's time-slip launch pads – at either the Kanangra Walls or Mt Victoria – this only needs to be a few minutes,' I said.

She was nodding her head in agreement.

Step 3: Be clear in your own mind what exactly you want to achieve in the self-hypnosis. Make an unambiguous statement to yourself about the reason you want to hypnotise yourself. This allows your unconscious mind to clarify the exact purpose of your self-hypnosis.

'Okay, that makes sense,' she murmured.

Clearly, she was engaging with the message of this, as indeed, I was.

'We can't have you time-slipping off to one decade, and one place, while I slip off to another,' I laughed.

Step 4: Concentrate your attention on three small things, one at a time. Proceed slowly, pausing for a moment to concentrate intensely on each.

'In the case of Fuhi's time-slip launch pads, this might be a stone, a leaf, or a gum nut,' I suggested. 'But I'm sure Old Burabin taught her something such as this. He must have been some guy. Just imagine the extent of his knowledge.'

'Presumably, we need to be sure we are concentrating on the same object,' she said.

'I'd imagine so. Better to be safe, than sorry, I suppose.'

Step 5: Concentrate on you auditory sense and, notice one-by-one, three things that you clearly hear. You will hear and absorb sounds in your environment, rather than be distracted by them.

'Such as the breeze through a tree, or a bird call, or a waterfall,' she said. 'I'm sure that's what Old Burabin would have been telling her.'

'Clearly, this was dependent on the moment,' I answered. 'But I get the purpose of the step – don't be distracted by noises; rather use them to your purpose.'

Step 6: Concentrate on your feelings, especially noticing three sensations you can feel right now, such as your glasses on your nose, the texture of your clothing touching your body, the comfort of your shoes, and so on. Proceed slowly from one to the next, always concentrating on the touch sensation.

I looked to Harriet. Her enthusiasm was palpable. I could sense she wanted to start to give all of this a trial run. Funny thing! Up until a week or so ago, she had shown absolutely no interest in self-hypnosis.

Step 7: Continue the process using two visual foci, then two auditory foci, and then two kinaesthetic foci. Then, in a like manner, slowly continue with one of each.

'Okay,' Harriet said, reading from the file. 'Apparently, having done all of that we will have completed the external part of the hypnosis process. Now it's time to begin the real stuff – the internal part. What's it say?'

Step 8: Close your eyes, and bring an image into your mind. It may be a beautiful beach, or it could be your mother or a childhood image.

'No worries with that so far,' she enthused.

'We'll see soon, won't we,' I replied. 'I suspect, it won't prove to be as easy as it reads.'

'Maybe. But what next?'

Step 9: Pause, allowing a sound to come into your consciousness, or even generate one, and name it.

'That seems simple enough,' she said, clearly anxious to get on with actually trialling these instructions. 'What's the last step?'

Step 10: Become aware of a feeling and name it in your mind – for example, the pleasure of seeing your mother's face following a long absence. You might simply name this Mum.

Repeat the process with two images, two sounds and then two feelings. Repeat the cycle once again using three images, three sounds and three feelings. You will begin to feel drowsy – the sensation of the hiatus of being between awake and asleep.

Then to complete the process, open your eyes when your allotted time is up.

Remember, you weren't sleeping. Your unconscious mind was doing what you asked of it.

'Ready to give it a trial run?' she asked.

'I think we should proceed with a little caution, one step at a time,' I answered, anxious about what might be in store for us.

Chapter 20

The Royal Australian Navy's Intelligence Division was tucked away in a little redbrick building on the western bank of Garden Island in Sydney Harbour. In two year's time these docks would be burdened with a mass of American and Australian naval vessels. But at the moment, the British South-east Asian Fleet remained supreme out of its base in Singapore, although there was quickly a power vacuum being created in the Dutch East Indies with the defeat in Europe of the Dutch by the Germans.

But Japan already had its eyes on the British fleet in Singapore. In eighteen months time two major British warships *HMS Repulse* and *HMS Prince of Wales* would go to the bottom, sunk by air attack by the Japanese Imperial Navy off Malaya on 10 December the following year, three days after the almost total destruction of the United States Pacific Fleet by the Japanese at Pearl Harbour.

But now, in the first week of July 1940, the Australian Naval Intelligence Division at the Garden Island dockyard was just beginning to shake itself into action. That didn't require a huge organisational effort, because there were only three personnel in its whole structure. For work in the field outside of naval jurisdictions they had to depend on the Criminal Investigation Bureaus in each of the Australian states. But at this time, tucked away in our Bower Lane flat, I knew nothing of this.

However, I did have some idea about the Commonwealth Security Service (CSS) which I knew would be formed in March 1941, principally to protect the Commonwealth against what it considered supposed aliens such as Harriet and I posed for its security. Other than intelligence work associated with security threats, one of its roles was to organise and administer the network of internment camps across the country to guard against these threats.

But now, in July 1940, all of that was in the future. At the moment Bob Menzies was Prime Minister and would remain so until 29 July the following year. For Menzies, Australia's role in this 'damned war' was to stand should-to-shoulder with Britain. This was despite the fact he had returned to Australia from an official trip to Germany in 1938, praising the work of the Nazis in Germany, especially in providing some bulwark

to the communists. At this very moment, here in July 1941, he was in Britain kowtowing to Churchill and his ilk. For him, all this talk about Japanese expansion in the Asia-Pacific region was just that – talk!

Lieutenant Frank Joske headed up the Naval Intelligence Division and, at this moment, he was in conference with his senior subordinate, Sub-Lieutenant Ross MacAlister.

'Europe is in turmoil, for God's sake,' Joske hissed. 'Most of our ships are in the Mediterranean, and we have a bloody security threat right here on our back door.'

'And that threat has got to do with the *Sydney*?' MacAlister asked.

'Apparently.'

They were staring at a collection of photographs, and some typed foolscap pages of a report on the small wooden table they sat at. In particular, they were studying individual photographs of Peter and Harriet, and one of them sitting together, taken recently by CIB people on the Manly ferry.

MacAlister looked to Joske. He had only been posted to the Naval Intelligence Division two weeks previously and, at first, he was worried about what this was going to do to his career. Like every other young officer in the Australian Navy, he wanted some action, a posting on a ship of war. But maybe there would be some excitement in his present role.

MacAlister was growing to like Joske, although his earnest manner at times could be annoying. Joske had a physical appearance to match his manner. He had short, tight wavy, auburn-coloured hair, brushed straight back; sharp, dark hazel eyes; and tight features. He had a slim build, but he appeared to have a giant intelligence. Apparently, that was the very reason he was posted here.

'Let's go over this, detail-by-detail, step-by-step,' Joske said.

He looked to MacAlister for a response. They were working well together, and he seemed an enthusiastic young officer.

MacAlister still wore the pimples of youth. He was no more than twenty years old, had dark hair, was a little overweight and of shortish stature. He came from an old Navy family in Hobart, and never questioned his career opportunities in the Navy. His grandfather had been a Commander in the Royal Navy. Three words summed up his attitude: service, service and service.

'First, we have a report of two foreigners approaching a young rating from the *Sydney* – following some shore leave to his home in Lithgow – on the train from Mt Victoria to Sydney Central,. They show him a group portrait of the ship's company after so-called successful action against the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July 1940, showing men crowded on the deck and standing in the rigging. He reports this to his superior office.'

Joske had his index finger on some of the typewritten pages.

'You've read them?'

'Yes, sir,' MacAlister responded. 'Obviously, the photograph is supposed to be of something that supposedly hasn't yet occurred. Simply impossible, of course. Sheer rubbish, surely. But their motive, that's what worries me, sir.'

'Look,' Joske exclaimed, his hazel eyes almost ablaze with energy and concentration.

He was pointing to a photograph taken by Froggy Small in Peter and Harriet's Bower Lane flat.

'This is what's written on the reverse of the photograph: *HMAS Sydney* – successful action against the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July 1940.'

'Well, we'll know on the nineteenth won't we? And that's only a week or so, or soon after; that's not a long wait.'

'Indeed, sir, only a matter of several weeks – fifteen days to be precise, sir.'

Joske had his pencil on the calendar in his diary and was marking the day.

'We want answers to exactly why ... their real purpose of their meeting with the naval rating on the train,' Joske insisted, thumping the photograph with his index finger.

'Are they acting alone, or do you think they're a part of a larger team – possibly saboteurs?'

MacAlister was studying Joske's face for a reaction.

'Most possibly the latter,' Joske said firmly. 'But there's at least one common factor in the interviews of the people who have encountered them – the naval rating, the senior person in the Commonwealth Bank, the car salesman, the two hotel attendants and the real estate agent. They all agree they have a foreign accent: most possibly South African or New Zealand. Moreover, we have this. He was pointing to a report from *Army* of two people, a foreign male and female, attending a pro-Nazi meeting at the Shalimar Café.'

'And your hunch, sir? They obviously were at the meeting to make contact with others of their kind.'

'I suspect they're South Africans, and you're correct: part of a larger team of saboteurs. We know that many South Africans are sympathetic to Hitler and the Nazis, and they're obviously setting up something here.'

'Mmm.' Joske was silent for a time. 'We need a full breakdown on all the individuals in Nazi sympathiser groups ... you know Australia First ... the New Guard ... there must be a list of these somewhere.'

'Yes, sir,' MacAlister answered. 'That's where their support will be coming from.'

'There must be a bigger plan ... some major operation here on Australian soil.'

'What do you think that might be, sir?'

'I suggest they're going to try something on the *Sydney*! But we can only assume that's just a part of a much larger scheme.'

Joske was thumping his index finger on the photograph of the copy of the St Andrew's Memorial Service document.

'Why else would they have this forged?'

MacAlister was shaking his head, clearly concerned with what was appearing as a larger issue than he had first thought.

'But why the issue with Alex Mair?'

'Mair – the New South Wales Premier, for God's sake, MacAlister.' Joske was shaking his head in anger. 'Those damned CIB people, the fools, went out to Twin Rivers – and I'm sure I don't need to remind you of the political power the Barsdens have in this country – and questioned Mr and Mrs Barsden about this supposed Harriet Barsden. Mrs Barsden complained to Ben Chifley, and you know what he counts for in the halls of power. She complained they were rude and reeked of alcohol, and she wanted to know the real purpose of their questioning. The CIB stuffed it all up, as is often the case.'

'And what exactly was the purpose of their visit, sir?'

'To try to ascertain whether or not this supposed Harriet Barsden is in fact a Barsden,' Joske replied.

'And is she, sir?'

'Mr and Mrs Barsden say she is. In fact, according to them, she and this St Claire had stayed with them at Twin Rivers only a few nights before. Apparently, the Barsdens were furious the CIB would come to Twin Rivers to ask if Harriet Barsden was indeed a Barsden.'

'So, what do you think, sir?'

'I don't know, MacAlister. I simply don't know!'

'Have the Barsdens ever had any connections with the New Guard, Australia First or any pro-Nazi group?'

'Oh, hell no. Just the opposite, in fact. They've always been supporters of the Labor Party as far as I understand. But, you're correct there. We need to check that out.'

'Yes, sir.'

'But let's at first deal with these two foreign agents. From my reading of the CIB reports, Harriet Barsden isn't registered with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, sir.'

'The Barsdens have registered every one of their children with the registry since it was established way back in early colonial times. But is Harriet Barsden registered? No, she's not! And why not?'

MacAlister was waiting for the answer to what clearly was a rhetorical question.

'Why not? Because she's not a Barsden. She's a damned alien – a bloody foreign agent, that's why.'

'The Barsdens would hardly be involved with aliens and some kind of conspiracy against our Navy, surely, sir.'

'We simply don't know the answer to that. But we do know that this Peter St Claire's birth also does not appear on any registry in any Australian state.'

'They're aliens, sir. There can be no doubt of that. Otherwise, why have they got that communications equipment?'

He was pointing to photographs of the laptops.

'Exactly!'

'And the weird underwear, sir?'

'Yes, indeed. That's not the kind of thing Australian women wear.'

They were both shaking their heads in disbelief.

'And the spy camera – made in Japan for God's sake. Surely, that's evidence enough.'
Joske was shaking his head. 'As clear as dogs' balls, they're enemy agents.'

'But what do you make of this report, sir?'

MacAlister was holding a brief report from a CIB officer, dated only two days previously. 'What do you think they're up to in the State Library?'

'Hypnotism, for God's sake? What's all that about?'

'Perhaps they're going to hypnotise the officers and crew of the *Sydney*, sir!'

Joske was shaking his head.

'This is not going to be easy, MacAlister. I think we have a lot to learn about modern German warfare. All that stuff we've heard about Hitler's secret weapons is suddenly becoming very real – right here in Australia.'

Chapter 21

'I want to remember the name of Marie Gersbach's regular screw at university,' she smiled devilishly. 'She told me once, and I've been trying to remember his name for ages.'

'Okay, go for it! Good luck, Harriet.'

She wanted to be alone in the spare bedroom to test out the DIY hypnotism, as she referred to it.

'How long will you be gone for?' I joked.

'If I'm not back in thirty minutes come and get me.'

I watched her close the door behind her, and then I sat down at my laptop. In discussing how to approach this DIY hypnotism, we had agreed it would probably be a good idea for us to be alone when we first attempted to master the process. I suspected it was not as easy as the author of the web-based article suggested. I kept an eye on my watch. I had long ago learnt that the timepiece on my laptop didn't function very well in this time-slip world. *I wonder if I should write to Apple when we return, and suggest they do something about that? Probably wasting my time.*

A little more than thirty minutes passed before she opened the door to the spare bedroom.

'How was it?' I asked.

'Hopeless.'

'What happened?'

'Nothing. Maybe I felt a little drowsy.'

Before she had gone off to attempt some hypnotism, we had brainwaved what we knew about what I called the twilight zone because, in my almost total ignorance of DIY hypnotism, that's what it appeared to be to me. This was one occasion when we really missed the internet. There surely must be a plethora of stuff on this topic there.

We talked about that psychological state that exists between being awake and dropping off to sleep. I had always called it the twilight zone, and had experienced it most profoundly when I was very tired mentally and physically, when I came home

from work and lay down on the couch for a short snooze. Like the article she had discovered, I always thought of it as being the hiatus between being awake and asleep.

'First, we need to capture that psychological state and maintain it for our own purposes,' I said, looking to her for a suggestion.

'But, that's going to be easier said than done,' she smiled. 'I bet I'm the first of us to achieve it.'

She had thrown down the challenge.

'Let me have another turn,' she said as she re-entered the spare bedroom.

Another thirty minutes, and she was opening the door. As she poked her head through, her eyes told her story.

'I think I'm starting to get there, darling. I just might be.'

'Well, tell me about it.'

'I don't know. I just did as the web article described. I just tried to get rid of any extraneous thoughts. It seemed to work.'

'But did you remember the name of Marie Gersbach's regular screw at university?'

'Yes, I did,' she answered proudly.

'Well?'

'Jeremy Saltmarsh.' She was triumphant. 'Now, you have a go. Beat that!'

She challenged me with those devilish dark eyes.

So I went to the second bedroom, determined not to allow her to forge ahead in this. But it was more than just a simple game between two lovers. *On 19 November next year 645 Aussie seamen are going to go down with the Sydney if we can't get this right.*

I slowly closed the door behind me, and walked to the chair we had been using. I sat down and closed my eyes, as if I were going to have a snooze on the sofa after having done a hard day at university. I always snoozed for a half-hour – almost to the minute. Amazing.

Step 1: Find a comfortable and suitable position and become relaxed and settled. Get into a position that you will be able to maintain easily for the time you are going to hypnotise yourself. Centre yourself, just looking in front of you. Breathe slowly easily and very, very regularly. Relax. Relax.

Okay, I think I have that under control. Just as if I'm lying back on the sofa for a short snooze.

Step 2: Concentrate on the length of time you intend to spend in this state. Make a mental statement to yourself about how long you intend this self-hypnosis to last.

Gently now. Clear my mind, close my eyes. I'm concentrating. Think about my colleagues back at uni.

Much more relaxed now, and having rid my mind of any extraneous thoughts, I proceed to go through the other eight steps, slowly. It seemed to be working. But, as I emerged through the door, she was looking at me expectantly.

'Well?'

'Close. But no cigar!' I answered in what must have been a disappointed tone. 'I think I was being too conscious of what I was doing.'

She put her arms around me, and gave me a gentle kiss.

'But we are making progress, darling. We need to remember what we're doing here is something that would only take a visit or two to some shrink on Adelaide's North Terrace.'

'Exactly. How many people here in 1940 Sydney are practising self-hypnosis?' I said. 'We've given ourselves a huge task.'

'But one, nevertheless, we must master, if we're to save the *Sydney*.'

'Look at this!' Joske spluttered to his two subordinates. He was thumping his index finger on a GPO telegram flimsy. It read: *HMAS Sydney* – successful action against the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July.

Sitting on the opposite side of the small wooden table in the centre of their small office on Garden Island were Sub-Lieutenant Ross MacAlister and Sub-Lieutenant Raymond Lester. Of course, the latter had been fully briefed on what had thus far transpired in this seemingly very strange case.

There was a moment's silence as they looked at each other. How could this be, for God's sake?

'With respect, sir, may I say what I understand about the story behind this case,' Lester asked.

'Go ahead, Lester,' Joske invited.

Lester took a deep breath.

'As I understand it, back in late April, these two enemy aliens – or Nazi agents – attempt to make contact with one of our ratings on the *Sydney* during a train journey from Mt Victoria to Sydney Central. They show him a whole-crew photograph of the *Sydney*, following a successful action against the Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July – twelve weeks following the contact on the train. Impossible, I say, sir.'

'Yes, of course, it's impossible, Lester,' Joske snapped back. 'We know that's the case, for God's sake. What have you got to say?'

For Joske, I suspect, Lester had a damned good investigative mind, and appeared never to be swayed by any emotion. But at times he simply annoyed Joske, and Joske could never put his finger on exactly why. Often, he showed socially and emotionally inappropriate behaviour. Sometimes he would have limited interest or total preoccupation with a subject. But, clearly the former wasn't the case in relation to these two enemy aliens they were now discussing.

I guess, for Joske, Lester had other social problems. He seemed to have problems with subtle modes of communication. And he seemed to have a complete lack of empathy for others. He was bloody inflexible in his thinking. In fact, Joske likened him to a bloodhound: once he had his mind set on something, almost nothing would change

it. He was just bloody frustrating to work with at times. But it was his inflexibility and rigid thinking that got right up Joske's nose – that, and his manifest fear of change, and a delight in the sameness in daily routines. He was prepared to forgive him for his clumsy and uncoordinated motor movements because of his exceptionally sharp and analytical mind. Indeed, what Joske didn't know was that fifty years later, Lester's personality and behaviour would be labelled as his having Aspergers symptoms. Joske simply labelled him an eccentric, or a square peg in a round hole.

Lester had gone to the right school for his Navy career – The Kings School at Parramatta. Life had not been easy for him there, despite the strict routines he so dearly cherished. The other kids had bullied hell out of him. But here now in the Navy he had found the best friend he had ever had – MacAlister.

Joske had been distracted for a moment as he looked at Lester, and momentarily had considered his character and worth. Let's get our attention back to these damned spies ... saboteurs ... or whatever they are.

'Okay, Lester. We know these aliens showed the rating a photograph of the *Sydney*, following a successful action against the Italian cruiser twelve weeks later. We know this is simply impossible. Impossible! That, plus the weird stuff they apparently have in the Bower Lane flat – particularly the communication devices, the camera, the tablets, and the photograph of the St Andrew's memorial service for the crew of the *Sydney*. These make them number one candidates for the category of highly dangerous enemy aliens,' Joske said with a solemn tone. 'But exactly when do we have the CIB arrest them; that's our critical question?'

'Yes, sir', MacAlister said. 'There's obviously more of these nasties scattered throughout the country.'

Joske looked at the other two for a moment.

'We have all known pro-Nazi sympathisers under twenty-four-hour surveillance, and we're already starting to intern the worst of them. As soon as these two make any effort to contact them, we'll know.'

'But what about the secret communication devices they have in their Bower Lane flat?' Lester asked. 'How will we ever know when they're communicating with the pro-Nazis in the country? And there's surely enough of them.'

'When you get some smart ideas about that, let me know, Lester.'

Joske had a frown across his forehead the like of which, I suspect, the other two had never before seen.

'What do you think is the exact nature of their mission, sir?' Lester asked.

'It could only be the sabotage of the *Sydney* ... or something much bigger,' Joske said with a troubled expression. 'For the time being, I think we just follow them and wait. We have to be sure we get them all, however many that might be. So, you're going to have some sleepless nights and good old-fashioned surveillance to do, gentlemen.'

Chapter 23

We were growing used to the little mechanical idiosyncrasies of the Dodge: the gear stick on the right-hand side of the steering column, the headlight dimmer switch on the floor, the clutch shaft that disappeared through the floor of the vehicle, the poor quality headlights, the heavy steering and so on.

We also had become aware of one very acute shortcoming. No climate control here. It had been freezing in the snowy conditions. So we had gone off to Hordens and bought travelling rugs, almost a thing of the past in 2012 Australian households.

'Perhaps, we should be taking some hot water bottles as well,' she joked.

I gave a little laugh.

'It may not be such a bad idea.'

At the break of day, rugged up in heavy pullovers and overcoats, we made our way out of the flat to the kerb where the Dodge was parked, unlocked it, settled into the front seat under our travel blankets, and pulled our enamelled hot water bottles in close to us.

Harriet smiled at me, turned on the ignition switch, fiddled around with the choke for a few minutes, and hit the red ignition button. The massive straight six cylinders with a displacement 217.8 cubic inches, and giving out 87 brake horsepower, burst into life. She turned on the headlights, and let out the clutch as she began to gun the engine, as she took the Dodge down Bower Lane.

Neither of us noticed the red Morris 1200 van with Postmaster General's Department printed across both sides that was parked down the street a little. In the back of the van was a small mattress where a young man in blue overalls snoozed while his colleague sat in the driver's seat, with his head against the fogged-up side window tightly wound up because of the cold.

* * *

Sydney's first traffic lights had been installed at the intersection of Market and Kent streets back in October 1933. But even now, driving along George Street onto

Broadway, and then onto Parramatta Road in August 1940, a driver wouldn't encounter any traffic lights after those at the Harris Street intersection. We were entering Church Street Parramatta, with the irritation of the traffic lights now far behind us.

'Father always says that as they improved the road over the Blue Mountains during the 1990s, the travelling time from Sydney to Twin Rivers has increased,' she said, in a chirpy mood, clearly elevated by the thought of what lay ahead of us.

'Those damned traffic lights may have gone, but in their place came speed restrictions,' I murmured in reply. 'But none of that now, darling.'

Indeed, travelling in the winter of 1940, there were few speed restrictions on the Great Western Highway. The morning fog had lifted and winter's sun was coming in through our rear window, warming the interior of the Dodge as we motored out along the highway. There were paddocks on either side of us immediately to the west of Parramatta and a few poultry farms and market gardens, grazing paddocks with a few sheep, but mostly beef cattle. *What a difference seventy years makes.* I had to remind myself that here in Sydney there were barely a million people; in 2012, its population would be pushing five million, and most of them west and south-west of Sydney.

Soon we were driving through the small village of Penrith on the banks of the Nepean River at the foothills of the Blue Mountains. I looked up ahead towards the mountains. A misty fog appeared to be coming in. I looked to her, and was about to say something mundane about the approaching weather, when I noticed her repeatedly glancing in the rear vision mirror, the only mirror on the car: a small one above the windscreen.

'What are you looking at?'

'I swear that red Morris van has been following us since we left Sydney. I think I first noticed it at Mosman, soon after we crossed the Spit Bridge, for God's sake.'

'Pull over and see if it passes us,' I suggested.

Given the small amount of traffic on the road, pulling over wasn't a problem. The van slowly passed us, the faces of the driver and the passenger barely visible, heavy woollen caps pulled down to their ears. We watched it slow down, and take a left-hand turn – no indicators in these days – and disappear down a side street in a part of the Lower Blue Mountains called Lapstone.

She looked at me with a worried expression.

'I'll drive slowly, and see what it does.'

By Springwood, only about five miles ahead of where we saw the van pull into the side street, Harriet looked to me with an alarmed expression. She had been driving with one eye on the rear vision mirror.

'They're back,' she cursed. 'Bloody hell!'

But the misty fog had intensified. The PMG van – maybe – needed to be closer on our tail if it was going to keep us in sight. We had no way of knowing for sure, of course, because by now all we could make out was a set of headlights about fifty yards behind. What now?

We crawled along, with our headlights on low beam. Slowly, we passed through the sleepy, fog-enshrouded towns of the Blue Mountains: Leura, Katoomba, Medlow Bath, Blackheath. There was just an occasional dull street light. Soon, we would be in Mt Victoria. But the mist and fog might just work to our advantage, we thought.

When we reached Mt Victoria, she turned right along the gravel road connecting Mt Victoria with the township of Bell. Down the road about a mile was the Fuhi time-slip platform. We had walked along this road three times before, and were reasonably sure where the bush track led off to the sandstone platform we were seeking.

About a half-mile from the track, she turned off the lights and, when the track appeared in the thick eucalypt bush on our left, she deftly steered into it. Anxiously, I was looking out the passenger window, and saw what appeared to be the red Morris van, now with its lights turned off, drive down the gravel road. *Yes, we'll have enough time.*

We locked the doors, and scurried down the bush track the two or three hundred metres to Fuhi's time-slip platform. As we did so, we were forcing ourselves to a state of relaxation, blocking any thoughts of anybody chasing us. It was easier said than done, but the thought of our approaching adventure seemed to suppress any anxiety we might have felt about being followed. Besides, it now all seemed okay. But we knew we needed at least twenty to thirty minutes to prepare ourselves for self-hypnosis. Just before we did, I had the presence of mind to check my wristwatch which showed it had just turned 12 30 pm.

* * *

'We've lost them!' Lester hissed, peering out through the passenger's side window which he had wound down in an attempt to gain as much vision as possible through the mist and fog.

'It seems to be getting thicker,' MacAlister moaned, as he braked the van. 'I'm turning this thing around.'

'Slowly,' Lester said. 'I'm looking for tracks off into the scrub.'

He had his side window down too, and was peering through the mist, towards the side of the road and into the eucalypt scrub.

'Yes, they must have left some tracks on this damp, gravel road. But where?'

'We'll find them,' Lester replied in a confident tone, his tenacious trait showing through.

MacAlister drove slowly, and at least twenty minutes had passed when Lester saw some recently made tyre tracks leading into a side track on the right-hand side of the road.

'I bet that's them,' he snarled.

'Okay, let's go.'

They each took out their holstered .455 Webley revolver from under the seat.

'This could get nasty,' MacAlister groaned, as Lester and he quickly snapped open their firearms, checking to see if they were fully loaded.

'You can bet they're armed – and with Lugers, you'll see,' Lester said as they set off down the track.

Within minutes, I imagine, they could see us standing, motionless on the sandstone platform, holding each other's hands. They each took a few steps towards us. Then they were shaken with sheer astonishment.

That's damned impossible!

'Christ!' Lester said in sheer amazement. 'They're bloody well gone.'

'Where?' MacAlister cried out, rushing down the track to where they had last seen the two figures.

'They've disappeared into thin air!' Lester said in utter disbelief.

Chapter 24

For days on end, we had practised self-hypnosis, and when we had mastered it, our goal was to concentrate on Sydney's St Andrews Cathedral, as Fuhi Barsden had done in concentrating on Mt Victoria's Imperial Hotel to visit her beloved Caleb a century or so ago.

With the old disused burial ground to its north, and brickfields and markets nearby, for Harriet and me, the rear grounds of St Andrew's Cathedral were a dreary and rundown place. Not the kind of place we would normally take a walk to. We had visited the place many times so that we would each have a strong mental image of where we needed to concentrate our thoughts for our hypnosis.

I felt dizzy and disorientated, but we were still holding hands as we attempted to adjust to our new environment, and try to make sense of where we actually were. I'm sure we were blinking like owls, being suddenly hit with a very bright sunlight. I dropped a small coloured stone, ensuring we would return to this same spot when we needed to return to Mt Victoria on 16 August 1940.

'I think we've done it,' she said in a faltering voice. 'I think we're at the rear of St Andrews.'

I looked to Harriet. Her eyes were watering with emotion. She returned my gaze and smiled and, as she did so, squeezed my hand.

'Fuhi Barsden has shown us the way. Her greatness still touches Australian society.'

'Through you, her granddaughter many times removed,' I murmured lovingly.

'Come on,' she smiled. 'Don't become too sentimental.'

During the days before we had visited the place, Harriet had told me what she knew about the cathedral. Designed by Edmund Blacket, the renowned colonial architect, it is an excellent pocket-handkerchief-sized version of older European relations. Its architecture is a pleasant Gothic Revival style in Sydney freestone of the late Colonial and Early Victorian periods.

Harriet had explained this to me and I was surprised to see how this was so: that the building stands with its back to George Street with its main door and its dominant spires

fronting onto Sydney Square. She also said there was supposed to be a street here, but by the time this building was finished in the 1860s, that idea had disappeared. Where we were standing, seventeen months after we had left Fuhi's time-slip pad, we were really facing what was meant at one stage in the cathedral's history, to be its front. But, as it was, when we had visited it back in early August last year, it was a truly beautiful sandstone building. Today, as the sound of church music became more accentuated, it was becoming increasingly clear to me that this wonderful building of God was filled with grief and intense sadness.

Holding hands, we walked towards the cathedral. It quickly became obvious there were thousands of people gathered here this afternoon, indeed, an ocean of grieving people, standing shoulder-to-shoulder as Australians, touched by one of the great tragedies of a world at war – a world quickly sinking into insanity and terror. And, for Australians, although these people here did not know it, a world where Australians would become increasingly isolated and desperate. There was much more bad news to come.

'This is about as close as we're going to get,' she said.

We were standing next to a middle-aged couple and two teenagers, most likely their daughters. I reminded myself, that in public I must use the phrase young people – young man or young woman – because the term teenager had not yet become a part of the Australian language.

I smiled at the small group, but they barely noticed my presence, they were so filled with grief. Clearly, the eldest son, or some other family member, had gone down with the *Sydney*. I looked around the milling, grief-stricken mass of humanity. I had never encountered anything like this. I attempted to concentrate on the sound of the organ music. I recognised Bach's *In Deepest Need My God*. This was tragedy on a scale I could never have imagined.

Again, I attempted to gain the attention of a member of the group with the two teenage girls. Momentarily, I caught the woman's attention.

'Your son?' I asked.

'Our nephew,' came the miserable reply.

'Direct family will be seated in the cathedral,' Harriet reminded me. *Yes, of course, but with so many, the cathedral will be overflowing with them.*

The organist – I remember now from the photo of the Memorial Service Form and Order is Mr TW Beckett – now played Attwood's *Solemn Prelude*.

I was still holding Harriet's hand, and she was squeezing mine tight with emotion. Tears were dripping down her cheeks.

'We can prevent this,' she sobbed. 'It's in our power. Fuhi has given us this power. It's meant to be, Peter. We can't waste what she has destined for us.'

I believed she was right, but just how we were going to execute this was, for me, becoming increasingly blurred.

Now came Mendelssohn's Choral Prelude *Our Father* from Beckett's deft touch on the organ.

Perhaps, I was simply more clinical than Harriet, my emotions more analytical, but I wanted to understand and comprehend the whole scene. Of course, I suspected she was attempting the same, but through a level of emotion that I was not experiencing. My eyes were watering, but her tears were flowing in a manner I could never have imagined in her. Truly, she's a beautiful human being, and her finer sensibilities shamed me. She must truly be the reincarnation of Fuhi Barsden.

As a naval band struck up with the opening voluntary, I found myself staring at the cathedral. The exterior had weathered to a mellow, warm brown colour, adding to the rich texture created by delicate Gothic windows. I continued looking at the building, upwards to its well-proportioned towers, buttressing, the multiplicity of decorated pinnacles, and the slate main roof. As I did so, I could sense my emotions tearing at me. I looked again to Harriet's face. I was immersed in a cauldron of emotion, the like of which I had never imagined possible.

Then came the hymn from the choir:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure:
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure ...

I looked to Harriet to indicate the aptness of the hymn. She squeezed my hand to acknowledge what I was thinking.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.
O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be Thou our guard while life shall last
And our eternal home. Amen.

The two teenagers next to us now had their arms wrapped around their parents. They were all sobbing uncontrollably – a life taken from them, and the words of the hymn explaining the sheer mystery of it all, as if in God's words. No wonder there would be a shelf full of books published on this tragedy for decades to come.

Now, there was some silence. I could hear a voice – most likely that of Archbishop Howard Mowall – being projected across the masses:

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God Whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.

I was aware of myself staring at the cathedral's stained glass windows – beautiful things, their beauty accentuated by my deepening emotional state. Tears were streaming down my face now. Then came Psalm 24:

God is our hope and strength ...

Though the waters there of rage and swell: and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same ...

And so the service continued – lesson, anthem, address, hymn, the Lord's Prayer, the blessing, National Anthem and finally the Last Post was sounded with huge emotion.

Why did it have to be? History is madness, sheer chaos: little men – Hitlers – beating at doors, shouting their madness to the world, demanding to be heard. Madness, hideous madness, surely. Nothing rational. Nothing pre-determined, just mad people demanding a voice: nations of disgruntled, ambitious people, lacking in any moral standards – people on all sides. There are no rights or wrongs.

But what if ...? But what if Harriet and I can bring these men safely home, and have this terrible chapter torn from our history books, reversing the generations of grieving and personal tragedy – the Swabys, and so many others – those who have suffered intolerably, simply because of this one tragedy.

I closed my eyes, shuddering with the stark thought of the fact that here now at St Andrew's Cathedral, we were only three days away from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

I took her hand and we turned to look for our little coloured stone.

Chapter 25

'We were away for less than five minutes,' I said as I regained my senses and looked to my watch. 'That's how long it took to hypnotise ourselves and get into the time-slip.'

I looked to Harriet who was shaking her head in disbelief. But I knew she had something else on her mind.

'Who do you think those two men were?' Harriet asked, as I gunned the Dodge back down the gravel road towards Mt Victoria and the Great Western Highway.

The fog was beginning to lift, and I leant forward and turned off the headlights.

'I thought I noticed they were each carrying a revolver. Did you notice that?'

'No.' I was still feeling a little dizzy. 'But there can be no question about it. They must be military security people of some kind. Possibly the New South Wales Police, the people who have been tailing us lately. I was too dizzy to get a good look at their faces, but thinking about it again, they just seemed young – different from the New South Wales Police.'

'Mmm.'

'I just think we're about to feel the weight of the 1939 National Security Act come down on us.'

'What do you think we should do?'

'I suspect if they were going to arrest us, they would have done just that back on the bush track.'

'Yes, perhaps so. So what exactly do we do now?'

'I think we have some time on our side. I once researched and wrote an article on wartime interment and the abuse of the 1939 National Security Act. It's still on my laptop somewhere. I need to re-read it and try to fathom out exactly what we're up against.'

'Okay, Dr St Claire. That's our task when we get back to Bower Lane. I want to know what my possible future accommodation is going to be like.'

* * *

'I can't believe this!'

He was thumping his index finger – which was becoming a familiar habit – on the photographs of Harriet and Peter.

'Can you repeat what you have just said,' he demanded glaring at MacAlister and Lester.

'We both witnessed it, sir, although it was a little foggy,' Lester stated emphatically.

'I'd swear on it with my life,' MacAlister said in a tone that was meant to reinforce his colleague's seemingly bizarre statement.

'So let's get this story straight,' Joske said slowly and purposefully. 'You followed them on the Great Western Highway to Mt Victoria and then they turned off on the Bell Road. Is that correct?'

'Yes, sir,' they replied in unison.

'Then you lost them as they apparently turned off on a bush track?'

'Exactly, sir.'

'But you quickly retraced your way back up the gravel road, until you discovered where they had turned off?'

'Yes, sir.'

'You walked down the track, and discovered them standing on a rock platform, apparently in a dazed, listless state, you said?'

'Then in a blink of an eye, they were gone – disappeared for God's sake!'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then you both took two or three steps towards the rock platform where you had last seen them, and whizzo, they're back, rubbing their eyes and walking past you as if you didn't exist, and in a zombie-like state?'

'That's the way it was, sir. I swear it,' Lester stated.

'Heavens above, man. This is madness.' Joske was incredulous, speechless.

Lester was nodding his head in agreement with what MacAlister had just stated.

'Put it all in your report, Lieutenant. I'll need to talk with Commander Hawken about all of this. This is bloody serious stuff!'

'With respect, sir, just how serious?' MacAlister asked in a troubled tone.

'No doubt, you've been reading the press on the Nazi invasion of Western Europe?'

'Yes, sir,' MacAlister said.

'The Netherlands in four days!' Joske was almost breathless with emotion. 'The Germans put paid to a country the size of The Netherlands in just four days. No doubt, you've heard the stories about the Nazi's alleged secret weapons?'

'Of course, sir.'

Again, they answered in unison, with expressions similar to the nodding heads of the clowns at sideshow alley at the Royal Easter Show.

'Well, it just might be that we have one of those secret weapons ... or at least the agent of the secret weapon ... here in Bower Lane Manly right at this very moment.'

'Yes, sir.'

'Go and write up your report. I want it on my desk by the end of the day.'

'Yes, sir.'

MacAlister and Lester stood and took the few short steps to their small wooden desks on the windowless side of the office.

Chapter 26

Commander Jock Hawken had come to his new post from being second in command of the sloop *HMAS Swan*. It was a rapid promotion. During the last few months, Naval Command was fast placing itself on a proper war footing, and taking events in Europe very seriously indeed.

Hawken had a decided rural gait, as well he might – he had been brought up on a sheep and wheat property at Condobolin in Western New South Wales – and his speech was drawled.. He had gone to school at Scots College in Bellevue Hill in Sydney's eastern suburbs, a traditional naval school, and probably the best preparation school for the Navy in Australia. He went on to top his year at naval college. He was one smart young man. But he was ultra ambitious. With a big war brewing in the Pacific, for him this was a posting whereby he could make his mark and pick up a more substantial command – a warship.

He seemed to know as much as anybody in the Navy about what was happening in Western Europe. But news was very slow. Not surprisingly, now, as Captain Frank Joske sat in front of his desk, and spoke to this report Joske was submitting to him, his senses were highly sharpened. The presence of these foreign agents in Sydney, and God only knows where else in the country, added a completely new dimension to his new role.

'You say both the foreign agents disappeared in the blink of an eye – vanished for God's sake – as your two men were observing them. In the bush, up at Mt Victoria? Then reappeared several minutes later, only to walk past your men, as if zombies, stymied by some kind of damned spell!'

Hawken was staring at Joske, demanding some form of explanation.

'Exactly, sir,' Joske sighed. 'You will notice in my report, I do propose two principal queries: one, exactly what were the agents doing in the bush near Mt Victoria and two, what is the real nature of their sudden disappearance and reappearance.'

'First,' Hawken said in his slow rural drawl, 'what do you think about this disappearance–reappearance business?'

'You will notice, sir, when you have time to read my report more thoroughly, I allude to the circumstances when these foreign agents first came to our attention.'

'I haven't as yet read that, Joske. Tell me about it.'

'These two agents, or more accurately enemy aliens – at the moment we only suspect they are agents – approached one of our ratings from the *Sydney* while on a train from Mt Victoria to Sydney Central. They — '

'Mt Victoria ... again ... Joske! Why Mt Victoria? What's its significance? I've been through the place dozens of times. There's barely anybody living there.'

'Of course, sir, I had noted that in my report. We don't know the answer to that as yet, sir.'

'Go on,' Hawken said, obviously becoming intrigued with this case.

'They approached the rating with a photograph of the officers and crew of the *Sydney*, following her successful action against the Italian cruiser, *Bartolomeo* on 19 July 1940. The photograph showed officers and crew crowded on the deck and standing in the rigging.'

'I recall seeing the same photograph,' Hawken said flatly. 'What's the significance of that?'

'It was shown to the rating *before* the *Sydney* ever sailed for the Mediterranean, sir.'

'Impossible!'

'Perhaps, but it's in the report, sir. This, coupled with a photograph, a very worrying photograph – the *Sydney* CIB obtained when they searched the enemy aliens' flat in Manly again is of some future occurrence – of a memorial service held at St Andrew's Cathedral for the officers and men of the *Sydney*, dated 4 December 1941.'

Joske looked to his commanding officer, who was shaking his head in disbelief.

'We now know the photograph celebrating the successful action against the *Bartolomeo* has become reality. Could it just be the photograph of the supposed memorial service for the *Sydney*, might just have the same outcome?'

Hawken was staring at Joske in disbelief.

'Sir, I'm sure you'll agree we have more than the simple issue of two alleged enemy aliens here in Sydney. This might well be all about a very real threat to our naval vessels ... and not just the *Sydney* ... but possibly all of our capital ships.'

Joske sat in silence for a second or two, as he studied Hawken's reaction.

'So, you're also connecting these photographs of the events in the future with what your men say about how these agents simply disappeared before their very eyes, and reappeared seconds later?'

'Yes, sir – that together with these photographs taken of objects in their flat. The communication devices are of particular worry.'

'Yes, there'd obviously be more of them in the country,' Hawken said, shaking his head. 'Do we know any more about them? Is there any indication ... any clue ... of where they might be manufactured.'

'They have a manufacturing date of 2011, designed in California by some company called Apple, and wait for it – assembled in China. The camera was manufactured in Japan.'

'That's obviously some kind of ruse,' Hawken stated confidently in a dismissive voice. 'China produces rice full stop. So we can forget that.'

'The plain fact is, sir, that the bloody Germans appear to have weapons, the like of which we have never imagined. We have some terrible presence here in Sydney.'

'Oh, I'm sure there's no doubt about that. Look what they have been able to achieve in Western Europe in just a matter of a few weeks. Britain is on its knees. Dunkirk may well have been a miracle, but between you and me, Joske, they're going to need a great deal more of those if they are to prevent Hitler tearing down the place and walking all over us.'

'Exactly, sir. Churchill might refer to Dunkirk as a 'miracle of deliverance', but I'm afraid they're going to need a great deal more of those.'

Hawken continued shaking his head.

'And what happens to Australia ... New Zealand ... Canada ... South Africa?'

'Well, I wouldn't worry too much about South Africa, sir. You'll notice in my report that people interviewed about these agents refer to their South African accent. If I could offer my opinion, sir, I'd say that half of South Africa is already lining up behind the Nazis.'

'Yes, perhaps, Joske. But our concern is here and now with these enemy agents. I think we can only assume they're here with secret weapons, the like of which we can only imagine.'

Joske was shaking his head, clearly horrified with the prospect of what lay ahead.
What else could there be?

'And,' Hawken continued in his rural drawl, clearly anxious, 'their target is our Navy. Destroy that, and what else is there to prevent a complete German conquest of British and Dutch territories in the Asia-Pacific?'

'The Americans, sir?'

'There's no sign of them rushing into the war. I tell you, Joske ... and quite confidentially ... Australia is in a heap of trouble.'

'How do we proceed with the enemy agents, sir?'

'Just make sure we have every single one of their movements under observation. Contact the CIB, and have them issue warnings to their counterparts in other Australian states.'

Chapter 27

'Okay, Dr St Claire, we need that article of yours on wartime interment and the abuse of the 1939 National Security Act,' she said in an anxious voice as we locked the doors on the Dodge, and wrapped it up in its all-weather canvas covering.

We rushed to the front door and, once through, we quickly checked to see if we had been visited. We couldn't find anything to suggest we had. So, I quickly opened up my laptop. I had only recently purchased this one, and I'd had all my files transferred over from my previous MacBook Pro. I hadn't looked at the file on the 1939 National Security Act and wartime internment, and I was praying that it wouldn't be corrupted in any way. *But, hell, I have to find the thing, first.*

'I think we all need a good lesson on file management,' she said. 'Let's get on and find this article. I need to know what sort of bed I'll be sleeping in, if these sleuths decide to arrest us as enemy aliens.'

A half-hour later, I had found the file I was searching for: Australia's 1939 National Security Act and Wartime Internment.

'The Jewish Museum in Sydney contracted me to do some research on all of this back about four or five years ago,' I explained as I opened up the file, and began to scan its contents. 'A good deal of it had to do with the *Dunera* Boys.'

'Oh, I've heard of them, but jog my memory,' she invited.

'Yes. Their treatment actually provides a good example of the handling of enemy aliens under the Australia's 1939 National Security Act.

'Yes, go on and explain it all to a history-deprived girl such as myself.'

'In July 1940, the Menzies Government agreed to accept six thousand internees from the 'old country'. However, only one shipment ever was dispatched to Australia – on board the *HMT Dunera*. There were —'

'HMT?'

'Yes, Hired Military Transport.'

'Oh, we learn something new every day.'

'Okay, there were about two thousand male German Jewish refugees aboard aged between 16 and 45. They had escaped from Nazi occupied territories. Also on board were 200 Italian POWs and 250 Nazi POWs.'

'That's a nice blend! They were separated, I presume?'

'No, they were not. In fact, there were close to three thousand people packed on the *Dunera* on her voyage through to Australia.'

'I bet there were more than a few skirmishes!'

'There certainly were. The voyage lasted fifty-seven days. The conditions were absolutely appalling, not to mention the terrible political animosity between the various groups on board. And apart from overcrowding on the ship, there were problems with hygiene, particularly in the tropics.'

'And, I suppose, the constant threat of a torpedo attack from submarines.'

'Exactly, but when I interviewed the few remaining *Dunera* Boys still alive and in Australia, all complained about the harsh treatment crew members had dished out to them. It seems the crew members were incapable of distinguishing between Jewish refugees, and the Nazis and Fascist POWs.'

I paused for a moment. I must have had a surprised expression.

'What have you just thought of?' she asked.

'The *Dunera* is due into Sydney on 6 September!'

'That's next week.'

'Yes, it is. Of course, there's nothing in the press or on the radio about her expected arrival. But somewhere in this article I've written, I'm sure it's recorded that it berthed mid-morning at Pyrmont. Of course, that fact was never in the media. The survivors told me that. I must check on it.'

'We should be there when it does.'

'We will be.'

'So, where did the *Dunera* boys finish up?'

'All over the place – from one internment camp to another, and not always under very pleasant circumstances. The 2063 German and Austrian Jews were mostly in the same camp, and often with the 451 Nazis and Fascists.'

'What was the background of the Jews?'

I was searching for the subheading.

'They were mostly professionals who had simply fled for their lives,' I explained. 'Among them were Franz Stampfl, later the athletics coach to the four-minute-mile runner, Roger Bannister; Wolf Klaphake, the inventor of synthetic camphor; the tenor Erich Liffmann; artists Heinz Henghes, Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack and Erwin Fabian; art historians, Franz Phillipp and Ernst Kitzinger; and the photographers, Henry Talbot and Hans Axel. Also on board were theoretical physicist Hans Buchdahl and his engineer, and later, philosopher brother, Gerd; Alexander Gordon – known then as Abrascha Gorbulski – who appeared in the documentary *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport*; and Walter Freud, the famous grandson of Sigmund Freud.'

'Good heavens! They must have gone from one hell in the Third Reich to another in Australia.'

I smiled at her mixed use of figurative language.

'You're so right. They were first interned in Hay and in Orange in New South Wales. Eventually they were brought to Tatura in Victoria.'

'Where they could be used in fruit picking, no doubt?'

'Yes, that was the obvious reason. But there were conditions.'

'Such as?'

'Enemy aliens had to be paid something and POWs worked out of the goodness of their hearts.'

'Remind me again, exactly where were these camps or, should I say, exactly where *are* they?'

'Bearing in mind, the Australian Government didn't always distinguish very clearly between enemy aliens and POWs, these camps were placed all around the state and, of course, in other states. But in New South Wales the principal camps were Hay, where they had two – one for POWs and another for enemy aliens. There was a temporary holding camp at Orange. An important one was at Cowra, which housed both POWs and enemy aliens. Others were at Yanco and Liverpool. Existing prisons were sometimes used – Bathurst and Long Bay. Even the Peat's Island Civil Reformatory on the Hawkesbury River was used.'

'So where do you think they'll put us?'

'That's a serious question. It's clear they're on our tail. Do you want to go back to 2012, while you can? We could be spending the remainder of this bloody war in some rotten internment camp.'

'That, the camp, would be a dire butterfly effect, wouldn't it?' she said with a grim voice.

'Mmm.'

The terrible possibilities of the various butterfly effects were beginning to be obvious.

'I'm staying to do what I can for those poor miserable souls whose sons and other relatives went down with the *Sydney* – the ones we saw the other day at St Andrew's. What about you?'

I looked at her. I was smiling at her gutsy attitude.

Chapter 28

Early on the morning of 6 September, we took the first ferry across to town. There was a definite touch of spring in the air, and this showed on the faces of the passengers, all of whom, I imagine, were growing weary of war news from England.

Although the heavily censored news from London concerning The Battle of Britain really told us very little here in Australia, Sydneysiders anxiously read their morning and evening editions of the newspapers, as they searched for any reliable scrap of news. Clearly, for them, Britain was in heaps of serious trouble, and the old British Empire was undergoing rapid change. But the British propaganda was thorough, and I could sense many people – mostly the *Sydney Morning Herald* or the *Daily Telegraph* – believed what they were reading.

As Harriet and I studied the people on the crowded *Curl Curl* that morning, I remembered my old History 301 course and old Professor Michael Rose at the University of Tasmania. Our Australian newspapers were telling us of the great challenges facing Britain from Nazi Germany: a fight of good against evil, and inexorably the forces of good championing over the dark forces. Of course, as is usually the case in wars, this was simply not necessarily the case. But, nevertheless, Churchill and his commanders, despite huge losses in manpower and aircraft, were holding their own in this strategic battle of the war. Today was 6 September, and although the newspapers would tell us nothing of this, people would learn much later that the phase of the battle in which the Luftwaffe had been targeting British airfields was about to turn to day attacks on British towns and cities.

The war was grinding on and, here in Sydney, this very morning, unbeknown to Sydneysiders, a British vessel finally had reached the safety of Sydney Harbour. And if any Sydneysiders knew of this, they could have wandered down to Pyrmont's Number 3 Wharf and seen for themselves some real live Nazis. There were Nazi POWs packed in beside Italian POWs, and Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria – two countries which now constituted the Third Reich.

As the *Curl Curl* berthed, I thought I caught a glimpse of the *Dunera* steaming in. Harriet had also spotted it.

'Come on, let's get over to Pyrmont,' she said excitedly as she took my hand and fell into the queue disembarking the ferry at Circular Quay.

Climbing up through Globe Street, through the steeply terraced buildings from the infamous docklands west of Sydney Cove through Sydney's notorious Rocks district, was quite an experience for us both, even in September 1940. In another century, sixty years into the future, we had known this as one of Sydney's principal tourist attractions. Indeed, young German backpackers, along with their fellow backpackers from all around the world, would mix with all kinds of tourists from all kinds of socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. By the year 2012, despite a very unfavourable exchange rate, they would be coming in hordes, clicking their digital cameras, and panning their digital video recorders, and consuming huge amounts of Australian culture and the general tourist experience, not to mention spending their overseas currency.

But here now, the stench from the roadside guttering was almost unbearable as we walked along Harrington Street, and then into Gloucester Street. Only a few decades ago, there had been Chinese rookeries: establishments situated almost out on the street where the vile odours of fish-curing operations took place under verandas of houses. Even today I found I was putting my hand over my mouth and nose. But the stench was from diesel and petrol engines, and other foul odours, possibly from blocked sewerage drains. But there was also the overpowering smell of the nearby coal-fired Pyrmont Power Station belching thick black smoke from its four huge stacks.

We then headed down Gloucester Street to the wharf area. As we walked through Millers Point and into Hickson Road, the stench intensified. Surrounded by a vast number of large and small factories, this section of Sydney's industrial waterfront, with its wharves, shipbuilding yards, factories and woolstores, was almost Dickensian in appearance, and I'm sure it was Dickensian in the lives of many of its young inhabitants. Moored in Darling Harbour was a mass of filthy coastal and Asian-Pacific steamers. Along the waterfront, were the tightly packed bondstores and warehouses, and neat rows of whitewashed little cottages with their trim small gardens. A few thousand residents still lived in this part of town.

I looked down the harbour. We could see some activity at Number 3 Wharf.

'Here she comes, Harriet,' I said.

The *Dunera* was steaming into Darling Harbour. The vehicles on the jetty were covered-in, dark green military Ford trucks. I think 'lorries' was the term currently in use.

We got as far as a little paved area which in 2012 I reckon was a part of the Sydney Aquarium.

'We're not going to get any closer,' she said.

'True.'

I could see the military presence quickly building up.

We found some old wooden packing cases to sit on, and settled back to watch the *Dunera* berth at Number 3 Wharf, which I reckoned was a little over fifty metres away. I imagined this was going to take some time.

Slowly there appeared to be some progress. A civilian, possibly an official or a medical person, scurried up the gangplank. Then, from where we sat, it appeared to be the Nazi POWs who were marched down the gangplank in single file up onto the canvas-covered backs of the Army Fords, perhaps twenty on each vehicle.

Sour-faced British troops were supervising all of this. At the trucks, I could now see two Australian soldier guards under the canvas, and another one beside the driver in the front of the truck.

I wished I had had some binoculars, as I tried to look to the faces of the young Nazis.

'They seem so young,' I murmured.

'Well, they are, aren't they? I'd imagine some would be no more than eighteen years old,' she answered. 'But they look just like young Australian boys.'

She now had her camcorder out, hidden under a large handkerchief, and was not losing a moment of all of this.

Of course, they were just young off-spring – swept up in something that was too enormous to comprehend. Perhaps some of them may have had some leanings towards Nazi ideology but, for the most, I imagine, they would have much preferred to have been with their loved ones, their mates, playing soccer, or whatever else was their inclination.

'In fact, these are the lucky ones,' she said. 'They're probably being saved from some cruel death in the ice and frozen mud at Stalingrad or Leningrad, or some other hell hole, dreamt up by Hitler and his cronies.'

'Yes, in three or four years, they'll come to realise that.'

'In fact, I think I have read that some of them opted to stay in Australia after the war,' she said.

'I think they did. Certainly more than nine hundred of the Jewish refugees chose to do so.'

'That's almost a half of them.'

We sat and watched the last of the German POWs being loaded onto the trucks. They all appeared a little jaded but, for most of them, they were holding their heads high, proud Germans swept up in a world of sheer madness, and it was about to get much, much worse. They were comparatively well-attired in their uniforms. After all, the war was only a year and a few days old. I wondered where these men were taken prisoner: most likely during the Norwegian campaign, where the British and the French enjoyed some early success, particularly in northern Norway. Elsewhere, the British and French POWs taken by the Germans must have outnumbered the Germans and Italians taken by the British. Although, I suspected the British had taken some POWs in the North African Campaign.

There were very few spectators here to observe the entry of the POWs and the Jewish refugees – maybe a dozen or so who just happened to be about when the ship berthed. And I doubted if many of these actually knew who these prisoners were.

Two of the Germans looked up towards Harriet and me. One fresh-faced youth waved; we returned his wave. Subconsciously, we were still people of the year 2012, and this maddening wartime mentality, and the sight of these poor fellow humans, hadn't quite registered in our subconscious.

Our waves were a mistake we would soon regret, as was Harriet's momentarily very visible camcorder. We continued sitting there on our wooden packing crates, watching the Italian POWs disembarking. They appeared a little brighter in outlook than did their Nazi axis partners. Indeed, many of them seemed quite excited about being in Australia, possibly where many of their friends and relatives had lived and worked for a generation or two in the sugar cane or fruit and vegetable industries.

By mid-afternoon the German Jewish refugees, labelled as enemy aliens, were beginning to single-file down the gangplank. Their destination was on special night trains that would take them through to Hay and Orange in New South Wales – both fruit-growing towns, where their labour would quickly be utilised.

Many would go on to join the 8th Employment Company and become proud and loyal Australian citizens. Among them I knew were the many intellectuals, economists and artists all of whom would make a significant contribution to the emerging multicultural Australian society. But having done so much research on these people, and having interviewed some of them in later age, I just wanted to catch a glimpse of their faces. Who knows? I may be able to recognise some.

I had interviewed Fritz and Hans deBusch – twins – and Franz Schmitt, as much older people, at one stage. I found I was keenly searching for what might appear to be twins filing off the ship. I assumed they'd be together. I thought I saw them, and as I did so, they looked up at me, obviously wondering who this person was, looking so closely at them. One of the brothers gave a little wave; I waved back. Another one of our terrible mistakes as we would soon come to realise.

Chapter 29

'I understand that the CIB agent who was tailing them took these, sir,' MacAlister gloated as he passed four photographs across the small wooden table to his superior officer.

Lester sat beside MacAlister with a worried expression.

'Damned amazing!' Joske exclaimed, shaking his head at what he saw.

(I later discovered they were photographs of me waving to some German and Austrian POWs and German Jews. There were also two photographs clearly showing Harriet with her camcorder pointing towards the German and Austrian POWs.)

'There's complete censorship on any news to the public about the arrival of the *Dunera*. How did they know when it was arriving? They would be the only civilians in all of Australia who would have known that. Of course, the others who were there observing the disembarkation of the prisoners were simply interested passers-by who had stumbled on the occasion. Hell, the two agents have come over from Manly especially for the event.'

'Well, that explains where the other Nazi agents are located in Australia,' MacAlister stated with some satisfaction. 'We've just brought three hundred of them into the country, and we have St Claire and Barsden, with all of their tricks, on the outside, roaming the country at will, obviously waiting to join up with Nazi prisoners.'

'And I'm not convinced about the supposed German and Australian Jews, the so-called enemy aliens who had supposedly fled to England to escape Hitler and his nasties,' Lester added. 'Just how do we know exactly where their loyalty lies?'

'Yes, it's all becoming clearer. I think we'll find their target is our own fleet, sir,' Lester said. 'To my mind, there's much more to St Claire and Barsden – or whatever their true identities might be – than meets the eye.'

'Yes, sir, of course we haven't got a clue of their true names and identity. But we can't just go and have the CIB arrest them at the moment,' Joske murmured. 'I need to talk with the 'old man' first. I understand there's some political issues with Barsden that need to be dealt with at a higher level.'

* * *

'Yes, this is damning evidence, alright, Joske. You're absolutely correct: we've just brought three hundred potential Nazi saboteurs into the country at no damned expense to Hitler!'

Hawken was shaking his head in apparent disbelief.

'And we're even feeding and housing the bastards for him! Hawken was rolling his eyes.

'Yes, obviously their target is our fleet.'

'What about the Barsden girl?' Joske asked.

'Big troubles there if we arrest her on a charge of being an enemy alien, I can assure you,' Hawken said. 'Detective Sergeant Bull McFawn and I have spoken several times about her. The Barsdens up at Twin Rivers claim her as one of their own, despite the fact her birth was never registered in any Australian state. And we know all about the political clout of the Barsdens. There has never been an Australian prime minister, or a state premier – from both bloody political parties – for decades who doesn't scramble off to Twin Rivers to pay due deference to that lot.'

'We mightn't be able to arrest her,' Joske said. 'But in her case, it's guilt by association, isn't it.'

'Exactly. It's within the Minister's powers to have her report to her nearest police station regularly each bloody week, so we can keep an eye on her. She's been bedding St Claire, a known enemy alien and suspected enemy agent; we have evidence of that so that's enough to keep her within our sights. The Minister has at least those powers under the National Security Act.'

Hawken's face was flushing with excitement, his rural drawl becoming more pronounced.

Joske seemed to be waiting for Hawken to regain his composure.

'In her interview with the two CIB men, Margaret Barsden had let it slip St Claire was from the University of Adelaide. Of course, we've checked that, and there's no record of a Dr Peter St Claire on their staff, or anyone by the name of St Claire, for that matter. Indeed, there're no birth records of a Peter St Claire in any Australian state. I

know there are many Australians who have no birth record, but it's very strange both these people have none.'

Hawken was shaking his head with anxiety and frustration.

'What's more, sir, they're both carrying drivers' licences: his, a South Australian one, and hers, a New South Wales,' Joske said with a grim face.

'And?'

'As you would suspect, sir, there's no record of either of their licences being issued – bloody forgeries!'

'Yes, damn it, man! Issue instructions for McFawn and his crew to arrest them immediately, and notify the Minister's office. We may just have opened a huge can of worms here.'

* * *

After the knocking on our front door had woken me, I scrambled out of bed and peeked out through the living room curtain. I really *was* expecting someone. I suspected the authorities would have been aware of our watching the refugees and POWs disembarking the *Dunera*.

Harriet and I had talked long about seeing this through. We had had our opportunity of scampering back to the comfort zone of 2012. But there was too much at stake here. The grief and sheer sorrow of those poor individuals at the St Andrews memorial service was something we'd never forget. And we knew we had a real chance of being able to save the *Sydney*, and do our little bit for the war effort. We had given much thought to our contingency plan if we were interned, or if one of us were. There was a chance Harriet, with her Barsden name, may not be interned. All rested on what we could do when the *Sydney* returned to Australian waters from the Mediterranean, and that was still some months away.

Besides, as I had often joked with her, from now on my lectures on life in wartime Australia, if I can ever return to 2012, would have added poignancy.

We both knew what to expect when the CIB came knocking at our door and, for sure, they ultimately did.

I rushed back to the bed.

'Wake up, darling, and get dressed. They're here.'

Two men stood grim-faced at our front steps.

'How can I assist you gentlemen?' I asked with a smile.

'Peter St Claire, we're detectives from the Sydney CIB,' Detective Rowe said.

They flashed their badges.

'We're arresting you under the authority of the National Security Act of 1939, as enemy agents. You'll accompany us to Headquarters. We'd like to ask you some questions.'

By this time, Harriet had pulled on her clothes and was standing beside me.

'I believe you should be using the label enemy aliens,' she said. 'Otherwise, I'm sure you'll need to explain to us exactly for whom we are acting as agents.'

Detective Van De Beer was obviously taken aback with such direct language coming from a female.

'I hope you have very sound evidence, otherwise my grandfather, Charles Barsden from Twin Rivers, whom I believe you have already met, will come down on you like a ton of bricks.'

The reaction from the two detectives was silence. Harriet didn't give them time.

'Get this right, gentlemen, otherwise, Grandfather, I promise you, will be knocking on more doors than a Rawleigh's salesman, and the doors he'll be knocking on will be in Parliament House in Canberra.'

I noticed the two detectives quickly glance at each other.

'We would like you to accompany us to CIB Headquarters to answer some questions,' Detective Rowe instructed, seemingly taking charge.

'And our belongings?' Harriet demanded.

'You may have the opportunity to come and collect those before —' Rowe was cut short mid-sentence.

'Before what?' Harriet demanded. 'Before you throw us into Long Bay?'

'Come with us!' Rowe demanded. 'Hold out your hands.'

We were handcuffed and led off to an old Police 1937 Ford Model C, parked behind our Dodge. We were pushed into the back seat as if common criminals.

* * *

At CIB Headquarters in Liverpool Street, Harriet was led away, and I was taken down a corridor. I was stood outside a door, while the two CIB officers checked inside and then I was taken in. Around the table sat two naval officers, their sleeves showing the rank of sub-lieutenant. The face of one of them was very familiar to me. *Hell, who is he? I know him for sure! Where? Where?* I began to rack my memory for some clue as to who he might be. *I'm sure I once knew him ... a very long time ago. Adelaide? Hobart?*

There were none of the legal protocols I had seen on television. I was sat in a chair, and the others stood around a wooden table looking over me, in the traditional police manner, the purpose being to psychologically intimidate me.

'Why were you at Pymont Number 3 Wharf on 6 September observing the *Dunera* unloading prisoners of war?' Rowe asked.

'Prisoners of war? I was under the impression that the 2542 detainees, all have been classified as enemy aliens. Is there not a very big difference between a POW and an enemy alien,' I demanded with feigned indignation.

'How much do you know about this ship?' Van De Beer insisted in his strong Dutch accent.

'Very little indeed, but I did watch the television movie *The Dunera Boys* which depicts the experiences of those unfortunate souls on board. This episode will become one of the great blights on our history, gentlemen.'

'What?' one of the naval officers asked – the one who I was sure I had known at sometime earlier in my life. 'What do you mean by television?'

Yes, I recognise that voice. Oh, God, where, where?

'It's a means of mass communication ... pictures transmitted over the airwaves ... similar to what you understand as radio.'

'I've seen it on the American movies,' Rowe said. He seemed to be in charge of the interrogation. 'But we'll come back to that,' he said in an authoritative tone. 'Exactly what do you know about this ship and her crew and —'

'And cargo of human misery,' I added.

This interrogation is proceeding just as I had hoped.

'Exactly what do you know?' the naval officer repeated.

'I know that when the POWs and so-called enemy aliens boarded the *Dunera* at Liverpool on 10 July, they included 200 Italian and 251 German POWs, as well as several dozen Nazi sympathisers, along with the 2036 anti-Nazis or, as you prefer to call them, enemy aliens.'

I looked at each one of them, slowly, individually and deliberately. They were intrigued with what I was telling them.

'What do you know about how these people came to be on the ship?' Rowe asked.

'After Dunkirk, men of German and Austrian origin in Britain were rounded up as a precaution as indeed they are in this country.'

They were looking at me stony-faced. I was tailing out my response, as I tried desperately to remember the face of the naval sub-lieutenant whom I was sure I had known very well somewhere when I was younger?

'That's exactly what happened during the last war,' the other sub-lieutenant said. 'I'm sure Hitler is doing the same with Australians or British who might be stranded in his Third Reich.'

'I'm sure he is, but let's not pretend that God or righteousness is on our side,' I answered. 'Sure, the original intention has been to segregate those who might pose a risk to security here or in Britain, and separate them from those who were neutral or who had fled to Britain to escape the Nazis.'

They're allowing me to talk like this in order to judge my loyalty. But I need to say what I have to say.

'Isn't that common sense?' Rowe asked.

'Sure, but in the wave of xenophobia sweeping across Britain ... and now across Australia, such distinctions are well and truly being lost. Anybody, such as Harriet and myself, for God's sake, are being suspected of being German agents, potentially helping to plan the invasion of Britain or some such activity here in Australia. So, in Britain they had to be deported to Australia or to Canada.'

'And, you're not a German agent?' the other naval officer asked.

I looked to the other officer. Now, I was beginning to remember. It was in Hobart that I knew him. *I just need a little more time to remember exactly who he is.*

I shook my head.

'Of course not. Do I look like a German agent? Does my accent sound German, for God's sake?'

'You certainly don't sound like one of us,' Rowe said with a sarcastic smile. 'Tell us, why were you and the other agent at Pymont Number 3 Wharf on 6 September observing the *Dunera* unloading prisoners of war?'

'You know as well as I, they are Jewish refugees, and most certainly are not POWs,' I answered with some venom. 'Some of those poor souls had already been to sea on the damned the *Arandora Star*, for God's sake.'

My last sentence had no effect whatsoever on my interrogators. Of course not. All of that had been well and truly censored.

'What's so significant about the *Arandora Star*?' the naval officer whom I thought I knew, asked. *Now, I think I know who you are!*

'A little more than three months ago – on 2 June to be exact – a German U-boat sank the *Arandora Star* off the Irish Coast with a massive loss of life,' I said. 'She was doing exactly what the *Dunera* is doing – transporting POWs and enemy aliens out of Liverpool. She was carrying German and Italian internees along with POWs to Canada. I take it that's news to you, gentlemen!'

'So?' Rowe asked.

'So, many of these poor bastards on the *Dunera* had survived one damned shipwreck, only to be loaded on that hell-hole that steamed into Pymont Number 3 on the 6th.'

I was now growing more angry, particularly at the ignorance of the two CIB officers. Rowe and the Dutchman continued hovering over me, grinning at me. *You're trying to break me, you bastards. I can play along with your little game.*

'So, you and your fellow agent, this so-called Miss Barsden, thought you would just take the early ferry from Manly, and wander down to Pymont Number 3 Wharf on 6 September simply to observe the poor suffering Nazis being unloaded off the *Dunera*? Shit!' he snarled.

Is he for real, or just trying to tempt me to lose my cool?

'Have you people really any idea what conditions were like on the *Dunera*?' I asked in a controlled manner.

'No! Tell us,' the Dutchman asked.

'In addition to the passengers were three hundred and nine poorly trained British guards, mostly from the Pioneer Corps, as well as seven officers, and the ship's crew.'

I was talking with a deliberate tone, hoping to tease their inane questions out a little longer.

'All in all, the *Dunera* had a total complement of almost twice her capacity as a troop carrier – that of sixteen hundred. The *Dunera* carried over three thousand, five hundred on that terrible fifty-seven-day voyage from Liverpool. She was an overcrowded hellhole. I'm sure you'll agree to that much, gentleman.'

I looked to the two naval officers. Their eyes expressed their concern with what I'd just said.

'Hell-hole?' Rowe asked in a teasing, challenging tone.

'Yes, exactly that,' I retorted. 'Hammocks almost touched; many men had to sleep on the floor or on tables, for God's sake. There was only one piece of soap for twenty men, and one towel between ten.'

The CIB officers continued smirking at me, attempting to persuade me to continue, to give full vent to my anger, to say things I wouldn't normally say. The two naval officers stood with concerned expressions. I continued telling the story as old Fritz and Hans deBusch and Franz Schmitt had told it to me so long ago.

'Water was rationed, and luggage was put in stowage, so they had to live in one set of clothes for the whole damned voyage – indeed, the voyage of the damned.'

'Not luxurious enough for the Nazis?' the Dutchman prodded, with smirk across his face.

I continued.

'As a consequence, skin diseases were common. They're not all Nazis, for God's sake. And even so —'

'Medical facilities were on board,' Rowe challenged.

'Oh yes, there's a hospital on board, but no operating theatre. Toilet facilities were far from adequate. Even with the makeshift latrines erected on the deck, stinking sewage flooded the decks.'

The two naval officers were shaking their head.

'Dysentery was rife. Blows with rifle butts and beatings from the soldiers were daily occurrences. One refugee – Franz Schmitt – tried to go to the latrines on deck during the

night – which was out-of-bounds. He was bayoneted in the stomach by one of the guards and spent the rest of the voyage in the hospital. His crime? Just wanting to have a piss.'

'If conditions were as bad as you claim, why haven't we heard something about all of this?' the Dutchman asked.

'Oh, you will, but not until the censorship has been lifted.

'The first Australian on board down at Pyrmont Number 3 was the Army medical officer, Alan Frost. His report will show he was appalled with the conditions. In fact, his report will eventually lead to a court martial.'

'What will result from this?' Rowe asked.

'I can't remember the full details, but I know the senior officer was seriously reprimanded, and at least one officer served a gaol sentence.'

'Bullshit!' the Dutchman challenged.

'Exactly how is it you profess to know so much about the *Dunera*?' Rowe asked.

'Because I once interviewed three of the *Dunera* Boys, as they became known in Australian history.'

I knew where that statement would lead the interrogation.

'You see that connects with the reason Harriet and I are carrying forged papers – something about which I suspect you're about to ask me.'

'Exactly when did you interview the enemy aliens from the *Dunera*?' Rowe growled.

'I think it must have been in the late 1990s. I'm not sure.'

'Oh, come on, man! Who do you think you're talking to?' the Dutchman blurted.

'You see, gentleman, earlier I alluded to Harriet's and my forged papers. They're forged because we are not from these times.'

'What do you mean?' Rowe hissed.

Clearly, he's not expecting this.

'We are, what are known in our time – the year 2012 – as time travellers.'

I tried to speak matter-of-factly, and purposefully, as if in 2012, time travel was a normal occurrence.

'Bullshit! What do you think we are – fools?' Rowe blurted out. 'Okay, given that you're time travellers, as you call yourself, exactly what's your mission here?'

'To save the *Sydney* ... the *HMAS Sydney*,' I responded in what I hoped was a challenging tone.

'Save the *Sydney* – from exactly what?' the naval officer with the familiar face asked.

'I'm pleased somebody has finally asked,' I answered, 'considering that's the reason Harriet and I are here in Sydney in 1940, in the first place.'

'Well?' demanded the Dutchman.

'On 19 November next year, in the Indian Ocean off Carnarvon on the West Australian coast, the German raider, the *Kormoran* will ambush the *HMAS Sydney* and sink her with the loss of all hands,' I said slowly, clearly and emphatically. 'Even through to 2012, it will remain as Australia's greatest naval disaster.'

The two naval officers were shaking their heads in disbelief. The two CIB men looked on with dumbfounded expressions.

'And what, exactly, do you intend to do to prevent this, this supposed disaster,' Rowe asked in a sarcastic tone.

'Somehow or other, I intend to get a message through to Captain Burnett that the *Kormoran* will be lying in wait for the *Sydney* on 19 November next year.'

'Captain Burnett ... Joe Burnett?' the familiar-faced naval officer asked. 'He's not in command of the *Sydney*!'

'Not now, but in May next year, when the *Sydney* returns from the Mediterranean, he will have command of the ship,' I responded quickly.

'You're full of bullshit!' the Dutchman cried.

'I think you had better start telling us the truth,' Rowe said. 'Tell us again, you Nazi bastard, how you came to be watching the unloading of Nazi POWS at Pymont Number 3 Wharf?'

Then I felt a mighty wack at the back of my head. I fought to hold onto my consciousness. *I'm in for one hell of a bashing here!*

I desperately tried to focus my eyes on the Dutchman, who was grinning at me and wiping his knuckles. My head was ringing, as if a belfry. I could feel blood trickling from my ear. *I hope that bastard hasn't done any permanent damage. I need to take charge of this damned situation.*

'I'm surprised you're not more interested in asking me to answer questions regarding the dreadful disaster of the sinking of the *HMAS Sydney*,' I said looking to the naval officers. 'History is not to going to judge you very kindly about that.'

I continued looking at the same two men.

'What does Sub-Lieutenant Ross MacAlister – one day Captain Ross MacAlister – think of that?' I demanded.

The two naval officers looked at me aghast. They were aware their names haven't been mentioned – obviously for security reason.

'You address a naval officer by name! How have you gained access to that?' demanded Rowe.

'Ross is from Hobart, and I knew him well, as an older man. He was the grandfather of my best friend, Lyndon MacAlister,' I answered.

'Was?' MacAliser asked with some obvious concern.

'Yes, you died in 2003,' I replied. 'I went to your funeral.'

'Alright smart arse, where is he buried?' Rowe demanded.

'In the Cornelian Bay Cemetery, close to his father and mother.'

'How do you know that?' MacAliser asked in a desperate tone.

I smiled at him. I liked him very much in his later life, when I knew him as Lyndon's grandfather.

'You'll be pleased to know you were the much-loved grandfather of at least six, and the father of three, including Philip, Lyndon's father. Mrs MacAlister is still alive and well – in a nursing home in Lenah Valley. When I'm back in Hobart, I always look up Lyndon, and we often go out to see Mrs MacAlister.'

'And what's my supposed wife's name?'

'Mary.'

MacAlister clearly was very shaken with what I had just said.

'And you lived in the old family home – where you had grown up – in Letitia Street, North Hobart. Mary had been your childhood girlfriend. She was the sister of your best mate when you were in the Derwent Sea Cadets. You told most of that to me when you used to take Lyndon and me out on the Derwent, fishing for flathead.'

'Take the prisoner back to his cell!' Rowe ordered in a rattled voice as he opened the door to the interview room.

A constable, standing guard at the door, quickly led me off to a cell.

* * *

Some food was pushed rudely through the food hatch; as I hungrily looked to the watery stew, and nibbled at it, I reflected on what had transpired during my interrogation. Obviously, they were not going to buy the time-slip story. It was just too much, particularly given the xenophobia raging throughout Australian society, and the sheer crap that was circulating about the Nazi secret weapons. Obviously, they had some mind-set about Harriet and me being a part of some kind of Nazi saboteur team, probably linking up with the Nazi POWs. But I was beginning to realise the real problem was Harriet and I were just too inexperienced in this time-slip stuff. We simply started out on the wrong foot when we had attempted to make contact with Milton Swaby that day on the train. Still, it seemed like a good idea at the time. We soon learnt it was stupid.

Perhaps, Ross MacAlister was a good opportunity. I needed to get back to him. But exactly how, I wasn't too sure. It was at this point in my thinking I started to think of Harriet: when I would see her again. After being so close to her during the past months, I was missing her intensely. But she was resourceful, and I was sure she would already be planning how to contact me. I couldn't imagine the minister responsible for the 1939 National Security Act – even given its far-reaching powers of the ruthless and xenophobic manner in which it appeared to be now administered – locking a Barsden away in an internment camp under a charge of being an enemy alien, even if she didn't have a proper birth certificate. That would be bound to stir the politicians. She was a Barsden, and Charles and Margaret claimed her as such.

I tried to imagine what was happening between the two CIB thugs and the two naval officers. I knew MacAlister wouldn't approve of the thuggery from the CIB officers. He was too much of a gentleman for that. He knew everything I had managed to say about him was true.

Exactly what was now transpiring between the naval officers and the CIB officers?

* * *

As I suspected, down the corridor from my cell there was a heated exchange building up between the two men from the Navy and the two from the CIB.

'He's a fuckin' fake,' I tell you.'

Rowe was almost red-necked with rage.

'But a bloody convincing one,' Lester retorted.

'Every bit he said about my life in Hobart was correct,' MacAlister said thoughtfully, apparently unmoved by the rage and angst among the CIB officers.

He was pondering how this man could know so much about him. He just had to be for real.

'When we interrogate him again, we'll be sure he answers our questions, and is prevented from raving on. We want answers!'

Rowe was furious, barely able to contain his rage.

* * *

Two days later, early in the morning, two stony-faced uniformed officers came to my cell, instructed me to stand, and to follow them. *So, it's back to the interrogation room! What delights have they got in store for me today, I wonder?*

Without a word being spoken, the uniformed officers opened the door to the interrogation room, sat me down at the bare wooden table and instructed me not to move. There was no drinking water in the room, only a toilet bucket. I sensed it was going to be a long wait for the interrogation.

Indeed, it was. It seemed to be late afternoon before a uniformed female officer, and the Dutchman and Rowe arrived. The woman carried what appeared to be a stenographer's typewriter. I had never seen one before except in a museum. I was most surprised about the employment of a female officer, but clearly there were some for such duties as these.

'We're going to ask you some questions,' the Dutchman announced. 'And you will only answer the questions we ask you. Do ya understand?'

As he was saying this, he placed his truncheon on the table beside him. The female officer – the most severe-faced woman I had ever seen – sat at one end of the table at

her machine. She was like something out of those Hollywood Nazi movies, except that she was supposed to be a goody. Her cold grey eyes refused to give me any form of contact. She waited, typing fingers poised above her keys.

They asked me long and convoluted questions about my relationship with Harriet: how long had I known her; did I know her family; was it her money that went into the Commonwealth Bank account; how could she have been my student at the University of Adelaide, when the university has no record of my working there, or her being enrolled there; what were the communication devices in our flat; and who we were communicating with; what was the purpose of the tablets in the strange packing in the drawer beside our bed; why was there the date of January 2013 stamped on the pack; how did we come by the photograph of the *HMAS Sydney* of the crew celebrating their victory against Italian cruiser *Bartolomeo* on 19 July 1940; why did we attempt to talk with a rating from the *HMAS Sydney* on a train from Mt Victoria to Sydney Central on the day of April 19; and how had we come by the photograph of the memorial service for the *HMAS Sydney* held at St Andrews Cathedral on 4 December next year.

They had confiscated the two cameras, they said, and were studying the 'film' in each.

'I'm sure you will find that activity very rewarding, indeed, sir,' I smiled in reply. 'Just make sure you don't break them. If you do, I'm sure your Commissioner will hear from Harriet's grandparents.'

They looked at me with a vacant expression, as cold grey eyes typed furiously. Clearly, they would still be figuring out how to get the film from the digital cameras.

Most of their questions, however, centred on Harriet's and my presence at Pyrmont Number 3 Wharf to observe the disembarkation of the Nazi POWs: why we were attempting to make contact with them.

By now their heightened xenophobia about Nazis under the bed, and their concern about Harriet's and my being a part of some grand saboteur threat with secret weapons was all too obvious. They were not interested in what we had to say about saving the *Sydney*. Australian society was undergoing massive changes, and this would only increase with the sinking of the *Sydney* on 19 November next year, and the near destruction of the American Pacific Fleet with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour only a few weeks later.

And so it went on, until well after midnight when I was escorted back to my cell, still without a meal. I had never felt so wretched in all my life. I thought of the comforts back in Adelaide, and the delights associated with my research and teaching. *Why am I doing this?* I reflected on my early grandiose ideas of spending eighteen months or so in beautiful art deco Manly with the one true love of my life, and then naively contacting Milton Swaby when the *Sydney* returned to Australian waters, and warning Milton about the impending danger. All he had to do was talk with his superior officers, and tell them the *Kormoran* was waiting in ambush for them. But Harriet and I were new at this time-slip stuff, and had made what have turned out to be some very poor decisions. *Should we have returned to 2012? No way!* I thought of those poor people we saw that day at St Andrews, and how their lives would be so different if we were able to save the *Sydney*. So this is the butterfly effect. *I wonder what more can happen?*

I knew they would want to keep me under observation. My only thoughts now were which internment camp, and when I would be able to see Harriet. She was a Barsden, with all their inherited resourcefulness so I was hopeful.

Chapter 30

I had lost track of the days, and they certainly weren't providing me with any access to radio, newspapers or calendars, but I reckoned I had been in the holding cell at Sydney Central Police Station for at least ten days, maybe even two weeks. Eventually, two uniformed officers entered my cell, handcuffed me, and announced brusquely 'You're coming with us'.

In full public view, they led me out of the police station towards a nearby tram stop. We were garnering quite a few glances from passers-by, and I'm sure that was partly what the whole exercise was about. But at least no one knows me here, I thought.

As we neared the tram stop a bustling and curious crowd began gathering about us. Cries of 'ooh! aah!' reverberated across the rough, concrete footpath. Others cried 'shame, shame!' as if I were an animal being led to the slaughter.

The two officers seemed to take great delight in spending time fiddling with my handcuffs. The expectant crowd grew become more vocal which fuelled the warped delight of the two officers.

Meanwhile, I tried to stare straight ahead, so that I could avoid eye contact with any of the milling crowd. I stumbled on the rough surface of the footpath. My two guards abruptly came to a stand-still as a result, much to their annoyance. Some of the crowd tittered or giggled while others burst out laughing. The two officers barked an order for me to continue marching. I looked straight ahead and stumbled forwards.

As we got closer to the tram stop, the surprised crowd, like unsteady marionettes, danced clear of us. Others fell back as if they had been invaded by a group of lepers. Wide-eyed and staring, they asked 'Who is he?'

Another chorus of 'oohs' and 'aahs' came from older women, many sympathetically, as they imagined their own sons in such a predicament.

One woman cried 'For how long? What's his sentence?'

Someone responded 'Ask him, love. He'd be delighted to tell you'.

A chorus of laughter rose from the crowd.

The inquisitive throng following us grew larger as we neared the tram stop. I must have indeed been a bizarre spectacle. Many were tripping over each other in their rush to gain a better view. Then a young woman, perhaps in her mid-twenties, stepped forward to the two warders and addressed them in a loud voice.

'This is a damned shame,' she asserted angrily to the policemen. 'I mean, this parade. Couldn't it have been done in a more private manner?'

Her eyes were on me. Briefly, I studied her face. There was an uncanny resemblance to Harriet. She had that same thick, dark hair, the misty dark eyes, the same beautiful skin. She was even about the same height as her and about the same age. Her manner and bearing radiated intelligence and concern. Our eyes momentarily met. I was completely unnerved and shaken, and found I had to bite my tongue so as not to call out to her, to call her Harriet.

'This way!' the bigger and more portly of the two officers grunted as he cruelly pushed me into the carriage with his baton, cursing me as he did so and calling me an obstinate troublemaker.

The crowd responded with a rowdy round of cheering and hissing, as if they expected more. I looked back. The last I saw of the young lady was when she was storming away waving her hand in the air, demonstrating her disgust and speaking in an animated voice to several members of the crowd. She seemed so much like Harriet. I now realised just how much I missed and longed for her.

* * *

The officers quickly placed me in an empty compartment. It had been reserved for the two policemen and their prisoner. As passengers filed down the corridor looking through the glass they peered into the compartment where we sat and, if any looked as if they might enter, the portly officer would simply hold my handcuffed hands in the air, and shake his head. Promptly, the passengers would scurry off.

Both officers were careful not to give me eye contact, or speak to me. I may as well have been a handcuffed rag doll. I had no idea of my destination and my confusion was accentuated by my hunger. I hadn't eaten since my last evening meal.

When the train stopped at Mt Victoria Station for ten minutes, the smaller of the two officers raced off and returned with two meat pies for each of them. I understood the mentality of their munching their pies in front of me. They wanted me to say something about my hunger, plead in some way, so they would have an excuse to heap some abuse on me. I smiled at them, and stared out of the window in the direction of the gravel road leading to Fuhi's time-slip platform. I reflected on her life, or the little I knew of it, for some inner strength. I wondered where they were taking me?

Bathurst Railway Station would provide me with an answer: if we stayed on this train, we would be going through to Orange on the Western line. If we changed trains, then my internment camp would either be Cowra or Hay, further down the south-west line.

As it turned out, we continued on the train. Good, I thought! Orange is only thirty or so miles from Bathurst and Twin Rivers. I wondered if Harriet would be able to visit me. She would surely be in the care of the Barsdens at Twin Rivers by this, I thought.

* * *

The Orange Railway Station is about a five-minute drive to the showgrounds. I discovered this when two soldiers were at the station to take delivery of me. The soldiers were no friendlier than the policemen, referring to me as the 'Nazi bastard'.

They were both nearing middle-age, and obviously were vets from the Great War. They silently studied me for a moment, as if I were a Martian. Then one grunted and pointed his old Lee Enfield .303 rifle – obviously a discard from the Great War – at me first and then an old brown-coloured Bedford utility (probably an early 1930s vintage) to indicate I should get in. The utility clearly had been requisitioned from some civil service. It had the numeral 3 crudely stencilled on the two doors, beside a large orange coloured disc.

'In the back,' the soldier grunted.

He didn't even bother lowering the tailgate. I climbed over this and sat sullenly on the dirty floor against the cabin end.

The guard sat with his Lee Enfield across his knees, and his back against the tailgate. After much effort, the other soldier started the Bedford and we headed off down through the gravel streets of the inland rural centre.

I only suspected both soldiers were from the last war, but really had no way of knowing for sure whether they were volunteers or a part of an Army Reserve system. I suddenly realised how little I knew of mid-war military matters. If I ever returned to 2012 as an academic historian, I was certainly collecting a mountain of ideas for future research.

One area in which I was becoming particularly interested was the manner in which governments used language to control public opinion. These camps were now labelled internment camps. I don't know exactly when and where the idea of rounding up enemy aliens and placing them under guard in a prison-like situation started. But I have a feeling the British used the idea during the Boer War. They were called concentration camps. Indeed, they were called that here in Australia during WW1 when they so callously rounded up the German population, some of whom had been here for generations. But since Hitler was getting such a bad press over 'concentration camps', Australian authorities had chosen to call them internment camps. But, in effect, they were one and the same thing.

The Orange Internment Camp was, in fact, a barbed wire compound situated inside the Orange Agricultural Showgrounds. As we drew near, I could see they had strung a few additional strands of barbed wire across the existing corrugated iron and barbed wire fence, previously used to prevent the public gaining free entry to the showgrounds. At the four points of the compass were four large wooden guard towers, each containing a rifle-bearing soldier. The Army had strung another inner security barbed wire fence about nine feet in height, enclosing the ablution, cooking and accommodation blocks. At the showground's main entrance a large building once used for exhibiting rural produce was the camp's administration building, which maybe also served as accommodation for some of the officers and soldiers.

The soldier who was driving the Bedford utility spoke a few words to the two soldiers guarding the camp's front entrance, and then the large barbed wire gate was opened. We drove through to the inner perimeter of fencing. The process was repeated, and the Bedford stopped about ten metres inside the compound. The soldier sitting

opposite me grunted at me to get out. I did, and the utility then drove off out of the inner compound.

What now, I wondered. Despite the research I had done on the *Dunera* Boys I really had no idea. All I had were the clothes I wore. Not even a toothbrush. A change of underclothes would come in handy, I thought. I hoped Harriet quickly discovered where they had interned me, and could manage to get here to see me. I wondered if they allowed visitors? God only knew. I looked about, attempting to get some understanding of the lie of the land.

There was an overpowering smell of sump oil, and I quickly worked out why. Internees were drowning the newly built structures with masses of sump oil to keep out the harsh weather so prevalent here. The designers of this camp had made use of the existing buildings and facilities of the old showgrounds. What was once toilet blocks, food preparation building, and other buildings were being used for accommodation. Some of these were substantial brick or timber buildings. But a vast number of other hut-like buildings had been constructed for the purpose of housing internees and, as I looked more closely, I could see soldiers supervising internees erect more of these buildings.

'And where are you from?' a heavy German accented voice asked as he approached me.

'If I were to give you an honest answer, I bet you wouldn't believe me,' I answered.

'My name is Peter St Claire.'

'Wolf von Laden,' he responded, offering his right hand. 'You have an unusual English accent,' he added.

Should I tell him exactly from whence – and when – I had come, or should I be more circumspect? I chose the latter.

'I'm from Adelaide, and before that, Hobart. People here in New South Wales often comment on my accent.'

'A Nazi sympathiser, I can only presume?'

Immediately, my alarm bells sounded. This question was simply too quick and too direct.

'I'm not, but the CIB and Navy Security have made up their minds that I am. And you?'

'I just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time,' he said with a little laugh, taking out a pack of Camel plain-tip cigarettes, and offering me one.

'No, thanks. I don't smoke.'

'You'll soon take up the filthy habit here in this damned place,' he answered. 'More nails in your coffin, hey.'

'I'm surprised you can get them?' I asked.

'Oh, I have a little money put aside for these small pleasures. The guards will supply them at reasonable prices.'

'Wrong place at the wrong time?' I asked.

'Yes. But let's find some shelter before we talk more.'

It was late afternoon, and a cold wind was beginning to blow in from the south-west. He led me off to one of the recently constructed wooden, sump-oil-soaked huts. There were ten of them, five on each side of a laneway where somebody had erected a street sign baring the name: Schlossbruecke.

'It's a great street, the Schlossbruecke,' I said.

'You've been there?'

'Once or twice. I did a sabbatical at The Humboldt University of Berlin.'

'When was that? I did my doctorate there.'

I had been there for three months, late in 2002, but how could I tell him that, I thought?

'I'll tell you one day. I was there under very strange circumstances.'

'Oh, I understand. Sensitive stuff, hey?'

'Yes. You might say that.'

'Here,' he said, opening the door of one of the wooden huts in Schlossbruecke.

Tentatively, I entered. It stank of sump oil. It was almost unbearable.

'Here,' he said pointing to an upper bunk. 'This is the last vacant one. You ought to grab it before it goes. They're filling quickly,' he laughed.

'Thanks.'

I looked about. Beggars can't be choosers, I thought. A pot-bellied stove in the middle of the hut had a teapot sizzling away on it. Four double-decker bunks, two on each side, lined the walls. From the outside, I had seen the walls were made from overlapping, rough-sawn hardwood. The roof was hardwood shingles. All of this had

been excessively painted with the odious sump oil. The inside walls and ceiling were a form of composite tarred heavy paper. I hadn't seen anything like it in domestic buildings. It was something akin to asbestos-based fibro, long outlawed by building Health and Safety authorities for their cancer-causing properties.

There was a small window on each of the side walls, but the flooring was the real issue. It was made from rough-sawn hardwood, no tongue and grooves. So, despite the efforts of the builders to fit the boards as close as possible, there was an awful lot of daylight coming through the floor. I could only imagine what it would be like on a cold, windy winter's day. I shuddered thinking about that. Some linoleum and old newspapers underneath would have solved the problem. But Wolf said that remained an empty promise.

'Blankets?' I asked.

'We'll find Rushy.'

'Whose Rushy?'

'One of the better, more obliging guards. I think his name is Alan Rush. He's reliable with the blankets.'

He looked at me in a knowing manner. Perhaps, he was suggesting he was bribing Rushy.

'What would we do without him?'

I laughed at the comical side of all of this. I'd love to be able to relate all of this to my students, I thought.

Wolf, with his sense of humour and boyish enthusiasm, had elevated my mood. I was still terribly hungry, but I was feeling more positive.

'I haven't eaten since last night,' I said. 'The police on the train weren't very obliging with sharing their meat pies. When are we fed?'

'Here, pour yourself a cup of tea. I must ask Rushy for some eating utensils when I organise for the blankets.'

He offered me an old chipped enamel mug for my tea. I poured some tea, added a heap of sugar from a filthy looking enamel container, and wolfed down the tea. I was now feeling as if I might just survive this damned place.

'What about a mattress?' I asked.

Immediately, he pulled his own bed to pieces and brought out a second mattress.

'I was keeping this just for you,' he smiled.

Of course, he had had it there for his own comfort. Straw-filled hessian bags were not the best mattresses in the world. There didn't appear to be any pillows. Perhaps, Rushy might be able to find something for me, I hoped.

Wolf stoked up the stove with a few more pieces of timber from the pile.

'Tea soon,' he said. 'We had better go and see if we can get you some cutlery and blankets.'

That was easily executed. Wolf approached a guard at the inner-perimeter gate, and explained I had only come in during the afternoon and had no blankets or cutlery. Within ten minutes another soldier – Rushy – appeared with two blankets and well-used knife, fork and spoon.

Rushy looked to me, studying my appearance.

'Where did they grab you from?'

'From Manly.'

'You have a strange accent. Are you an Australian?'

'Yes, a sandgroper.'

I noticed Wolf momentarily look at me, and then look away in a thoughtful manner, as if he were considering Rushy's question, or my response.

'Oh, okay. South Australians are a little different. But you don't even sound like a South Australian.'

Rushy turned and walked off to the Administration Block. Wolf and I returned to our hut just as two others were putting a large saucepan on the pot-bellied stove. It was full of mutton and mixed vegetables.

'Make the most of it,' he said. 'Except for some bread and tea, it will be all you get for the next twenty-four hours.'

The Red Cross was caring reasonably well for the internees in respect of food. Why not? This was one of the richest food-producing areas in the country.

Wolf introduced me to the other six members of the hut, and explained he himself was the usual go-to man if there were any issues but that there were seldom any. As we walked away Wolf warned me that political opinion in our hut ranged from strongly anti-Nazi to strongly pro-Nazi.

'Be very cautious about what you say,' he warned. 'Tempers can become very frayed.'

The other six were all Germans nationals and, like Wolf, had been caught in Australia when war was declared. There was a journalist from Sydney, Adolf von Merhadt; two Lutheran missionaries from the Hermansburg Mission in the Northern Territory, Werner Osberg and Wilhelm Geiger; a PhD student from the University of Sydney, studying anthropology, Hans Fleischhacker; and two filmmakers, Bruno Schweizer and Sigmund Rasher.

I quickly figured out that the two Lutheran missionaries were anti-Nazi; Wolf, the journalist – who had once completed a doctorate – and the two filmmakers couldn't give a damn; the strongly pro-Nazi was a PhD student studying anthropology.

I will be very careful what I say, I thought.

'What do you think of Herr Hitler?' Hans challenged. 'You must have some opinions, one way or the other,' he asked as we sat with our mutton stew on our chipped enamel plates.

'I couldn't give a damn,' I replied. 'I'm here simply because I happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. My partner and I were foolish enough to approach a sailor from the *HMAS Sydney* with some information about what we considered to be the impending fate of his ship.'

'Interesting,' Hans said. 'And exactly what's the nature of that impending fate of the ship?'

'Whatever we said it was wrong, and the naval intelligence service took gross exception to our approaching the sailor.'

'And what exactly did you say about the fate of the *HMAS Sydney* that naval intelligence took exception to?' Hans asked.

'Oh, something that must have upset them. I can't really remember now.'

I looked to Hans. I sensed he wanted to ask me more on that subject, but was interrupted.

'What do you do for a living?' asked Wilhelm.

'I teach in the Faculty of Education at the University of Adelaide.'

'Surely, your colleagues would be attempting to get you out of here,' Wilhelm said.

'I'm sure they're doing their best. I really don't expect to be here long.'

'Are you a South African or a New Zealander? Or have you spent many years in one of those countries?' Bruno asked with a quizzical expression.

'Neither, I'll wager,' Hans said emphatically. 'I have studied accents for a long time, particularly English accents. Our friend here has an accent with which I am totally unfamiliar.'

'It's just that I had a very poor elocution teacher, I can assure you.'

I wanted that topic to end there and then. Wolf seemed to sense that.

'How long will the Menzies Government last here in Australia?' Wolf asked, quite clearly in an attempt to change the topic.

'It won't last long,' I said knowingly. 'It will fall when Japan enters the war.'

'Hey, that's what I like to hear,' Hans exclaimed, enthusiastically clapping his hands.

'How long before that happens? Any ideas?' Wolf asked, obviously pleased this topic was not so likely to stir the emotions of those sitting on bunks around the pot-bellied stove.

Again, I bit my tongue. At times, Wolf worried me. Soon, however, my thoughts were drifting towards Harriet. It had been a damned long day, and I was missing her terribly. I wondered what she was doing right now.

Chapter 31

As it turned out, she was only a little over an hour's drive away. She was where I suspected she'd be – at Twin Rivers. And not before she had made sure she had all our possessions from our Bower Lane flat, all except our laptops, which I suspected the guys from Naval Intelligence had kept in order to examine them. They might be smart enough to discover how to turn them on, but surely would never guess our passwords. IT experts were thin on the ground in 1940 Sydney. I was damned sure of that.

* * *

Fears about the Barsden political clout were alive and well. Harriet was safely with her grandparents.

'They were so rude,' she fumed. 'I have never been treated in that manner! Who do they think they are?'

'I'm afraid that's what the war is doing to this country,' Margaret sighed, as she poked at the large, dried eucalypt logs in the cavernous open fire. 'But at least we're getting closer to knowing where they have Peter interned.'

'Chif's office said they would be back to us within a week. They're quite definite about that,' Charles said. 'But you say this crazy xenophobia, this sheer madness, is going to get a lot worse?' he asked.

'Much, much worse,' Harriet said.

'Yes, you previously spoke about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. But we were all so rushed then, with your trying to find Fuhi's time-slip secrets. But now we're more relaxed, I want you to tell us what happens to Australia after this terrible attack. When exactly is it going to occur?'

Clearly, Margaret wanted to learn as much as she could. Charles was waiting expectantly. He was clearly very proud of his granddaughter.

'I must ask you to sit on the information I'm going to tell you.'

'Yes, we understand, dear. If it were to become public knowledge, heavens knows what might happen,' Margaret intoned.

'Apart from exposing Peter and me, and the butterfly effects of all of that here in Australia at present,' Harriet answered.

'Butterfly effects?' Charles looked inquisitively at Harriet. 'What on earth are they, for heaven's sake.'

'Oh, that's just a twenty-first century expression for the many flow-on effects for something that happens.'

'Go on and tell us about the effects of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour,' Charles said.

'Well, I think it's all best explained in three related chapters,' Harriet said in a thoughtful tone.

'Go on.'

'First, following the Japanese air and submarine attack on Pearl Harbour, the American Pacific Fleet was almost destroyed – a plethora of destroyed planes, along with ... I think it was eight damaged or destroyed battleships.'

'That's unimaginable,' Charles said in a shocked tone.

'You had better get used to it, because it's going to happen,' Harriet said. 'While it will be of some consolation for the British because it will bring America into the war, it is going to be a hell of a shock for us here in Australia.'

'When did you say that will happen?' Margaret asked.

'December 7 next year, American time. Australians suddenly will be very isolated. And you can imagine that will only make them more xenophobic.'

'I'd imagine so,' Charles sighed.

'The Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour will open the door to Asia, South-east Asia, the Pacific and Australia for the Japanese,' Harriet continued. 'The fall of Singapore, only a few weeks following Pearl Harbour will be a terrible psychological shock for Australians.'

'Good gracious! Not Singapore! That's unbelievable.'

Charles was shaking his head and Margaret was clearly shocked.

'It's going to be a terrible blow to Australian society,' Harriet continued. 'Over fifteen thousand Australians will be taken POW. Many of them will never get to fire a shot at the Japanese. Many will be murdered. It will all be so quick.'

'I can't believe this!' Charles said.

'I think you can understand just why saving the *Sydney*, in a country so awash with tragedy, is so important to Peter and me?'

'What about the poor buggers who are about to become POWs in Singapore?' Charles asked.

'Unfortunately, there's little we can do for them – unlike the crew of the *Sydney* ... which *can* be saved.'

She really emphasised that point.

'Yes, I understand,' Charles said. 'But I'm not clear exactly how you intend to achieve that.'

'Neither are Peter and I at this stage. Once, we thought, in all our innocence and ignorance, we had that well and truly in hand. But, we're at a loss to know what to do now.'

Charles and Margaret continued shaking their heads.

'Curtin will describe the fall of Singapore as Australia's Dunkirk. He'll suggest it will be followed by the Battle for Australia. His prediction will be fulfilled almost immediately when the Japanese launch their first air raid on Darwin on 19 February 1942. The bombing in successive raids will almost destroy the town, as well as the ships in its harbour.'

Harriet stopped there. She could see the affect all of this was having on her grandparents, as young as they might be now.

'But of course, the news of these setbacks largely will be censored from most Australians. I doubt you'll get to read much about it in the newspapers. But what will follow the Battle for Darwin will be of even greater psychological shock to Australians. Racism here in our beloved Australia will reach new heights.'

'What else can go wrong for the country!' Margaret asked. 'You mentioned John Curtin's name?'

'Yes. Some time next year – I think it will be in August some time – Menzies will lose support of the UAP (United Australia Party), and Arthur Fadden will have a short

stint at the top job, but it will all fall in a pile for the UAP in October next year, and Labor will take government, led by Curtin.'

'I'm pleased,' Charles said emphatically. 'Curtin's a good man.'

'He'll need to be, because there is much worse to come for Australians,' Harriet said.

'I can barely believe what I'm hearing,' Margaret sighed. 'What else?'

'In late May and early June 1942, Japan will launch a series of midget submarine attacks on Sydney and Newcastle. They'll sink a few ships in the Sydney Harbour, kill some sailors, and a few days later the mother submarines will destroy some houses in Sydney's eastern suburbs.'

'Unbelievable,' sighed Margaret.

'The mother submarines will go on to disrupt shipping along the Australian coast, and more sailors – merchant seamen – will be killed. But the effect largely will be psychological for Australians, and that will be in terrible proportions.'

'Yes, Sydney's eastern suburbs real estate suddenly will become very, very cheap, I'd imagine,' Margaret said.

'I'm sure some unscrupulous Australians will take advantage of the sudden exodus from Bondi and its neighbouring suburbs. I believe the traffic along the Great Western Highway out of Sydney will become a little thick for a short while, as people seek a safe haven inland, until it all settles down,' Harriet said. 'I remember the story of Rebecca Cooper who amassed a fortune in real estate out of the mess. But in this case it went to the general good. The proceeds of her estate were used to fund a medical research foundation named in her honour: the Rebecca Cooper Foundation.'

'You've mentioned Curtin but what's the future for our Chif?' Charles asked.

'Curtin will die in office some time in July 1945, and within a few weeks when the Labor Party sorts itself out from the shock, your Chif will become Prime Minister.'

'And?' Margaret asked.

'After the war, which finally ends with the atom bombing and destruction of two Japanese cities in early August 1945, Menzies will come back to defeat him with a revitalised UAP, which will be called the Liberal Party. Following the 1949 general election, he will become Australia's longest serving prime minister.'

'I don't want to hear any more,' Margaret said. 'I can remember him returning from Nazi Germany only a few years ago, full of praise for what Hitler had accomplished.'

Clearly, she wasn't a big fan of Robert Menzies.

'You mentioned the words atom bombing,' Charles asked. 'Destroys two Japanese cities, you say. Exactly, how is that possible?'

'With the assistance of some German scientists, particularly a brilliant man called Albert Einstein, who wrote to President Franklin D Roosevelt in August last year – our time – warning him of the Nazi attempt to build these terrible weapons. As we sit here now, the Americans have already begun The Manhattan Project, a highly secret and massively destructive weapon that forever will change our civilisation.'

'Good gracious!' Charles exclaimed. 'Do the Germans build their own ... what do you call it ... atom bomb?' Margaret asked.

'They came close, but no cigar,' Harriet answered.

Margaret and Charles were sitting, numbed, as they considered what Harriet had just related.

'I gather you know Chifley quite well?' Harriet asked.

She felt as if she should attempt to lift the mood of the conversation.

'Yes, very well. We provide his party with some considerable financial support. The Barsdens have always been Labor supporters,' Charles replied.

Harriet dwelt on his answer which provoked much thought.

Chapter 32

A freezing cold, south-westerly wind was blowing off Mt Canobolas, the higher points of which I could only grab partial glimpses. I was trying to catch a better view of its snow-capped peak when I sensed someone standing close to me.

'It's a lazy wind,' Wolf said, wrapping his arms around his chest to shield himself from the bitter cold.

I turned around and faced him, inviting him to continue.

He smiled.

'It's too damned cold here. Let's go inside where it's warmer.'

We settled down on our bunks opposite each other. Only the two filmmakers – Bruno Schweizer and Sigmund Rasher – were in the hut. Wrapped up in every piece of available clothing, they were snoozing on their bunks.

'You told me yesterday you did a sabbatical at The Humboldt University of Berlin,' Wolf said. 'Which professors did you work with?'

He was speaking in hushed tones and at the same time carefully studying my face. I now realised I shouldn't have said what I did about my sabbatical in Berlin. I hesitated with my answer, because I sensed he was setting a trap for me. Then I noticed him briefly glance towards Bruno and Sigmund. There was a moment's silence.

'Why don't we go for a walk on such a nice brisk morning? I'm sure it will help us think.'

This was just what I needed: some time to think of a suitable answer to this meddling man. Hell, this was all I needed.

We had not walked more than twenty paces, and he looked at me.

'You're not of these times, are you?'

He was very purposeful and direct in his question. He was the first person to suspect our little time-slip adventure since I had departed from 2012. What's he up to, I thought? And how could he possibly have guessed?

'Why do you say that?' I challenged. 'That's rather an extravagant statement.'

I knew I had to be careful because I was going to be in the hut for some time, if not this hut, certainly this camp. I could hardly appeal to the authorities for a transfer on those grounds!

'I think I once told you I completed my doctorate at Humboldt,' he said. 'I obviously know that university very well, and I know that you know it. So when you hesitated to tell me about your sabbatical, you only confirmed something I suspected when I first met you yesterday. Sure, you may have attended there, but at a very different time from what you're telling me. When I heard Rushy comment on your unusual Australian accent, that only confirmed something I already suspected.'

'Oh yes. Tell me though, what exactly did your doctorate deal with?'

I looked at him in a challenging manner, hoping he might move the focus of the discussion from my sabbatical at Humboldt to something about him.

'And I could also ask *you* why somebody who has a doctorate from such a prestigious university is working as a journalist? You hardly need a doctorate to do that!'

'Exactly,' he answered confidently. 'But if you are a reader of the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung*, I'm sure you will see ample examples of my work.'

'Of course. But what was the subject matter of your doctorate at Humboldt?' I challenged.

'I went there to study Jungian psychology,' he answered.

As we were speaking, the sun broke through the late winter clouds, and it quickly began to warm up. People began to emerge from their huts to soak up the sun and the pleasant conditions. We both paused in our conversation. I wanted to ask Wolf a whole host of questions concerning all these people. They seemed so European in appearance in their well-worn pieces of assorted military uniform and western European clothing.

I turned my attention back to Wolf. He was smiling. He had an easy manner. I was beginning to like him very much, despite some doubts I continued to harbour. He certainly had an engaging personality. *Thank heavens I have somebody I can talk to in this place – not necessarily a kindred spirit, but someone I can relate to. Nevertheless, I'm not going to divulge anything about my time-slip adventure.*

'Jungian psychology?' I asked.

I knew something about it because I had a psychologist friend, Robert, in the Faculty of Education at the University of Adelaide who was a Jungian, with an equally engaging personality. He had introduced me to several fellow dedicated Jungians in the Psychology Department. I quickly gathered my thoughts on Jung.

I remembered that Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and the founder of analytical psychology. He had lived on until 1961. In 2012 there are plenty of academics and psychologists in Australian universities and in clinical practice who are very close to the man – second generation Jungians, I suppose. My colleague, Robert and others at the University of Adelaide would think of themselves like this. I understood Jung was considered the first modern psychiatrist to view the human psyche as by nature religious, and make it the focus of exploration. For many decades, this element of his psychology tended to put offside many modern-day materialists – including the behaviourists. But by the 1970s Jungian psychology had regained its international status.

I refocused my attention back to Wolf, whom I discovered was only partly looking at me. He was looking alternately towards a group of internees, and back towards me.

'My work on Jung, and my many associations with his Jewish followers caused me to abandon my interest in psychology,' he said, sighing and shaking his head.

I knew something about the relationship between Jung and the Nazis, but I certainly lacked a detailed knowledge. I was anxious to talk with Wolf about this, mainly to understand better how he felt about the Nazis.

'Like many of us, I suppose,' he went on, 'at first with the rise of Hitler, Jung had to tread very carefully.'

'Of course, you're all much wiser now,' I said as I began to better appreciate Wolf and his current circumstances.

'Yes, Jung, my dear fellow, had many friends and respected colleagues who were Jewish, and he maintained relations with them through the 1930s when anti-Semitism in Germany and other European nations was on the rise.'

He continued to glance occasionally at a group of people who were attempting to kick about what appeared to be a half-flat soccer ball on the wet gravel.

'You must understand that while Jung had many German associates, for most of his professional life he has lived in Switzerland, safe from Himmler and his thugs.'

I nodded my agreement. He was looking at me and smiling in his usual friendly and empathetic manner. When I started this time-slip journey I never imagined I would be in an internment camp talking with somebody who had lived in these times in Germany. Butterfly effects, indeed! I was intrigued with where Wolf was taking the conversation. I was completely oblivious to anything else happening in the camp at the moment.

'I remember,' he continued, 'only last year, he also maintained strong professional relations with psychotherapists – people like myself, in Germany – supporters, who I must say had declared their support for Hitler and his band of thugs.'

'Weren't —'

I hesitated. I must remember to speak in the present tense, and certainly not as if I'm a time traveller.

'Weren't what?' he asked.

I suspected he understood what I was thinking about the tense in which I was speaking. I smiled and continued.

'I'm sorry. I was momentarily distracted.'

'Continue with your question?'

'Yes, I was just going to say, haven't any Germans been speaking about Jung as being a Nazi sympathiser?'

'Oh, some may do so, for all kinds of different reasons, I imagine. But if they were to take the time to read his work, they might have different ideas.'

'Oh?' I murmured inquisitively.

'Yes, if his critics had bothered to read his work *Civilization in Transition* where he condemns Hitler and describes the Nazis as being 'the Aryan bird of prey with his insatiable lust to lord it in every land, even those that concern him not at all', or at least something like that, if I remember correctly.'

He continued looking at me and occasionally glancing at the small gathering of internees playing with the soccer ball. Then, he looked back at me, with anger in his eyes.

'Oh, there is much more, too, in his writings where he condemns Hitler, but just at the moment I can't remember them all.'

'Were you ever a practising clinical psychologist?' I asked.

'I certainly was. In fact for nearly two years. And in a roundabout kind of way that's how I find myself here in Australia.'

I looked at him, encouraging him to continue.

'Tell me.'

'Well, in 1933, after the Nazis gained power in Germany, Jung began to assist in the restructuring of the Allgemeine Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Psychotherapie —'

I interrupted him.

'I'm not very fluent with German,' I smiled.

But I thought I had caught partially his meaning: perhaps, the General Medical Society of Psychotherapy.

'First, there was the General Medical Society of Psychotherapy,' he said. 'It's a German-based professional body with an international membership, or should I say, at least it was.'

'I know nothing about it,' I said.

'Oh, I think there were some Australians who were associated with it. But while they may remain Jungians, there obviously is no longer any association with the German body. In fact, I was in the process of contacting them to write my article – the purpose of which I'm here in Australia – when your security people invited me to come here and take a break in this damned internment camp.'

He was smiling, and I was enjoying his humour.

'Of course.'

I really was finding all of this fascinating. I'm going to come out of this damned camp much more enlightened than when I was before, I thought.

'Then there was a second, but nevertheless, related body – a body that has all but destroyed Jungian psychology in the fatherland.'

I was fascinated with his use of the word fatherland. Now he was speaking as if a man possessed, a man who had a mission in his life.

'What about this second body?' I asked.

'Well, I must say from the very beginning, its members and leadership were not at all friendly; indeed, they were very hostile to we Jungians. This was the Deutsche Allgemeine Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Psychotherapie – a strictly German body, built upon Alderian psychotherapy.'

'You must tell me more about it, some time. But how exactly did it bring about your changing your career from Jungian psychotherapy?'

This was a fascinating conversation, and I only wished my good friend, Robert, from the university was here to be a part of it.

'Well, one has to earn a living, you'll agree.'

I nodded.

'True.'

'The Deutsche Allgemeine Ärztliche Gesellschaft für Psychotherapie happens to be controlled by the Nazis, none of whom are friendly towards we Jungians.'

Now, I'm beginning to understand what makes our Wolf tick!

'And the Deutsche Allgemeine happens to be controlled by Matthias Göring!'

'That's a name that rings a bell!' I exclaimed, with my tongue in my cheek.

Naturally, there had been much in the Australian press about Hitler's lieutenant and right-hand man.

'Exactly – the brother of none other than Hermann Göring!'

'I see!' I exclaimed. 'So you took the wise step and looked for work elsewhere, other than Jungian psychotherapy?'

'Precisely. I escaped the fatherland so I wouldn't end my days in a Nazi concentration camp, but —'

'But the irony is, here you are with me in one – a merry old internment camp – here in good old Australia.'

'Yes,' he smiled. 'But it is fortunate that you and I should meet here where we have so much time to swap notes, exchange ideas, don't you think?'

'Oh, I must warn you, I'm not a psychologist, by any means,' I warned. 'I teach and research in the area of history curriculum.'

'But, you're not from these times, are you?' he challenged. 'I asked you that before, and you have very cleverly avoided an answer, by astutely turning our discussion back on my German circumstances, haven't you?'

I smiled at his perspicacity.

'It's something I'm sure we'll have much time to discuss, for however long we're here.'

'But, I am very interested in the paranormal,' he said in a very serious and studied tone.

I hesitated. I had a gut feeling I needed to get to know him better before I began to talk about Harriet's and my experiences. Besides, I really needed to talk with Harriet before I mentioned a word about Fuhi's time-slip launching pads and her whole experience with the Umbarra people, and all the secrets she had been privileged to learn of during her stay. It just seemed to me as if it wasn't my story to tell. Long had I been thinking how the Barsdens were now the custodians of Old Burabin, the gommera of the Umbarra who had passed on to Fuhi Barsden the traditional secrets of the gommera. These were sacred secrets, of which only Old Burabin was custodian, but now with the Umbarra's traditional ways destroyed, these wonderful responsibilities were with the Barsdens. Moreover, I was fully convinced they must stay that way.

'I understand why you hesitate,' he said. 'But I should tell you of how I have come to have such an interest in these things. We really are kindred spirits, and it's clearly our destiny we should be brought together like this.'

'Yes, that thought has crossed my mind.'

I was still making up my mind about Wolf.

'Did you know Jung himself was involved in such a paranormal event? What do you call them?'

'A time-slip.'

'Yes, precisely. Only a few years ago – perhaps five or six – while travelling through Italy, he visited the tomb of a Roman Empress in Ravenna. Impressed with the remarkable beauty of the mosaics depicting maritime scenes, which he later wrote of as being in an eerily pale blue light, he discussed them with his companion for about half-an-hour and, on leaving the mausoleum, he even tried to purchase postcards of them. Surprisingly, there weren't any.'

Of course, I had read of this before, and I had discussed it with Robert and my other Jungian colleagues back at the university. But I allowed him to continue.

'So,' he continued, 'some time later, Jung asked a friend visiting Ravenna if he could obtain pictures for him. It was only after seeing them that he finally learned the truth. The mosaics he had seen and discussed in great detail were totally different, absolutely different, from the mosaics now decorating the mausoleum. However, they did exist

once, but had been destroyed in a fire some 700 years previously. Amazing, don't you think?'

'I must admit, I've heard parts of this story before.'

Indeed, I recall having a long discussion with Robert about these in one of our university coffee shops.

Wolf was looking at me in that engaging manner, waiting for me to continue.

'It's fascinating. So what's going on here with these paranormal events, time-slips? Jung was personally convinced his consciousness had somehow travelled back in time to when the mausoleum had been first constructed, fourteen hundred years prior to his visit to Ravenna. But what do you think of all this?'

'Why would Jung fabricate the story? What would he have to gain from it? Besides, he had his friend's testimony to what happened: cross-collaboration, surely?'

'Exactly,' I answered, keen to pursue the topic from the point of view of a psychologist a half-century removed from my time. 'Then there was the fascinating case of Charlotte Moberly and Eleanor Jourdain – respectable people, the principal and vice-principal of St Hugh's College in Oxford.'

'Yes, I know the story very well. I have their book on the whole affair.'

He was nodding his head with excitement.

'Surely these were not the people you'd expect to be fabricating stories for any financial gain, or some other benefit.'

'Of course, when they published their book on the experience they opened the whole thing up to scientific investigation,' I added. 'It's all fascinating stuff that occurred less than forty years ago.'

We looked at each other for a few seconds. Time had passed with our discussion. But I knew he would continue pressing me for my experiences with the paranormal. After all, my experience was hardly a momentary slip in time. *Had I mentioned Harriet to him? I'm sure I haven't. And I should be careful not to – for many reasons.*

Chapter 33

When Harriet finally was able to recount to me her experiences at Twin Rivers during our long separation, she told me it was her first meeting with the Great Man that most excited her. Most of her waking hours before meeting Ben Chifley were spent thinking about how best she could broach the subject of the impending sinking of the *Sydney*. And then there was the issue of how to get me out of the internment camp, now that she had discovered where I was.

Chifley was a busy man. Following a term out of parliament, he was re-contesting the Federal seat of Macquarie for the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and the election was due on this coming Saturday – 21 September. These were desperate days for him and the Labor Party. In Canberra, Menzies and his Conservatives reigned supreme. But Harriet knew her Australian history, and she knew that Menzies' days at the helm were closing in very fast.

Chifley had phoned through to Twin Rivers only the day before to tell Harriet the good news that his office had found me in the Orange Internment Camp. But he had warned getting me out wasn't going to be easy. Evidently, I was considered a high security risk. But Chifley himself knew little of the case and, of course, hadn't met either Harriet or me. But he was doing a last round of door-to-door calls with his close supporters during these last frenzied few days of the election campaign, and would be able to call into Twin Rivers on the Thursday before the election. He had warned Charles and Margaret he was quite ill with a serious bout of double pneumonia.

During her recent trips to Bathurst, Harriet had watched with fascination as most of the district's population threw their weight behind their Chif. It seemed that every mile or so there were red and white posters nailed high on large eucalypts imploring citizens to Vote 1 Ben Chifley Labor for Macquarie.

When Harriet had first seen these, she later told me it reminded her how the great champion of working-class colonials Governor Lachlan Macquarie – way back in the early days of the colony – would have a Federal electorate named after him, and also the great champion of the people, Ben Chifley, would be competing for this seat in

Australia's parliament during a time when the country would come up against its greatest challenge.

* * *

'I tell you, they don't come any tougher or more determined than our Chif,' Margaret said as she had her housemaid prepare some morning tea of fresh scones, blackberry jam and fresh cream for their visitor who was expected at any moment.

Chifley had made his mark on national politics as Minister for Defence back in 1931 in the Scullin Labor Government, but his future was less assured during the Conservative ascendancy under at first, Joe Lyons, and then under Bob Menzies. But earlier this year in June, Chifley's old friend and top Canberra public servant, Sir John Jensen, had used his influence to have Chifley appointed director of labour supply and regulation in the Ministry of Munitions.

A testimony to the regard in which Chifley was held in Canberra was the fact that this occurred under Bob Menzies' government. Menzies, too, was well aware of how Chifley could get things done. It was events such as this that gave Harriet hope that Chifley might be able to do something to save the *Sydney* the following year.

In his present role Chifley had gained much public praise, even from those opposite him in parliament – Menzies and his ilk. But there was a more important development. Chifley had made an enormous number of friends in high and powerful places. Apparently, a relationship of mutual respect and personal sympathy grew between himself, Jensen and Essington Lewis who many consider to be the founder of the Australian steel industry. The one-time farmyard roustabout and later railway engine driver Chifley was now, indeed, in powerful company. Chifley and Lewis had both had humble childhoods, and both were men of iron – in the case of Lewis, quite literally. Both were driven loners and outsiders, patriotically joined in wartime by a strong work ethic and dreams of a powerful, industrialised Australia.

Harriet was privately hopeful Chifley could do something about the *Sydney* when she returned from the Mediterranean and was back in Australian waters on patrol off Australia's west coast. In the middle of these thoughts, she was jolted back to reality when she heard a motor vehicle on the front driveway. She looked to Margaret and

Charles. Margaret stood up and straightened her frock. Harriet looked at her own frock. I'll need to get some new spring clothes; I've been wearing these for months, she thought.

Charles opened the front door to him. He was dressed just as she expected him to be: a dark grey, striped suit with a matching waistcoat and silver fob watch. Where was his pipe? she wondered. From her university work on the great man, Harriet knew, like Churchill's cigars, Chifley's pipe had become a striking political trademark and negotiating tool, consuming more matches in attempts to get it functioning than it did tobacco.

He was six feet tall in the old measurement, that is, maybe more than one hundred and eighty centimetres. But he had a bear-like frame, was large boned, with a strong, rural, rough-hewn countenance.

When he first looked to Harriet he did so with a poker face, but he soon mellowed, she recalled. She told me how she had to do some quick mental calculations to remind herself of his age. He was born in 1885, fifty-five years ago. His hair had greyed, but was still thick and curly. For Harriet, his appearance was like a Great Dane, with his rugged good looks and what was quickly becoming evident to Harriet, his immense personal dignity. He appeared friendly, but always, perhaps, slightly reserved. His twinkling, grey-blue eyes danced with humour and charm. Harriet immediately sensed she would enjoy his company.

Following the customary shaking of hands and best wishes for Saturday's election, Charles and Margaret turned to Harriet.

'Allow me to introduce my grand-daughter, Harriet Barsden,' Charles said with a broad smile, clearly fully aware of the issues this would raise with Chifley.

He shook Harriet's hand, and studied her face.

'Well, I can see you're a Barsden, but will somebody please tell me how you happen to be Margaret's and Charles' granddaughter when, as far as I know, they haven't yet been blessed with a child of their own. Is there something I don't know?'

Harriet loved this moment, and she often recounted it to me. She told how she briefly studied the great man, a man who would go on to be one of the most endearing Australian prime ministers. He looked and spoke as a straight shooter, a term she had recently acquired out here in the country. Although clearly suffering from an illness at

the moment, he held his head tall and his bearing proud; his deep blue eyes continued flashing with intelligence and empathy for his fellow human beings.

'The truth is, I'm a time traveller,' Harriet said firmly. 'I was born in 1987, and I'm here with Dr Peter St Claire, whom I believe you already know about.'

'Just let us pause there for a moment,' Chifley said.

'Why don't we first sit down and have a cup of tea and some scones,' Margaret said, with a reassuring smile.

He sat down and immediately pulled out his tobacco pouch and pipe from his inside coat pocket. Smoking inside the house was commonplace. Margaret and Charles had huge ashtrays strategically placed around the house for that very purpose. Chifley was quickly drawing on his pipe, and sipping a cup of tea. As he was doing this, Harriet noticed him glancing at her and studying her face. She was beginning to sense he enjoyed being in the company of a young woman. Then he began shaking his head.

Margaret saw all of this, and quickly intervened.

'It's true, I can assure you, Chif. Apparently, Charles and I are to have a son, who we'll call Hugh, and he will eventually marry a Sophie Gladewright from Adelaide. Harriet, here, is their offspring.'

'*One* of their offspring,' Harriet corrected her grandmother. 'My brother and sister are with their various spouses and children somewhere back in 2012.'

'So can you tell me what all this is about?' Chifley asked. 'Tell me exactly how you come to be here.'

Obviously he wasn't taking in the time-slip story. Who could blame him?

'Peter and I have travelled in time from Easter 2012 back to Easter 1940, specifically to save *HMAS Sydney* from what will be the nation's greatest naval disaster.'

'And are you going to share with me exactly how you've managed that. We'll come to the issue of the *Sydney* next.'

He was being polite, but obviously very cynical of what he was being told. Hilary wondered what she could do to convince him of the story?

'Oh, apparently there is nothing new in all of this,' Margaret broke in. 'The secrets of time travel apparently are contained in Fuhi Barsden's journals, hidden away somewhere in our grossly untidy library here at Twin Rivers.'

'Fuhi Barsden? The famous Gommera Woman?' Chifley asked. 'Of course, I've heard a great deal about her over the years in this part of the world. Nothing would surprise me about anything I heard about her.'

'Yes,' Charles said. 'She was called the Gommera Woman, exactly because of her powers – precious powers she had been given by the Aborigines with whom she had lived for so many years.'

'You see,' Margaret explained in a lowered and almost conspiratorial tone, 'she had written in her journals how, because of her great affinity, empathy, and understanding of the Aborigines, she had been gifted with these secrets dating back possibly tens of thousand of years – who knows how long.'

'Amazing!'

Chifley was now drawing very heavily on his severely stained old briar pipe. Only the Barsdens of Twin River could bring him to believe what for most people would be a most preposterous story.

'So, time travel is no great scientific invention from the twenty-first century. Gifted and privileged Aborigines ... the custodians of their culture ... their gommera, or shaman, had used these powers for thousands of years.'

Harriet had spoken, and now looked to the others.

'Save the *Sydney*, you said ... from the nation's greatest naval disaster?' Chifley asked. 'I was once a minister for Defence, and so what you propose has some interest for me.'

'Indeed, because you will be in the War Cabinet when this disaster occurs,' Harriet said bluntly.

He looked at Harriet with a surprised expression.

'I'd imagine Menzies will have something to say about that.'

'Menzies soon will be sitting on the Opposition Benches,' Harriet answered. 'He's about to experience some disloyalty in his own ranks. He's about to undergo some real difficulty in keeping things together.'

'Oh,' Chifley answered, not entirely in a surprised tone. 'I hear from some quarters he's already experiencing some of that. It will be interesting to see how Saturday's numbers go for him.'

'Not very well – they won't go very well at all,' Harriet said confidently. 'After Saturday, he'll be governing only with the support of independents, but not for long.'

Chifley was shaking his head as he attempted to accommodate all Harriet was saying.

'Yes,' Harriet continued, with a glance towards her grandparents who were sitting listening to all of this with numbed expressions. 'Menzies will resign as prime minister August next year. Arty Fadden will replace him.'

'Good God, a Country Party Prime Minister!' Margaret said in a shocked voice. 'I can't believe it.'

'Well, that's exactly what will happen,' Harriet continued. 'But Fadden's conservative coalition will collapse when two independent MPs cross the floor, forty days after taking power – on 7 October, if I remember correctly.'

'And then what?' Chifley asked.

'Then what?' Harriet smiled knowingly. 'Your man, John Curtin will have the numbers.'

'Good God,' Chifley exclaimed.

Margaret and Charles had now stood up and were moving towards Chifley, as if to congratulate him on something that was still at least ten months away.

'You'll be Treasurer, sir, for most of the war, and so you'll be in the War Cabinet when the *Sydney* is attacked and sunk the following month on 19 November.'

'What can we do to save it?' Chifley asked.

His mind was racing.

'Warn Captain Joe Burnett directly. By then he will have the command of the *Sydney*. Don't attempt to go through the command channels,' Harriet said deliberately in a lowered and purposeful tone.

'Yes, of course.'

Chifley was taking all of this in.

'And you're sure of all this?'

'I couldn't be surer.'

'You say you come from another time? Did you say you have travelled in time from Easter 2012?'

'Yes, with my colleague, my partner, Dr Peter St Claire, whose exact present location you have already been so kind to discover for us. I must thank you very sincerely for that, sir.'

'I'm afraid there's not much we can do for him, even *if* I'm elected on Saturday —'

'You will be, Mr Chifley – quite comfortably – if I remember. But I'm sorry to interrupt you.'

'Yes, from what you had already said, I gather I'm going to be okay on Saturday,' Chifley said. 'But I was saying about your ... ah friend ... Dr St Claire ... there's not much we can do for him to get him out of his present predicament. You see, he's essentially *persona non grata*'.

'Yes, I understand, Mr Chifley. Like me, he only has a forged birth certificate. That was done hurriedly in case the authorities confronted us. We knew there would be no match for these in government records.'

'I must say I was concerned at first when people in my electoral office pointed this out to me. The Navy people had checked on you, of course. While you were *persona non-grata* you at least had two very reputable citizens vouching for you. But not so with Dr St Claire, I'm afraid.'

Harriet smiled at Chifley's fatherly concern.

'That's okay, Mr Chifley. I'm sure he can look after himself. He's quite resourceful.'

'He may need to be. I hear some of those internment camps are pretty tough going.'

Chifley suddenly had a very serious expression. Charles and Margaret looked to Harriet for her reaction.

'You have been a mine of information, Miss Barsden,' Chifley continued. 'And I'm sure it's very opportune I have met you. It sounds as if I will need to talk with you more, particularly if events work out in the coming years, as you have said.'

'Thank you, sir. It's the least I can do for my country.'

She smiled in the most devilish manner, enjoying the circumstances.

'But, I must rush off. I'm sure you'll appreciate I have many things to do before the election on Saturday.'

'Yes, we have taken up much of your time,' Margaret said, looking at the large grandfather clock at the entrance to the room.

Harriet was expecting his parting questions.

'How did history record the performance of Curtin's government?' he asked as he put on his coat.

'Very well, indeed, sir. You all performed ... or should I say, you will all perform marvellously: no less when you become Australia's sixteenth prime minister.'

'I think it's best if I don't hear what you might be going to say next.'

Chifley looked worried as he shook their hands and said his goodbyes.

* * *

I soon learnt the journalist from Sydney, Adolf von Merhad, had had professional associations with Wolf back in Germany before the war. 'Don't trust the bastard' Wolf warned me one beautiful spring day as we sat out in the open soaking up the sun.

'I quickly learnt that on the few occasions I had to deal with him before the war.'

'What's his problem?' I asked.

'What do the American Indians say in the Hollywood movies? He speaks with a forked tongue. That's it. In a sly way, he'll ask you for information, and before you can turn your back, he's in the Commandant's office.'

He was referring to Major Sloane, the camp's commander. I had had no direct dealings with Sloane, but from all accounts, he was a reasonable bloke – a veteran of Gallipoli, and apparently badly shaken following that terrible epoch. I'd heard he was fighting a losing battle against accumulated demons from the terrible war. But he considered it his duty to serve his country, so he had come in from his cherry orchard located near a little village called Millthorpe about half way to Bathurst, towards the township of Blayney. I had to admire him for that. Life must have been cruel for those wretched veterans from the last war. But we, from the year 2012, better understood all of that, with our experiences of the damned Vietnam War veterans.

But that was something I couldn't talk about here, particularly with Wolf, who was ever eager for me to talk about my time-slip experiences. But I refused to talk about that. There was too much at stake.

I could never work out where Wolf was coming from with his talk about von Merhad. Von Merhad certainly was an unpleasant bloke. But I had met many of those in my time in universities. But to be fair to him, he was in no way offensive in his

relationship with me. He was always keen to chat, particularly about the South Australian German people, something of whom I had very little detailed knowledge. And of course, my knowledge was of 2012. He assumed I would know of the Germans in South Australia in 1940.

'But you must know them,' he exclaimed, baring his dark, almost rotten teeth, when I couldn't answer his questions about a German family who had pioneered viticulture in the state. I simply knew nothing of this family. Unless their name was current on wine bottles in South Australia, I was at a loss to help him.

I soon discovered von Merhadt was freelancing for several German magazines in writing these articles, although he tended to publish in the *Hamburger Illustrierte*. I needed to remind myself this was the high-water period, the halcyon years of magazines and newspapers and hence, journalism was possible as a career. I had only to think of the wonderful array of journals here in Australia during this period – the vast numbers of journals spawned by the Packers and the Fairfaxes, other than their dailies.

Apparently, von Merhadt was pursuing his assignment in these countries which had large and long-standing German populations. He'd just finished twelve months doing the same thing in South Africa. Yes, there would be a definite readership for this kind of thing at this point in history.

Maybe, it was von Merhadt's physical appearance Wolf found difficult. Von Merhadt certainly had an unpleasant, even aggressive appearance. He was a small man, small-framed, with little muscle or flesh. In another life, I imagined him as a jockey who had spent too long in the sauna; this miserable existence also had affected his miserable persona. He was a serious man, never enjoying a joke, and continually pointing to deficiencies in camp life. But, of course, we hardly needed him to remind us of this.

I soon discovered being an enemy alien in wartime Australia gave me ample time to study human behaviour. There was not much else to do. There were a few magazines, of the Woman's Weekly kind, floating around the camp, provided by the Red Cross in their very few visits. A few books, mostly by Daphne du Maurier, came my way. I read *Jamaica Inn* in a day or two, then I asked about how to swap it for *The House on the Strand*, which I wanted to re-read. It was du Murier's fascinating story of a drug-induced episode resulting in a time-slip novel that introduced me to this genre, maybe ten or so years ago now. But, even the most avid readers looked at me with shaking

heads, indicating they had never heard of the work. Then I realised, later of course, that they wouldn't have. It was only published in 1969, when interest in the paranormal was becoming more popular with the general public.

So, for most of my days, I was reduced simply to thinking about these things. There was little opportunity to write because of the paucity of writing materials. Occasionally, the Red Cross did bring in some basics. But to whom could I write? Any attempted communication with Harriet was sure to unduly stir the interests of those who censored the mail. Where *is* Harriet, I wondered.

Of course, there was plenty of time for talk and, for me, this was mostly with Wolf. I soon got to know him very well, indeed. Von Laden was a typical proud German, and looked every part of the kind of Hollywood Germans I had seen many times on the screen. He was an athletic-looking man, with thick, curly, blond hair, flashing blue eyes and a tanned skin. His appearance was such that he might have spent his younger days in the Hitler Youth. But he assured me the only time there was when Hitler demanded it.

He was continually taking long walks around the camp's perimeter fence. I would often accompany him on these walks. He seemed to know all the guards by their first names, waving to them and passing jokes about camp life and Hitler's next little adventure.

Wolf constantly assured me his early enthusiasm for the Nazis had long dissipated. Like many middle-class Germans, he said, he initially held out much hope for what the Nazis would do for Germany – not just material and economic progress, but also repairing some of the national pride the Treaty of Versailles had so terribly tainted. But, Wolf confessed, this present war may yet prove to be a grandiose and Herculean mistake by Hitler and his henchmen.

He dwelt on this topic many times over and the more I heard him repeat it the more I began to sense he was saying it purely for my benefit. There was just something about the way he said it! *I should wait though, before I made any quick judgement about him.*

Soon I found I was understanding the others in our hut through Wolf's eyes and prejudices. The two Lutheran missionaries from the Hermansburg Mission in the Northern Territory – Werner Osberg and Wilhelm Geiger – belonged to a small class of Germans who saw their life mission in other lands, saving the souls of primitive people.

Germany had always had these people. While many would argue they should be devoting their energies to work in the fatherland, developing it for future generations, people such as the Werner Osbergs and Wilhelm Geigers believed they were better placed outside Germany. This was a sentiment I tried to understand from my 2012 perspective. I understood how deeply the wrongs of the Treaty of Versailles had bitten into the German psyche of the 1930s. It was not for me to judge from my 2012 perspective what Wolf was saying. I attempted to understand what Wolf was saying from a 1940 perspective. Did he despise these two apparently harmless Lutheran missionaries simply because they were so intensely anti-Nazi?

I often found myself staring at the two missionaries. They were always polite to me, but never attempted to talk on a personal level with me. I sensed most of the discourse was with their God. They were the very essence of piety and humility, always avoiding any coarse talk. For me, neither of them had notable features about their appearance or personality. Indeed, they were the most forgettable-looking people I'd ever encountered. I wondered whether they were relating to me in the manner they did simply because I appeared to be in so much discussion with Wolf.

Hans Fleischhacker, the PhD student from the University of Sydney, studying anthropology, provoked far less angst from Wolf than did Osberg and Geiger. He would often join us in conversation. In many ways his physical appearance and manner were very similar to that of Wolf. They were about the same age – perhaps in their middle thirties. With his German appearance, it seemed very fitting he should be so engrossed in the study of the human race. His research was on the Aborigines of Eastern Australia. He often assured me human society could never be understood by any other means other than through the lens of race. Race was everything to most of these Germans of this time, as indeed, it was to most British. Everything needed to be explained in hereditary terms.

The two filmmakers – Bruno Schweizer and Sigmund Rasher – were intensely in love. They would wander off to their private little world, and do what their emotions had them do, and all of that had nothing to do with me. Because my 2012 values were more liberal, I wasn't judging them. For that reason, they were very friendly towards me.

Perhaps they were safer here in Australia than they would be in Nazi Germany. At least here, they could only go to gaol for their relationship. I remembered the tragic history of Hitler's attempt to exterminate the gays of the fatherland.

Of the seven people in the hut, other than myself, Schweizer and Rasher were the most un-German in appearance. Maybe, they had managed to hide a Jewish ancestry? What did Wolf think of these two gays, I wondered. He never shared his thoughts with me on the subject, and he seemed to be assiduously careful not to. Only once when I broached the topic with him, I used the expression gay, but he simply looked at me, indicating he had absolutely no idea what the word meant, or at least in the way in which I was using it. That made me think of the many other words from my own time I might have used inappropriately in conversation with people. But did Wolf avoid talking about Schweizer and Rasher simply because they were gays, or was it because they had some dark ancestry?

All of these worrying thoughts were mixing in my mind as I lay awake one night in early December, a darky moonless night with heavy cloud. I had been thinking about Wolf and his attitude towards von Merhad. On several occasions during the past few days I had noticed them surreptitiously swapping glances. Surely, not the actions of men who intensely disliked the other. It was as if they were communicating in some weird pre-determined manner. Exactly, what is going on with these two, I wondered?

Then, two nights later, when I was also lying awake in my uncomfortable bunk, von Merhad left the hut at what I guessed to be about two-thirty in the morning – maybe to go to the communal ablution block. He had only been gone for ten minutes when Wolf left, possibly to go to the toilet. I suppose there was nothing unusual in this, but it only twigged when I connected it with their surreptitious swapping of glances. *Don't be such a conspiracy theorist, St Claire!*

Chapter 34

Harriet had told me she had started the Dodge frequently to ensure it was in good running order with a fully charged battery. But she had avoided driving the vehicle into Bathurst when she made her weekly reports to the police station. She told me that she often joked to her grandparents that 'the local bloody police' had her under surveillance, and she didn't want to needlessly upset their day.

So the weeks passed, and it was now mid-December. She would soon tell me her worry for me was increasing at a crazy rate, despite reassurances from her grandparents that if anything untoward occurred, she would surely hear. She just wanted to talk to me, particularly about Chif.

It was only an hour's drive from Bathurst to Orange along a rough road that passed as the Great Western Highway.

* * *

'It's great until you cross the Blue Mountains, and then it's not so great,' Charles laughed as he drove his duck-egg blue 1939 Bentley Mk 5 saloon in a westerly direction through the little village of Lucknow located on the Great Western Highway.

Harriet laughed. Despite the almost unparalleled comfort of this wonderful vehicle, she was now feeling the discomfort of the corrugated gravel road. He was referring to the quality of the highway that greatly worsened on the 'bush' side of the Blue Mountains. In this age most people travelled by train, something that would be rectified during the 1950s when motor vehicles became much more commonplace.

She later told me of how she thought of the last time she had driven here in her Porsche 911 Carrera along what would become a four-lane highway – with that boy she thought she had loved. But now all of that seemed a lifetime away for her. Silly, silly, fellow was more in love with her burgundy car than he was with her. And he made love as if he were a ferret, she said. Good God, how could I have been so silly, she would often say, and laugh with me about it.

'You know, we're not likely to see much,' Margaret said, turning around to face Harriet in the large cavernous area that was the rear seat.

'I realise that,' Harriet replied, now refocusing her thoughts away from the ferret, and his fumbling attempts to get inside her knickers. 'It's just that I need to be able to visualise the place before I do what I need to do next,' she explained as they travelled along.

Charles and Margaret were shaking their heads in unison. They still hadn't got used to this idea of time travel. They were only now getting used to the idea of having a granddaughter living with them, before they had had their first child.

'He really is a wonderful father,' Harriet said. 'You'll be so proud of him.'

Margaret was always asking Harriet about the little things Hugh did, trying to build up a mental image of him, and Harriet was only too anxious to oblige. Charles loved listening to them talk like this. He knew they were going to miss Harriet when she had to leave. They were protective towards her, as if their own daughter.

Charles knew exactly where to find the Orange Agricultural Showgrounds. And Harriet could not help but say 'You know the last time I was here it was a caravan and campervan park – very popular with the grey nomads'.

'The what?' Charles answered.

But they were already approaching the showgrounds. She often told me later how she could feel her pulse beginning to race, knowing that somewhere I was inside the tall fence.

'A concentration camp, smack bang in the middle of the town,' Harriet exclaimed. 'It's disgusting!'

'It's wartime, remember dear,' Margaret reminded her granddaughter.

'Oh, it's just that I'm reminded of our internment camps we have in my time for people escaping the brutality of their own country, and the public outcry and fierce debate we have about them,' Harriet answered.

She was being distracted from the reason for her visit here.

'I wonder where he is?' she said, as Charles parked the Bentley in a quiet section of Margaret Street, opposite the camp.

Apart from having a reasonably accurate mental picture of the camp and where I might be, she also needed to have a mental picture of where she was not to appear: around the main gate and the nearby administration area.

'You can't see much,' Charles said. 'But I don't want to get out of the car, and try to see any better.'

'No, we don't need to make it too obvious,' Margaret said, craning her neck to get a better vista of the camp. 'This car is a little obvious, and very well-known about the town.'

Harriet was aware of a mass of people in the camp. She could see some people moving about. She knew there were some females there, but not many. She could mainly only see the rooftops of the huts, so high was the corrugated iron fencing.

'Of course, you have no way of knowing his exact hut,' Charles said.

'No, I don't,' Harriet answered. 'But I just need to go on my gut feelings ... instincts, you know ... and trust them.'

'Have you thought what would happen if you were to drop in on the wrong area?' Charles asked.

Margaret was looking to Harriet, as if she were her own daughter embarking on some long and dangerous adventure.

'Do give it plenty of thought, darling,' Margaret said with intense concern.

'If you're caught in there by the guards, they'll be in touch with the Bathurst police before you can say Jack Robinson,' Charles warned.

Harriet smiled at that expression. But he was right; she knew that much. She was well aware the administration here probably already had her photograph.

'I've got to at least try, Nan,' she answered.

Her use of the term of endearment brought tears to Margaret's eyes. There was a wonderful and tender relationship building between the three of them.

'I think I know roughly where I should appear,' Harriet said in a definite way. 'I certainly know where I shouldn't appear.'

'Take care, darling. You're the only granddaughter we have,' Charles said.

* * *

She told me later how several days after, she had departed Twin Rivers in the Dodge through the back road to Titania and, from there, to the short stretch of the highway she needed to travel on before she arrived at Mt Victoria. It was a dark, moonless night, and before she had reached the small township the heavy cloud rolling in from the east had further reduced visibility. This is just what the doctor ordered, she told herself.

She would tell me later how her pulse quickened at her use of the word 'doctor'. God, I've missed you, darling, she had said as she drew closer to Mt Victoria. But she really had no idea how she was going to make contact with me once inside the camp. She was confident some opportunity would present itself. People have always said for her the glass is always half-full. Even in the thick fog and cloud she had no difficulty in finding the narrow sandy track leading to Fuhi's time-slip launching pad.

* * *

Ten minutes or so after von Merhadt had left the hut, my curiosity intensifying, I silently pulled on my trousers and, with my shoes in my hand, slowly tiptoed out.

With a few dull streetlights glowing in the distance beyond the camp, and another dim light coming from the administration block, the camp was virtually pitch black. It would have been impossible to have seen me from a distance of a few metres. I had no idea where von Merhadt and Wolf had gone. I just had a gut feeling they would be somewhere near the ablution block. Besides, I suddenly had an urge to relieve myself. I thought I could hear some muffled voices coming from the direction of the block so, very carefully, I edged my way in that direction. I was hoping to overhear what they were talking about. *It's bloody strange that Wolf is continually shafting von Merhadt and yet they should go to so much trouble to arrange to meet in this clandestine manner!*

Then I sensed somebody close to me. My heart pounded. *What in the hell is this!* I could almost feel the hot clammy breath on my face. *Somebody is within a few centimetres of me!*

'I just knew it was you,' a familiar husky voice breathed in my ear.

'Harriet, how in the hell —'

She wrapped her arms around me, and we passionately embraced for a moment.

'I just couldn't stand being away from you for another second,' she purred, rubbing her body against mine. 'Let's make love.'

There was nothing in the world I would rather have done. I'd had been thinking of that for weeks now.

'But how did you know where to find me. It's as dark as sin here,' I breathed as I began to comprehend that she was now beside me, and all of the implications of that.

'I just allowed Fuhi's invisible hand to guide me. It's amazing. I knew what I had to do. I simply allowed my self-hypnosis to work on me. I was just thinking about you and the camp. And ... and it just happened.'

My mind quickly returned to the reason I was out here in the darkness of the camp at this time of the morning.

'Harriet, there's something very strange happening here,' I breathed.

'How ... what?'

'I don't really know ... perhaps nothing at all. But when we have more time, I'll explain. Just follow me for the moment.'

I took hold of her hand, which was rubbing the back of my neck.

'I'd love to make love but, strangely, there is something more important at this very moment. Come ... very quietly. But let's take our shoes off. They're making a noise on the gravel. There's grass about, but it's too dark to see it.'

We were about twenty or thirty metres from the ablution block where I could hear the sound of muffled voices

'Tell me, what's happening,' she demanded in a more determined voice. 'I thought we could just make love somewhere in the dark, and then I could tell you my good news.'

'Maybe, we'll be able to do that yet,' I replied softly. 'There are two Germans here acting very strangely. They're supposed to be enemy aliens, who just happened to be in Sydney ... you know the wrong place at the wrong time ... but during the last few days I've had a gut feeling there's more to it than that.'

'Like ... Nazi agents?'

'Perhaps.'

'Can you hear that?' I asked.

Her hearing was as sharp as a fox. We stood motionless for a second.

'Yes,' she said. 'They're not far away.'

'I desperately want to hear what they're talking about,' I whispered. 'One of them ... a guy called Wolf ... has been telling me what an asshole another bloke called von Merhadt is.'

'And you discover them sneaking out on the darkest night of the year for a little conference. Is that correct?'

'Correct.'

We crept a little closer. By now, we could hear what they were saying. Holding our breaths, and our hands, we listened with fascination. No, we listened with sheer horror. Then we tiptoed off into the darkness. I knew there was something she wanted to tell me, but before she could do that, there was something we both desperately wanted to do. My body was aching for hers.

Chapter 35

I'm not sure if Wolf and von Merhadt knew I had been out of the hut while they were having their little conference, but they appeared to be genuinely asleep when I returned about a half-hour before dawn. Because I could hardly distinguish their bodies in their respective beds, I doubted if they could have done the same in respect of mine.

Following my tender and intimate moments with Harriet my anxiety had fallen from me as if autumn leaves. It was wonderful to be in love, and she was so special. But our present circumstances were hardly conducive to our getting the most out of our relationship.

'We can't go on meeting like this,' she whispered in my ear as she departed the camp, courtesy of Fuhi's time-slip medium.

As dawn broke, I lay in bed thinking about what she had said about how Ben Chifley could intervene to save the *Sydney* in about eight months time. It was comforting to know that through the powerful Barsden family, Harriet almost had direct access to a man who would soon be an authoritative member of the War Cabinet, who could get the Navy heads to warn Captain Joe Burnett of the lurking *Kormoran*. After all, this was the reason for our being here. Given Chifley now knew what was going to happen to the *Sydney*, there was no good reason to stay here in 1940. But other things had become much more complicated, and much more urgent.

I needed to think long and hard about what I'd heard Wolf and von Merhadt talking about. This had the potential to render far greater damage to Australia than the sinking of the *Sydney*. But unlike the sinking of the *Sydney*, it didn't occur in our history. *Why didn't it occur? Simply because somebody prevented it? And who was that somebody? It could only have been Harriet and me, surely! Or does the answer lie beyond the horizons of our present understanding?* It was becoming increasingly obvious to me there was so much we didn't understand about history and its causation.

I again began to reflect on Eric Bress and J Mackye Gruber's wonderful 2004 time-slip trilogy *The Butterfly Effect*. Apart from being a fantastic piece of science fiction and a really disturbing psychological thriller, it offered insightful hypothetical examples into

chaos theory, illustrating how, in any dynamic system, small initial differences may, over time, lead to large unforeseen consequences. Surely, this is what is happening here, but in a manner I didn't fully understand. I had just begun to comprehend what I had overheard of Wolf and von Merhadt's conversation. I had to think about what I could do to avert this imminent disaster. *Maybe our mission of saving the Sydney is somehow related to saving Sydneyites from another dreadful catastrophe.*

Neither von Merhadt nor Wolf gave any indication they suspected I had overheard their conversation. Von Merhadt had always tended to keep to himself, and very seldom attempted to engage me in conversation. He was no different in the weeks following. Nor did Wolf give any sign in this respect. Things were as they had always been. Wolf continued to very subtly urge me to give him information on the know-how for time slips. But I was determined to keep him on a leash. I responded by gently pressing him for his feelings about the Nazis.

I knew I had to spend some time with Harriet to think all of this through. It was far from simple. If I hadn't had the Navy security people breathing down my neck, and watching all of Harriet's and my movements, our task would be made much simpler. Then there were those thugs from the Sydney CIB. The plain fact was the Royal Australian Naval Intelligence Division's Lieutenant Frank Joske, MacAlister and Lester – because they might somehow interfere with our principal goal of being here – could be a greater potential danger to me than these two highly dangerous Nazi agents lying in their bunks.

I just had to think it all through. Harriet was confident she could get me out for two or three days in a month's time – early January.

'If you can bring a Sydney Morning Herald from 1940 back to 2012, I'm sure by holding your hand, I can get you back to Fuhi's launching pad at Mt Victoria. Perhaps, we could have a lovely few days together at the Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath. It's only a twenty-minute drive from Mt Victoria.'

I liked the idea of that. I did my best thinking when I was in bed with Harriet.

* * *

Was getting out of this damned place going to be as simple as she proposed? During the early hours of the morning – at 2 30 am sharp – Tuesday 7 January 1941, I walked through the moonlight night to the ablution block where we had arranged to meet. It was the same as before. I was walking slowly when I felt her breathing down my neck: a lovely sensation.

'Fancy meeting you here,' she purred in her husky voice, as she took my hand. 'Let's go back to where I entered, to the darkness of the walls of the ablution block.'

It was only about twenty metres away.

'Hold my hand ... tightly,' she said.

Then I could feel that old familiar nausea of the time-slip sensation come over me.

* * *

I opened my eyes and we were standing goggle-eyed, heads spinning with time-slip nausea on the sandstone platform near Mt Victoria Railway Station. My first sensation when my senses finally came to me was one of delight of being outside a caged camp. *God, I would hate to be in gaol.*

With our normal senses returned, we walked briskly to the Dodge. Harriet jumped into the driver's seat, and with headlights on we were away for two nights to the Hydro Majestic. Harriet had even brought some decent clothes for me.

No credit cards and ID checks in 1941. We simply rolled up, paid the cash, and a pageboy took us to our room, no questions asked. But it was still early morning. That seemed to make no difference. False names and addresses, odd arrival times, were the order of the day here, as wealthy Sydney businessmen relaxed in the comfort of their mistresses.

The rooms were amazingly small by 2012 standards, but the craftsmanship was superb, with all the tasteful little art deco trimmings: light shades and curtains and colourings – greens mainly. Small, but I realised now that was due to the fact these rooms didn't have to accommodate a TV set. That made me realise just how much that medium had changed domestic architecture.

Maybe, my senses for all of this were particularly heightened after the sump oil stench of the rough-sewn timbered place where I had been held captive for the last

months. There were eggs and bacon, toast and marmalade, and piping hot tea from a teapot – no teabags here.

'Well, have you thought of anything yet,' she asked as she lay naked on the crisp sheets, her hair all dishevelled.

'Well, we know from their conversation there are definitely at least four more operatives somewhere out there,' I answered. 'There has to be any amount of Nazi sympathisers in the suburbs and out in the countryside. Remember the taxi driver – the Nazi enthusiast – who took us out to the Shalimar Café that night to the Yabba group?'

'Oh, my gosh, yes.'

Hilary had Bird's fascinating book on Australian enthusiasts for Hitler's Germany on her laptop. We had often discussed it. I had no doubts the four Nazi operatives would be hiding away in a Sydney suburb, possibly around Parramatta somewhere.

As Bird's brilliant study records, there were some Australian POWs who had signed up to serve in the Waffen SS unit! I wondered how many more of a similar ilk might be secretly tucked away in Sydney in 1941, waiting to serve the Nazis in their evil international ambitions? If Menzies could return to Australia, only three years ago, praising the work the Nazis were doing in Germany, how many more Australians of power and influence might come out of the woodwork to support a Nazi invasion of Australia?

'While we missed much of what Wolf and von Merhadt were talking about, we do know they intend to paralyse Sydney's power supply.'

'And we know just how much Sydney depends on the power station.'

'Sure. While I don't know much about Sydney's wartime power grid, I do know there are some large power stations about the place.'

Indeed, as I thought about this, I realised I knew very little about this topic.

'Grandfather will be able to tell me.'

I smiled at her use of the term 'Grandfather', and interrupted her line of discussion.

'How old were you when your grandfather, Charles, died?'

'Ten, I think.'

'Well, I was just thinking there aren't too many people who get a second chance to know their grandparents, as you have done.'

'It's been really lovely. Now I can appreciate my father so much more,' she answered with a smile.

'But back to the problem. Wolf and von Merhadt were certainly talking about some other stations. But I missed some of that. Your German is much better than mine, Peter.'

I smiled at her assessment of my understanding of German. I doubted very much if mine was any better than hers. Of course, she was correct in thinking Wolf and von Merhadt had mentioned other sympathisers, but I hadn't heard that clearly, either. But there must be others, we thought.

'They're surely located close to a horde of explosives of some kind, wherever that might be.'

'What can we do?' she asked with a sigh.

'First, I think you need to talk with Chifley, but insist he doesn't go to any defense authority with the information. Otherwise, I'm sure those heavy-handed nincompoops from the Navy, or wherever —'

'Or ... worse still ... the local CIB thuggery with their incompetence!' she exclaimed, looking at me with a horrified expression.

'I wonder exactly when Wolf and von Merhadt and co will strike?' I asked. 'What would they need to trigger their evil?'

'Obviously, a situation where Australia is at its most vulnerable,' she answered.

'Yes! Yes, of course! Exactly, and I should have thought of that: after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour and the terrible frenetic shockwaves that followed here. Maybe, after the surrender of Singapore? Or the submarine attack on Sydney and Newcastle? I wonder.'

'Yes, our timing in telling Chifley will be very important, and we must warn him about sitting on the information until we're sure they're about to strike. Those incompetents from the CIB would certainly blow it,' I answered. 'Remember, this is likely to occur when Chifley is in the War Cabinet. I'm sure we're correct in thinking it will be some time soon after the Japanese victory in Singapore, but more likely at the time of the submarine attack on Sydney and Newcastle. We know of the extent of the chaos ... in Sydney particularly ... when those strikes occurred. I think we can forget about its occurring during the time of the Japanese air raids on Darwin. Virtually no Australians knew about those, and there was certainly no general panic in Sydney.'

'Yes, I'm sure we can forget about the Darwin air raids. Even to this day, few Australians outside the Top End seem to know about them. And certainly, there was no panic in Sydney. So, I tell Chif, and then what?'

She was waiting for me to continue.

'Well, I think he needs to know about the threat, and needs to understand exactly why he must sit on the information until at least the time of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour.'

'Yes, December 7.'

'By then, of course, we'll know of the fate of the *Sydney*. If we're successful in preventing that, we'll have established our credentials with Chifley. He'll understand we're fair dinkum.'

'Yes,' she answered. 'But I'm sure ... thanks to my grandparents' testimony ... he already believes our story. I'm sure of that.'

'So, maybe, we're looking at the time of the fall of Singapore,' I suggested.

She was nodding her head, thoughtfully. I could see she was assessing this event in Australia's history as a likely trigger for this impending evil that was being planned for the innocent people of Sydney.

Of course, in a little over twelve months time, the fall of Singapore would inflict terrible psychological damage on the Australian nation, apart from the equally terrible damage it did to the thousands of Aussie diggers who subsequently were marched into POW camps. And, given my last several months internment in the Orange Internment Camp, I could start empathising with them about the camp conditions which, incidentally, hardly rated against what the poor bloody Aussies diggers would go through at Changi. What insufferable horrors they endured as slave labourers on the Burmese Railway.

I reminded myself that at the moment Singapore was the major British military base in South-east Asia – the Gibraltar of the East. But, Harriet and I were the only two people alive today, here in January 1941, who knew it would fail very poorly in its right to use the title 'fortress' in a military sense.

In thirteen months time – on 15 February 1942 to be exact – following a pathetic week of fighting, more than 80 000 British, Indian and Australian troops would be surrendering to a much smaller Japanese force. Indeed, the often-displayed Japanese

propaganda photograph of Lieutenant General Arthur Percival being led by a Japanese officer, and walking under a flag of truce to negotiate the capitulation of Allied forces in Singapore would become a potent symbol of pathetic soldiering and leadership, apart from marking the end of the British as a force in South-east Asia. This would become the largest surrender of British-led forces in history.

These poor bloody Aussie diggers would join the 50 000 other British, Australian and British Empire soldiers taken by the Japanese in the Malayan Campaign. Very soon, Churchill would be calling this wretched capitulation the 'worst disaster' and 'largest capitulation' in British history. But for Australians, it sent nervous shockwaves through the country, as they began to prepare for what appeared to be an imminent Japanese invasion. But, there was worse to come.

Maybe, and more likely, the Nazi agents would strike at Sydney's power stations at the time of the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney and Newcastle.

That would mean I had another four months to spend in the internment camp, waiting and watching for these Nazi bastards to make their move. I knew the history of the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney and Newcastle very well. I once interviewed a young final-year medical student from the University of Sydney – Lance Robey, God bless his wonderful heart – who was at home in Maroubra, a Sydney eastern suburb, when the shells from the five Japanese fleet submarines waiting off shore landed down on some houses in his street.

In late May and early June the following year, five Japanese submarines would mount a series of attacks on Sydney and Newcastle. On the night of 31 May, three Ko-hyoteki-class midget submarines, each with a two-member crew, would enter Sydney Harbour, narrowly avoiding the partially constructed anti-submarine boom net, in a mission to sink Allied warships. After being detected and attacked, the crews of two of the midget submarines would scuttle their boats and commit suicide without successfully engaging any Allied vessels. A third submarine, however, while attempting to torpedo the heavy cruiser USS Chicago, would instead sink the converted ferry, *HMAS Kuttabul*, killing twenty-one sailors.

Many decades later, amateur scuba divers discovered the wreck of this Japanese vessel off Sydney's northern beaches. But there was another wave of attacks on Sydney, and then later, Newcastle. Immediately following the Sydney Harbour raid, the five

Japanese fleet submarines, minus the midget submarines, would embark on a campaign to disrupt merchant shipping in eastern Australian waters. During the following month, the submarines would attack at least seven merchant vessels, sinking three ships and killing fifty merchant seamen. During this period, in the early hours of 8 June, two of the submarines bombarded the ports of Sydney and Newcastle. This is the raid Lance Robey had told me about.

He told me of the mass hysteria among the population of Sydney generally, but of the seaside suburbs in particular. Apparently, over the next few days there would be an almost mass exodus of people to the country. So, while the physical effects of these raids would be minimal, the psychological damage – the morale of the population – would be massive. Panic would foment through the eastern suburbs.

Sure, the Japanese mission would be to seek to destroy several major warships, but would only manage to sink an unarmed depot ship, causing minimal damage to Allied shipping. Would they know there will be a waiting German invasion force ready to sail into Sydney Harbour when further panic gripped the heart of every man, woman and child, as they watched the population panic, and then have Sydney paralysed through the destruction of its power stations?

'We should understand,' I told Harriet, that while the Nazis and the Japanese were allies in the Axis agreement – their Axis Pact – that the best historical research up until 2012 shows there was never any high-level exchange of top-secret information between the two powers. Maybe, there was some degree of it between Hitler and Mussolini, but there was little between Hitler and the Japanese.'

'Exactly,' she agreed. 'Of course, the German High Command would know at this very moment that the Japanese are gearing up for an attack on the Americans but, at this stage, the German High Command, not even Hitler, would be sure exactly where that would be.'

'Yes. So, the Germans ... Wolf and von Merhadt and co are simply waiting here for the most appropriate moment to strike.'

I was becoming angrier by the minute.

'And their motives?' she asked.

'Simply to strike a mortal blow to the British, and maybe to warn Stalin before the USSR becomes involved in the war, exactly what Nazi Germany is capable of doing:

bringing a vital country of the British Empire to its knees, occupying it, and maybe utilising its considerable coal and grain resources for the Third Reich.'

'All of that makes sense,' she answered, shaking her head.

Perhaps, we had exhausted our discussion on the threat of the Nazi agents destroying the Sydney power supply. I wanted to talk about the *Sydney*.

'I wonder what strategy the Navy will use to save her?'

'It's just a matter of Chif contacting the Navy a week or so before 19 November, so that Captain Joe Burnett is ready with his guns manned before the *Kormoran* can open fire on her.'

'Yes, I'm more than confident the *Sydney* can look after herself in any fair battle with the *Kormoran*. Take out the surprise element of the ambush and I'm sure the *Sydney* will come out of the exchange very well.'

I threw myself back on my pillow, and stared into the lovely art deco ceiling. We had talked enough. I looked to her, and she seemed to understand what I was thinking.

'You're a devil,' she said with her purring voice.

'It's going to be a long year, only being able to meet like this,' I sighed as she moved her moist lips to mine.

Chapter 36

I returned to the Orange Internment Camp via the same medium I departed it. But, of course, courtesy of Fuhi's time-slip, I was absent from our hut only for as long as it took me to walk to the ablution block, urinate and wash my hands. When I re-entered the hut, I could see that not a soul had stirred. But I was now sure I would have a long wait on my hands before I could leave here and return to my university. I wondered what my hut mates would say about my new clothes. As far as they were concerned, they came courteous of the Red Cross parcel I had been sleeping on for a few days.

I was determined to discover exactly who Wolf von Laden and Adolf von Merhadt really were. I suspected the journalist story was simply a cover. But I knew how much Wolf wanted the secrets to the Fuhi time-slip powers. So I intended to put him on drip-feed. I would gradually give him a false account of it.

I knew the months leading up to what Harriet and I considered would be the moment of the Nazi attack on the Sydney power stations would pass slowly for me. It was seventeen months away. My feelings for Harriet simmered inside of me. She was constantly on my mind. We had arranged for another night at the Hydro Majestic in four weeks.

When I wasn't thinking about her as I lay awake on my bunk during the day and night, I was reflecting on the whole business of Fuhi's time-slip. I knew there was plenty of evidence of the many occasions when people had experienced these paranormal psychological states; there seemed to be corroborated evidence that individuals actually interacted with people of the time-slip time to which they had been transported.

I knew there was an April 1940 edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald* somewhere in Sophie and Hugh Barsden's home at Twin Rivers that I had taken there from my first visit to the Mt Victoria Railway Station. Evidence enough, one might assume, that collaboration with people during a time-slip does occur. So, I was convinced my being here now in July 1941 was real. I intended to take something, whatever that might be, back to 2012 as a personal momentum of my stay here – back to my comfort zone at the

University of Adelaide, with my students and research, and hopefully living with Harriet.

But just now, something had been greatly troubling me, troubling me as a historian and as an educator of trainee history teachers. *When I learn of the fate of the Sydney – if she is saved from the treachery of the Kormoran – what will happen to the vast number of books written on her story?* There will be no disaster, thank heavens, and therefore, there will be no memorial service at St Andrews on 4 December. But, surely, Harriet and I had already attended this service. We saw the pathetic grief written across the faces of the relatives and friends of those poor souls who had perished on that fateful day off the West Australian coast, out from Carnarvon. We had heard the hymns and psalms that day. What could be more real than that? And somewhere – hopefully – Harriet has in her possession a copy of the service. What would happen to it if there never was a service?

This is the butterfly effect in its most gripping form. All of this made me think of how Harriet and I first entered the time-slip to save the *Sydney*, to alter the history of something that I know – no, I once knew – for certain had occurred in history. This was the great irony in which Harriet and I found ourselves. We came here to save a ship and her crew from a disaster that history says did occur, and we're now involved in saving vast numbers of people from a disaster that history books say never occurred. It was never in the history books that a nest of Nazi agents gathered in Sydney to sabotage the city's power supply as a prelude to full-blown Nazi invasion. It simply never happened, but I know if Harriet or I fail in this mission, it will happen. *And if the unthinkable does occur, what happens to all the thousands upon thousands of different books already written, that don't mention such a calamitous event: surely the most tragic event in Australian history?*

History is a crazy thing – pure chaos, surely. That's the endless fascination of it all. There seems to be so much more that needs to be understood. Pity my poor students when, or if I ever return to them.

* * *

When I wasn't thinking about such things, my time was taken up with pandering to Wolf's constant subtle questioning of my time-slip knowledge. I allowed him to think I was beginning to trust him to the extent that I might share such knowledge.

'It's knowledge I stumbled upon in my work as a historian at the University of Adelaide,' I let slip one day.

Of course, this statement was not entirely true, nor was it entirely a downright lie.

'What kind of knowledge?'

I hesitated. Except for two Lutheran missionaries from the Hermansburg Mission in the Northern Territory, Werner Osberg and Wilhelm Geiger, the Germans in this hut were some of the most racist people I'd ever spoken with. I knew they regarded First Australians as being sub-human. *But, come on Peter, that's also the way they regard Jews.* I'd watched the manner in which they talked to the Jewish asylum seekers from the *Dunera*. It was disgusting. So, I almost knew what his reaction would be to my next statement.

'Knowledge from the First Australians,' I answered, with a tone of reverence.

'From the what!' he asked with a severe exclamation.

'The First Australians.'

'Who on earth are they?'

'Australian Aborigines – the Australian Indigenous people.'

'Good God. What are you saying! These are Stone Age people, are they not?'

'They may have been once, but haven't we all got that origin?' I said forcefully.

'Perhaps, but some races have progressed? Some more than others.'

'That may be so, by some reasoning, but which races have progressed to the extent they have learnt to gather certain elements from the earth, throw it on a fire, breathe in the fumes, and promptly disappear into another age?'

I looked at him triumphantly, challenging him to respond.

'And, I might add, my presence here now, is testimony to the potency of the knowledge thus acquired from these people.'

He stared at me, his mouth agape.

'That can't be,' he demanded, his face becoming heavily contorted.

'But it is. And I have acquired their secrets.'

I studied his face. *This bastard has swallowed my lie hook, line and sinker! I'll keep him there for a while, as he sucks on the juices, and then I'll start to play the bastard in.*

'How did you come by this knowledge?'

'I found it in some very old field notes from an anthropologist who had spent years working with the First Australians in Central Australia.'

'And you were able to get your hands on these elements from the earth? Evidence, man, evidence!'

'Well, I thought my presence here now ... the fact that I've come from the year 2012 ... and my talking with you are sufficient evidence.'

'Amazing! Simply amazing!' Then he looked at me dubiously. 'Why hasn't your government made use of this?'

'They have for more than a decade,' I lied. 'That is a decade earlier than 2012.'

'Of course,' he responded. 'Of course.'

For me, this was great fun. I couldn't wait to tell Harriet.

Chapter 37

'That's amazing, darling,' she smiled, as she lay on the bed, naked, sipping at some 1939 vintage Seppelt's champagne. This was a time when an Australian sparkling shiraz – in this case the best available in Australia in August 1941 – could be given the generic title of champagne.

'Indeed,' I smiled. 'But what exactly are you referring to? My last statement about our friend Wolf, or my manhood?'

'The latter, of course, silly,' she smiled as she took my hand and placed it on her breast.

'You're very kind,' I smiled.

'Chif was fascinated and horrified with what I had to say,' she said.

'Yes, I bet he was.'

At the general election earlier the previous year, Chifley had been safely returned to his old seat of Macquarie in the Central West of New South Wales. He was now a part of a resurgent Labor Party, squaring off against the flagging Bob Menzies' United Australia Party.

Menzies was a tragic Anglophile, and had made the fatal mistake earlier in the year of travelling to Britain to discuss war strategy with Churchill and other leaders. Needless to say, with Japan engaging in some severe sabre rattling, and the general state of crisis here while he was playing the international statesman, his position at home deteriorated.

As a university history teacher I had read accounts by Australian historians who proposed that Menzies really had quite grandiose plans about his role in the empire. He hoped to replace Churchill as British Prime Minister, and apparently had some support in Britain for this.

But Menzies was home now, and his support within his own party was dissipating like a morning summer fog. I knew from my work as a historian that the following week Artie Fadden from the Country Party would assume the office of Prime Minister. The

Labor Party was only forty days away from office, and Chifley would be in office when the planned attack on Sydney's power supply would occur.

'And you have told Chif all of this?' I asked.

'Oh, yes. He spent more than an hour at Twin Rivers last weekend. Traditionally, the Barsdens have organised much of the support for Labor in the district. We spent most of the time discussing what the Nazi agents were planning. Being a Barsden does help sometimes.'

'Yes, from what I've observed, being a Barsden is hardly a chain around your neck. So, what does he propose to do?'

'I told him that from what you and I understand, this attack on Sydney's power stations – Balmain, Pyrmont, Ultimo, Bunnerong, White Bay – will only come during or soon after the time of the Japanese submarine attack. As soon as that occurs, he would be sure to post troops around these installations and along exposed key sections of the electrical power supply – all the major substations.'

'Good. Of course, they only have to knock out the White Bay power station and effectively they've knocked out the Sydney electric train system.'

'Although, he assures me he will have the troops at the Randwick Barracks on alert when the shock of the news of the fall of Singapore hits Australia,' she continued.

'Good, but I now feel sure it would be during the time of the submarine attack.'

'You've overheard some more of their conversation, then?'

'Not really. No more than what we already know. But they're certainly planning something big, and Nazi troop ships are involved.'

'Chif has even thought of making arrangements to talk with you. But I said I would ask you.'

'That could only occur with a time-slip move at night ... the same way I came to be here tonight.'

'Alright – the same time in four weeks? I'll come and collect you, if I can organise that time with Chif.'

'Good. I look forward to meeting the great man. But we must be careful we don't stir the suspicions of Wolf and von Merhadt.'

'How are you going with Wolf?' she asked.

'Okay. I know he'd kill for any knowhow on Fuhi's time-slip stuff. So, I'm spinning him along with a story about how I had discovered it.'

'He believes you?'

'Not only believes it, but I think he would kill for the full details.'

'And I'm sure he will do just that, given the opportunity. Just don't give him the opportunity, darling.'

'I certainly won't. But he's intrigued with the idea. He's even asked me how to find the stuff in Central Australia.'

'Has he? So, he seems to be planning on staying around Australia for some time.'

'Yes, I'd imagine so. Obviously, he doesn't plan to get on the next ship out of Sydney to Kiel, or wherever, when he and his friends complete their mission.'

'Do you have any idea of his real identity?'

'I really don't know. But I do know who he isn't,' I smiled.

'Don't tell me – Wolf von Laden,' she was laughing at her own humour. I loved this characteristic of hers.

'You put it so aptly.'

She laughed again. She was enjoying her champagne.

'And what did you learn?'

'I heard the name Göring mentioned several times, and I don't think they were referring to the famous ... or should I say infamous ... Hermann of that same surname.'

'Why is that?'

'It was just the context in which it was spoken. And I did hear a first name, but I couldn't quite understand what it was.'

'Interesting.'

Chapter 38

She arrived right on time, just as on previous occasions. She had worked out the quickest way to Chifley, and the least conspicuous. With the time-slip it was best to return to Fuhi's platform at Mt Victoria where Chifley would be waiting for us in his private car.

I quickly tried to shake off the dizziness that always seemed to accompany this kind of travel. I could see Harriet was doing the same. When I finally did, and focused my eyes through the heavy mountain fog, I saw a dark figure sitting at the wheel of an old grey Chev sedan, probably about ten years old, parked down the gravel track about a hundred metres away.

Winding down his window, Chifley looked to Harriet as she stepped towards where his car was parked.

'That was quick! You've only been away a minute or two.'

'Time travel – one of the marvels of the twenty-first century,' she joked.

In the darkness, although lit by the interior lights of his car, I studied Chifley's reaction. It was one of astonishment and disbelief. For a moment, I felt he had faith in what she had just said.

'What every wartime politician needs,' he laughed in reply.

He was holding out his hand to shake mine.

'I've heard a great deal about you, Peter. It's a pleasure to meet you.'

We got into his car, a car that reeked of pipe tobacco. Come to think of it, so did the great man.

'Harriet tells me you've uncovered a plot to sabotage Sydney's power supply,' he said directly.

'Yes, but before I tell you about that, I must ask whether you have got the *Sydney* safe from a German ambush?'

I just needed reassurance on that count. The image of those grieving poor souls at the St Andrews memorial service still haunted me, as did the tragic figure of Yvonne Swaby.

'Yes, indeed,' Chifley responded. 'I can see much of what Harriet has already told me of how this year will play out for us, has in fact occurred. So, I have no reason to doubt what you say about the fate of the *Sydney*. I'm in touch with Captain Emile Dechaineux, from Naval Intelligence, who assures me Captain Joe Burnett will be warned in plenty of time.'

'Well, that's reassuring, Mr Chifley,' I answered. 'Believe me Korvettenkapitan Theodore Detmers of the *HSK Kormoran* is, as we speak here now, sailing into the Indian Ocean on his mission to sink capital ships of our Navy.'

'I believe you, Peter. The *Sydney* will be safe,' he said in a reassuring tone. 'But we also have another threat, potentially, an even more terrible one, have we not?'

'Indeed, sir.'

I then told him everything I knew, and was very careful to detail the speculation from the facts. Of course, much of this was repeating what Harriet already had told him when they had spoken last at Twin Rivers. He listened closely, and only occasionally stopped me while he recorded some detail in his notebook.

'Do you need to continue in the detention camp? Can we trust the officer-in-charge there to contact us when the two agents break out?'

Chifley was drawing heavily on his pipe, which he had just re-loaded with a foul-smelling tobacco.

'Probably not,' I said. 'His guards are taking bribes from the internees, so there's always the danger that he might be doing the same.'

'Mmm. I see what you mean. Can you put up with the place until the submarine attack on Sydney and Newcastle? On the night of 31 May and the morning of 1 June, you say?'

'That's right,' I answered. 'Can I put up with the place another six months? I certainly have better things to do, particularly now I'm assured you have the *Sydney* looked after.'

'If there's some way we can get you out, and have sufficient assurance these two agents will be surreptitiously watched until then, I'll let you know. There may be some way around it. I'll talk to the Inland Security people. But I need to wait until I'm in the War Cabinet, which Harriet assures me is my destiny.'

He was smiling now, as if he was getting closer to finding a solution to the problem of my being in the internment camp until June next year. Obviously, he would be able

to use the issue of the *Sydney* to verify what he needs to say to the big wigs in the Army or Navy.

Chapter 39

When I returned to the camp, I found I was spending each day mentally marking off the calendar the days to 19 November. It was now 9 October, and the Fadden Coalition Government had fallen two days previously. Curtin's Labor Government was now in office, and the days slowly ticked over towards that fateful day in the Indian Ocean.

But how would I know? We had no radios, and the few newspapers which found their way into the camp had been heavily censored, and were often days old.

Unfortunately, Harriet had made no arrangements to visit me so she could tell me the news of the fate of the *Sydney*. But she dared not wander around the camp looking for me in my hut, the exact location of which she was not sure.

November 19 came and went. Maybe, I would have to wait a week or so longer. Then on 25 November, I saw Major Sloane – a smiling Major Sloane – with two of his men striding towards my hut.

* * *

'What's taken you so long?'

She was leaning over the steering wheel of the Dodge.

'Guess what?'

She had flung the door open and was throwing her arms around me.

'We're off the hook,' I laughed, as I took her hand

'What should we do?' she asked.

'I've been thinking about that for a long time. I think we deserve a little break in Manly to appreciate the art deco culture there, don't you think.'

'That's just what the doctor ordered,' she laughed, 'until 31 May. What do you say?'

'I say it's a great idea.'

* * *

Those long, warm, delightful summer days in Manly, in a lovely rented art deco flat not far from our old one in Bower Lane were a fitting chapter to end Harriet's and my time-trip escapade.

We made good use of our laptops which Naval Intelligence had returned to us. I needed to find some files I had on the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney Harbour. I wanted to watch all of this, and attempt to understand it.

On the night of the midget submarine attack at about a quarter to ten, we drove to a vantage point on the harbour side of Manly. We were in place and looking down to the Middle Head–South Head loop where I had read midget submarine M-14, launched from the mother submarine I-27, was the first to enter Sydney Harbour. Suddenly, there were some rather weak-looking searchlights on the water. Then there was the sound of some boat engines across the night.

'That's the *Yarroma* and the *Lolita* attempting to locate the first of the midget submarines,' I said.

'Oh, you're just like a big boy on cracker night,' she laughed as she gave me a kiss.

'They're about to drop depth-charges that fail to explode,' I went on.

Then there was a larger explosion.

'That's the midget submarine M-14 scuttling their craft.'

All this time sirens were screaming across the water. But I could still see harbour traffic – ferries and other craft – continuing as if nothing had happened.

We stayed there until daylight, listening to the sound of exploding shells and depth charges. After all, we both knew this would most likely be the first and only occasion we would have the opportunity to watch a war. As we drove home, she looked at me, and asked 'What do you think? Did the Nazis strike last when all the action was on, or tonight?'

'Not until the mass hysteria builds during the next week. Let's wait for the shelling from the mother submarines.'

As the week passed, there was certainly nothing to suggest the military had intercepted the Nazi agents. But I expected the radio and newspapers would be censored on this, if and when it might occur. We had to wait another week.

In the early hours of the morning of 8 June, I could hear shelling as the Japanese mother submarines I-24 and I-21 bombarded Sydney. I knew that just after midnight,

submarine I-24 would surface fourteen kilometres south-south-east of Macquarie Lighthouse, and the submarine's commander would order the gun crew to target the Sydney Harbour Bridge. I counted ten shells over a four-minute period.

Long ago, I had read about and had interviewed people who were there at the time, including my old friend, Lance Robey, about the terror in Sydney's eastern suburbs as this was happening. Nine of these shells had landed in the Eastern suburbs around Maroubra, and one had landed in water. Then followed the public mayhem. The Nazis would strike at the Sydney power stations tonight. Harriet and I took comfort in knowing that Chif would have alerted the military and they would be there to save Sydney.

* * *

We had just arrived back from a walk down to the ferry terminals and the newsboys, although we weren't expecting too much in the press. There was plenty of front-page treatment of the Japanese submarines, stressing the gallantry of the Australians in contrast to the woeful Japanese military finesse. But there was nothing at all about the Nazi saboteurs.

'Military censorship,' she smiled knowingly.

'Yes, I'm sure it will all leak out sooner or later. It can't be good for the general morale of the population to know that there are Nazi saboteurs hiding in the city and suburbs.'

We were still talking about the absence of any news on the attempted Nazi sabotage of the city's power stations when, at about 8 am, there was a knock at our front door. With a puzzled expression, Harriet went to answer some frantic-sounding knocking.

Chapter 40

People seldom knocked at our door: only the occasional door-to-door salesman and a few people peddling religion. But I could tell from the tone of Harriet's voice this was very different. I craned my head from the sofa where I was seated to see who it was. There was a familiar voice. I immediately went to the door. I could see three men in naval uniform.

Lieutenant Frank Joske from the Naval Intelligence Division looked to me.

'Can we come in Dr St Claire? It's very important!' he asked his voice broken with apprehension.

Why was he asking me, and addressing me by my title? He had been talking to Harriet. Then I remembered the chauvinism of these times. I sensed that they seemed to understand who we really were, and what we were doing here in wartime Sydney.

'Sure,' she answered coolly.

Behind Joske on the narrow entrance was Lieutenant Ross MacAlister, with a fresh growth of pimples, but less overweight than he was when I had last seen him. Behind Joske stepped Lieutenant Raymond Lester, his intense persona more prevalent than I had noticed before. When I commented on MacAlister's and Lester's promotion to the rank of Lieutenant and congratulated them, they seemed to relax a bit more.

'We seem to have the whole Naval Intelligence cadre here this morning,' I smiled as, with a show of my hand, I invited them to take a seat on. 'I presume you gentlemen were witness to the fireworks display on our harbour last night?'

'We were elsewhere, as I'm sure you know, Dr St Claire,' Joske snapped, his irritation a little obvious.

'And?' Harriet asked.

'And ... damned nothing,' Joske answered. 'Your Nazi saboteur from the Orange Internment Camp thumbed his nose at us ... a damned joke. Bloody nothing. We had personnel at every power station about Sydney ... and nothing ... bloody nothing.'

'What do you mean?' I demanded. 'Nothing yet, I think you mean! If it wasn't last night, it will be tonight, that's for sure.'

'Maybe, but what if it's all a great ruse ... a Goddamned distraction for something else?' Joske answered.

I looked to MacAlister who was about to speak.

'Oh sure. Your Wolf von Laden somehow walked out of the camp about sunset last night, and was promptly picked up and driven towards Sydney, as you told Chifley he would,' MacAlister said.

'Picked up by whom?' Harriet asked.

'By a seventeen-year old kid from Bathurst, who doesn't appear to understand what he has done. Some foreign guy, as he described him, hired him to do the job. It was in a stolen car from Sydney they had asked him to drive on the expedition.'

'Then what happened?' I asked.

'At the outskirts of Bathurst they turned around and headed back to the camp,' Joske explained.

'Did he ever get out of the car?' I asked.

'Oh, yes, for a toilet break, he later assured us ... when we picked him up again outside the camp.'

'Did you search the area where he had the toilet break for some message he may have dropped off?'

'Of course we did, as soon as it turned daylight.'

'Do you think that might just have been too late?' I retorted

They raised their eyebrows in response to my question.

'Perhaps,' Joske responded.

'And where is the driver now?' I asked.

'We have him in custody in Bathurst. But he seems to be an innocent victim whom they've dragged into this, a simple country hick,' MacAlister said.

'Sure. I'd say if von Laden has dropped off any note to his fellow Nazis, it was collected before daylight.'

I studied their faces for a response.

'We only had one vehicle and two men,' Lester said. 'Apparently they had to make a split decision either to follow von Laden or search the area in the dark.'

'And who exactly were the two men you had tailing them? Not our friends from the Sydney CIB?'

Their sheepish expressions told the story.

'And what story did von Laden give for his little supposed excursion out of the camp?' I asked.

'His story is that he thought he had a relative in Bathurst, and wanted to talk with her about family matters,' Joske said. 'And then he realised this would only get him into more trouble than it would be worth.'

'Did he name the person?' Harriet asked in a dubious tone.

'A distant relative, and he wasn't sure of her name ... only had a rough idea where she might be living ... obviously a concocted story,' Joske said.

'How did he get out of the camp?' Harriet asked.

'Some poor security, but all the guards speak very highly of von Laden,' Joske continued.

'Including one called Rushy?' I asked.

There was no need for an answer to that question.

'Look, Dr St Claire and Miss Barsden,' Joske said as he obviously tried to gain some control over our discussion. 'We need to know if you can remember anything else you may have overheard them say that would suggest some other target ... or time?'

Then I noticed Harriet looking to me with an expression that I well understood.

'Peter, remember the gravel that night! Do you think they may have heard us, and their conversation we overheard was no more than a ruse?'

God, she's probably right! But what if it's not a ruse, and they attack the power stations tonight? And what if they plan something in addition to the sabotage of the power stations. Hell, the city is bedlam after the Japanese attack last night. Whatever they have planned must be set for tonight.

There was a moment's silence as they all looked to me. I looked to Harriet. I knew what she was thinking.

'You're correct Lieutenant Joske. Harriet and I need to revisit that conversation between von Laden and von Merhadt that night.'

'Revisit it?' Joske asked in a surprised tone. 'Exactly how do you intend to do that?'

I ignored his question and looked to Harriet.

'How soon can you get us to Mt Victoria?' she asked.

I looked to my watch. It was just after eight-thirty.

'Have you any idea what the traffic is like along the two highways leading over the Blue Mountains?' Joske asked.

Then I remembered what my old friend Dr Lance Robey had told me about the chaos caused by the Japanese submarine attack, and the rush for safety to the inland: rail and road would be a gridlock for days, and there was obviously no need to waste time thinking about those options. What was clear to me was that the Nazis would strike in Sydney somewhere tonight, and that von Laden's little escapade to Bathurst and his return to the camp was a trigger for something.

But first, Harriet and I had to determine exactly when we had to return to the Orange Internment Camp to re-hear the nocturnal conversation between von Laden and von Merhad.

* * *

Joske rushed off to the nearest public phone booth to phone one of his staff in the Australian Naval Intelligence Division to see if he could organise a small plane for a flight across the Blue Mountains. He needed to know if the military had a record of private airstrips in the Bathurst/Lithgow region.

Harriet followed Joske on the phone, and rang Margaret to see if she could remember the exact day she and Charles drove her to the Orange Internment Camp. It was two days after that that Harriet visited me at the camp on the fateful night. In her customary efficient manner, Margaret was quick with an answer. It would be on her calendar. Back at our flat, Joske explained he had managed to get the use of a light aircraft, but there was room for one passenger only. And there was a private airstrip at a place called Little Hartley, not far from Mt Victoria.

For the last half hour Harriet and I had talked about who should go to Fuhi's rock platform at Mt Victoria. It made better sense for Harriet to be there, rather than me. If discovered by the saboteurs, or any of their cronies, I would be a dead giveaway. Even though my release from the camp would still be some months away, I knew that they were suspicious of me. If they caught Harriet overhearing them while they were conspiring in the darkened ablutions block they would have no idea who she might be. So it had to be Harriet for this mission.

'You should go, Harriet,' I insisted. 'You know where to look, and I'm sure you're much lighter on your feet, if there was any noise on the gravel.'

There was no time for prolonged discussion. We all agreed Harriet should go.

After dropping Joske and Lester off at the ferry terminal to return to their headquarters, MacAlister's task was to drive Harriet to Mascot Airport. Apparently, they would be able to use a civilian aircraft, recently requisitioned by the RAAF. Just this morning, the RAAF had pulled it off duty searching for the Japanese submarines for this task with Naval Intelligence. *God only knows what this thing might turn out to be!*

'Well, I'm sure you will all have a fruitful day, gentlemen,' I said forcing a smile from where I stood forlornly on the footpath as I watched the others pack into the Navy vehicle. I looked at my watch. It was approaching 9 30 in the morning.

With the three Naval Intelligence officers in the Chev, and Harriet in the rear seat, and with MacAlister touching the ignition switch she looked to me with an expression that suggested she wished I were with her.

I shrugged my shoulders in a manner that I hoped would convey she would enjoy her little adventure. Then, in a blink of an eye, they disappeared down the streets of Manly. I turned and walked back into our flat.

* * *

About 2 30 in the afternoon I heard what I thought was a vehicle outside. I rushed out to see a grimed-faced MacAlister, obviously in a hell of a hurry.

'I've got to get back to HQ,' he breathed. 'Thank you all very much, and we'll talk later.'

Then he was off.

'What is it? Did you find out?' I asked Harriet.

'They're going to hit the Sydney water supply tonight. We were right. It's all been a ruse.'

'The water supply? We would never have guessed that! Surely not!'

'Yes, tonight. They've got a truckload of something they're going to tip into the water supply. I couldn't find out how or where. It wasn't in their conversation.'

'I wonder exactly where they intend to do this?' I asked. 'At the main reservoir?'

'That's at Prospect, way out near Blacktown. But I'm not sure. That's why MacAlister was in such a rush. The others had been in contact with people from the Sydney water supply.'

'They don't need us any more?'

'I don't think so. I think we've done our little bit, and we'd only be in the way.'

Now we were more settled, Harriet was telling me this was one part of our adventure back to wartime Sydney she would remember for a long time. Despite her heightened anxiety concerning what these Nazi saboteurs intended exactly to execute, her little adventure was full of surprises. Mascot Airport in 1942 was nothing like she had imagined it to be. She imagined it would have a terminal similar to the one most people are familiar with from watching movies such as Casablanca, with a most delightful art deco styling. But, no, it was nothing like that.

'It's more like a very large flat paddock with a small collection of corrugated-iron sheds. Oh, yes, there were an abundance of military vehicles, obviously recently requisitioned by the various authorities, and now bearing military symbols, and there were a few aircraft of various kinds, mostly with foreign markings – mainly Royal Dutch, British, US, and even a few RAAF aircraft – but none that anybody would want to be flying into combat.'

'Australia is hardly ready for an air war, then, at this time?' I said as she settled back.

'No unfortunately,' she smiled. 'Just as we're not ready for a naval war. You imagine there're Nazi troopships off Sydney somewhere ... we know for sure; we've told the Navy, and there's nothing they can do about it!'

'No, they simply haven't got the means. No over-the-horizon radar ... in fact no radar full stop.'

I sighed in frustration.

'Of course, as far as the RAAF is concerned, we need to remember that Bankstown was ... I mean ... is now in June 1942 ... the main military airstrip. And a lot of air traffic was from sea planes operating out of places such as Rose Bay in Sydney and at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie to the north of Sydney.'

I smiled. I could tell she wanted to get on with her story.

'But fortunately we had Cecil Butler and his fabulous BAT monoplane waiting for us at Mascot.'

I encouraged her to continue.

'It was absolutely fantastic, Peter. You should have seen me. There were two WAAF girls there to meet us, and they had a flying suit ready for me – khaki overalls, a lovely leather type helmet and goggles. Oh, I wish I had taken my camera. It was just something straight from Raiders of the Lost Arc.'

'And just who is this Cecil Butler and his fabulous BAT monoplane?' I asked.

'A pioneer in Australian aeronautical engineering. He once worked at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory. So he knew the area around Mt Victoria. We landed at a small private airstrip at Little Hartley: a quiet little village about fifteen minutes by road from Mt Victoria. The flight was a little over an hour from Mascot. I sat beside Cecil in the plane he'd designed back in '37. It was the first aircraft designed and built in Australia to be issued with a Certificate of Airworthiness by the Department of Aviation, he told me. It was a two-seater and it was a single engine aircraft. Oh, it was so beautiful, flying so low over the Blue Mountains. I'd never seen them like that. He told me with great pride it was a strut-braced high wing cabin monoplane aircraft: the only one of its type ever built.'

'So, there were no problems with your time-slip escapade?'

'None at all. I appeared in the camp, on time so to speak, and right on location. We're really getting very good at that, Peter.'

'And the mayhem following the Japanese attack last night?' I asked.

'Oh, it's more than mayhem! You should see it from the air. It's crazy! Just what the Japs and Nazis asked for – just the right conditions to inflict more mayhem and terror, and take control of Sydney.'

Chapter 41

As soon as Harriet and I had some tea, she rushed off to the public telephone. She returned about thirty minutes later.

'Grandfather has told me that the Prospect Reservoir beside Eastern Creek to the west of Sydney near Blacktown was the first earth-fill embankment dam built in Australia.'

'Okay, but it would be a very large task to poison the whole reservoir, wouldn't it?'

As she was telling me this I was thinking about where they might possibly drop the poison into the water supply other than there. But then she gave me a clue.

'In May that year – 1940 – the reservoir became a part of the Warragamba Emergency Scheme. Pipes were constructed to deliver water the thirteen miles from Warragamba to the Prospect Reservoir. From there, the water travelled by aqueduct into Sydney. In parts this waterway is uncovered. Imagine! Locals actually swam in it.'

'Well, that's it!'

I stood bolt upright.

'What do you mean?'

'If the water is flowing in an open aqueduct, then what's stopping these bastards from dumping it there? That, surely, would be much more effective than dumping it into the reservoir where much of it could possibly dissipate. Dump it into the aqueduct, then they know it will reach the whole of their target – the poor, unfortunate people of Sydney.'

'God!' she gasped.

'Exactly,' I snapped.

'But where do you think the poison is being stored?' she asked.

'Where are the open aqueducts?'

'Wherever they are, I'm sure we'll find the poison stored in close proximity.'

'Yes, they would have it close by. They wouldn't want to be transporting the stuff across town, would they?'

She had a horrified expression.

'What kind of poison do you suspect it to be?' she asked.

'Who knows! Most likely it's come in from Germany. You know, many of their chemists have become world experts on mass poisonings.'

'Yes, yes. It's all making sense now. Wolf and von Merhadt are securely tucked away in the internment camp, waiting for some kind of signal to break out, link up with their fellow agents, and then perform their monstrous act.'

I was looking at her, admiring her sharp intelligence. *But has Navy Intelligence sorted that out?*

'Harriet, I think we need to go back to that public phone booth.'

'I'm thinking the same thing,' she sighed.

* * *

As it turned out our friends in Naval Intelligence had already come up with the idea of the military securing the Sydney water supply aqueducts.

Of course, the press and radio had been censored in order to control the public mayhem that would have resulted if news had leaked about the attack on the water supply. We had no way of knowing. The military must have been successful in securing it. But I did expect a polite 'thank you' call from Naval Intelligence.

Then on the morning of 10 June as we were packing to go to Twin Rivers to say our goodbyes, and return to a normal life in Adelaide in 2012, a telegram came from Margaret:

'There are two packets here for you two from Chif's office.'

Of course we were filled with anticipation. When we arrived and opened the packets, we found there was a plaque in each. Below the Australian Crest of Arms were the words:

Harriet Barsden and Peter St Claire

Thank you for what you have done for our country.

On behalf of the Australian Government,

Ben Chifley.

'Well, that will raise a few comments from visitors to my office,' I said, looking at Harriet.

Chapter 42

'Have you thought how we're going to get back to Twin Rivers?' Harriet asked as we were wiping our eyes in an attempt to rid ourselves of that now-familiar dizzy sensation that accompanies time travel.

We were trudging our way along the narrow bush track from the sandstone platform at the Kanangra Walls in the year 2012.

'I just hope there's somebody up here at the carpark who might have a mobile phone,' I answered.

'It's been so long, I'm not too sure if I know how to use one,' she laughed.

Within a few minutes, we could see where we had parked the Land Cruiser so long ago. We quickly paced towards it. We each carried our plaques with the Australian Crest of Arms and the 'thank you' from the Commonwealth Government. I also carried my old enamel mug from the Orange camp.

'Look!' she exclaimed. 'I swear that's our Land Cruiser. It's parked beside that other one. You know, the man with the flat tyre.'

'Not after all this time! It couldn't be. How would your parents know we were returning today? Impossible!'

'How was the party?' a male voice from the other Land Cruiser asked. 'I still think it's a strange place for a party. You weren't gone long.'

We looked at them with what must have been a dazed expression.

'You must remember us,' a female voice sounded from the other side of the Land Cruiser. 'Remember us! Laurie and Margie Junee – with the flat tyre?'

'How long were we gone?' I asked.

'I don't know, maybe ten minutes. I've just had time to repack the spare tyre.'

'Oh,' we seemed to exclaim in unison.

'But you look as if you've been to hell and back,' Laurie said, studying our appearance. 'What happened to those fancy party clothes you had before?'

We certainly must have appeared very different from when they last saw us – only ten or so minutes ago. We must have appeared like refugees from war-torn Europe.

'It's a long story,' I joked. 'Just be careful if you take the kids down that track!' I laughed. 'We're off to another party.'

I tried to joke, but I could sense Laurie and Margaret were concerned.

'Dad, Dad, please can we go down that track,' the three Junees kids pleaded.

'Time travel is a contagious state of mind,' Harriet murmured softly to me as she searched for the spare ignition keys for the Land Cruiser which were hidden in a plastic bag up under a mudguard.

After exchanging a few pleasantries with the Junees, we drove off down the gravel road towards Twin Rivers. They must have sensed we were in a hurry.

'Do you think we really saved the *Sydney*?' she asked.

I looked at her for a second or two.

'I'm really not sure.'

'History will record we didn't,' she intoned.

'Perhaps so. But did we save thousands, most likely tens of thousands, of Sydneysiders from being poisoned by some crazy Nazi agents, and a possible invasion by the Nazis? Who knows?'

'What do you think would have happened to that invasion force?' she asked.

'If it were ever there, I'd imagine it has turned northwards and sailed to the north of Papua New Guinea or somewhere else for protection, then most likely to the Mediterranean where it would be drastically needed.'

'You know, Peter, even though it may not be recorded on the pages of our history books, I bet one of the lessons learnt from this whole episode for Chif was the need for a centralised Australian Intelligence Organisation. There was something terribly lacking in the role of Naval Intelligence and the New South Wales CIB.'

'Exactly, Harriet. Now I have a better understanding of Chif's motives for establishing ASIO in 1949.'

She looked at me, and put her hand on my knee.

As soon as I had the opportunity and had some reception on my mobile, I googled prisoners of war and internment camps in Australia: World War II, searching for Wolf von Laden. I found what I was after: Wolf von Laden (1912–1942). This had been bugging me for days. He and Adolf von Merhadt (1910–1942) had been killed during an attempted breakout from Orange Internment Camp on 8 June 1942.

Von Laden was an alias. Most likely his real name was Adolf Sikora from Gleiwitz, Upper Silesia, Germany. He had arrived in Australia masquerading as a journalist, but was in fact a staunch Nazi and close friend of Nazi Matthias Heinrich Göring (1879–1945), a staunch and unrelenting Jew-hater, fierce opponent of Jungian psychology and brother of Hermann Göring.

She was shaking her head.

'Not surprising,' I said.

'Indeed, Peter, but I wonder to what extent Nazi and Japanese saboteurs infiltrated our country during the war. Now I remember watching something on ABC television *Who's been sleeping in my house*, I think, about a home in a Perth hillside suburb. It was about wartime espionage, a wartime guesthouse, and Japanese espionage concerning a plot to blow up Perth's Canning Dam water supply.

'There's a book in all of that,' I answered. 'But there's one other thing I need to do know.'

'What's that?' she asked.

'Drive to Yvonne Swaby's place in Lithgow. She'll know.'

'I wonder if the Dodge will be at Twin Rivers when I next return?' she smiled, as we headed off down the gravel road towards the road leading to Lithgow.

'In fact, when we settle down again to 2012, you should take a drive out to Twin Rivers just for the pleasure of driving this baby, hey, honey.'

I liked the way in which she talked about our future but, deep down, I really believed she would realise she had a lot a living to do before she settled into a permanent relationship with me, or anybody else for that matter. The fact was she had her own career to pursue, and she was hardly going to dump that and come to me in Adelaide.

But I guess, the invitation may be there one day for me to pick up a new career in the Barsden organisation. But, hell, I'd need to think about that. Life's bloody difficult. Maybe, it was destined that Harriet and I were only to be in love during 1940 and 1941. She must have known what I was thinking, because she braked the Land Cruiser for a moment, and leaned over and kissed me.

'Who knows,' she said in a wistful tone. 'There may be other time-slips adventures that may come our way.'

'Got anything in mind?' I laughed. 'Come on, let's get down to Lithgow and talk with Yvonne Swaby.'