

PAGES OF THE PAST

ALESSIA'S RAILWAY JOURNEY



Chapter One

Sunlight warmed Alessia's face as she sat on the front steps of her new house, grumbling about the unfairness of the move. She never wanted to leave her old friends behind, but her parents had promised a bigger house and a livelier neighbourhood. Ignoring her complaints, the removalists hustled past, lugging heavy boxes inside.

"Alessia?" Her father crouched down beside her, concern in his eyes. "Time to help us out. There's a box of books in your new room. Can you unpack it, please?"

Alessia reluctantly made her way up the stairs, still unhappy about the move. With no siblings, her friends were her family, and now, all she had were her books.

2

Chapter Two

Alessia's mother had tried to cheer her up by mentioning the massive bookshelf in her new room. It didn't work; Alessia believed she would remain miserable in this big house with its grand bookshelf.

She tore open a box filled with books, feeling a sense of anticipation. Maybe she'd rediscover an old favourite among them. As she carefully placed each book on the floor, her mood began to lift. The books brought a piece of her old home into this new one.

The bookshelf spanned an entire wall, and Alessia ran her hand along the shelves, only to find a layer of dust that she wiped on her pants.



Chapter Three

Among the dust, Alessia knocked an old, bumpy leather-bound book onto the floor. As she opened it, she discovered handwritten pages, unlike the typed words in her other books.

Confused, she ran downstairs to show her discovery to her father, who recognised it as a journal, over 160 years old.

Chapter Four

They sat together, and her father explained that it belonged to a boy named George who had lived in their house in the 1850s. George had diligently written in it, much like a diary, detailing an important moment in history.

Alessia recognised some of the places mentioned, like Devonshire Street, which was their street and the starting point of the first railway line in New South Wales. Her father suggested they take a walk to explore it further.



Chapter Five

The following morning, Alessia and her father walked down Devonshire Street and through Prince Alfred Park. He read snippets from George's journal, describing how the area had changed, imagining a time when the park was a train track.

Alessia and her father decided to follow George's journey, using the journal as their guide.

Chapter Six

Continuing their journey, Alessia's father shared more of George's journal entries. Alessia learned that George's father was the engine driver for the first train service, making the day even more special for him.

Alessia led her father to the train station, eager to embark on their adventure following George's footsteps.

Chapter Seven

The train pulled into Newtown Station, and Alessia read about a "flour mill" in George's journal, which her father explained was a place that ground grains into flour.

Looking out the window, Alessia struggled to imagine wheat fields where the bustling streets of Newtown now stood.



Chapter Eight

The doors closed, and they continued to the next station, Ashfield, where George had described a small village surrounded by Eucalyptus forests. Alessia marvelled at how different the area looked now.

Chapter Nine

Approaching the final stop, Alessia asked her father what it was. Her father explained that the journey ended at Parramatta Junction, which no longer existed. They'd get off at Granville Station instead.

As the train slowed, Alessia could almost hear the hiss of brakes and see the celebration that George had witnessed when they arrived at Parramatta Junction.

Stepping onto the platform, Alessia felt that their journey had only just begun. They had uncovered a forgotten journal, revealing that Australia's rail network had begun in their very own backyard.

