

Buzz Words July 2013

ARTICLES

SHARING HISTORY VIA FAKE I.D., A YOUNG ADULT E-NOVEL

by Hazel Edwards



The History of this Family History-Mystery book...

Fake ID was always a very popular book, but often for the wrong reasons. Those wanting a fake ID would Google it, by mistake. This Young Adult (YA) novel had the most international hits on my author website, but not for literary reasons.

Now, adult family history enthusiasts are keen on sharing 'Fake ID' with their teenager relatives, because the plot includes unusual ways of finding out about ancestors. And having it accessible in a digital format as an e-pub means it can be read on iPads and computers. Younger people consider it 'cool' to read on screen.

This story is fiction, but the historical background is accurate.

I had professional help in checking the historical probability of my Gran character Magda who has fake ID due to wartime upheaval. And the specifics of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution which linked into Melbourne's 1956 Olympic Games included some athletes who defected. I'm grateful to the sleuthing 'genis' of the State Trustees, especially Kath Ensor, who helped with the research.

In my 'Writing Non-Boring Family Histories' workshops I met genis (genealogists) whose job is to trace missing relatives of those who have died without a will or left unclaimed millions. Using Internet searches, D.N.A tests and document checks, these super sleuths prove or disprove family links. This gave me the idea for 'Fake I.D.' where Zoe's grandmother was not who she claimed to be.

'Cluey' subjects like Genetics and Genealogy fascinate me, but I do NOT look like my relatives nor do I have millions to leave anyone.

Ironically in updating the book for the e-pub version, I discovered that the finalthoughts.com site which had been a genuine site for messages to be sent after death had closed that January.

So often dramatic 'faction' a blend of factual background and fiction makes the best story. But the Dead Persons Society still exists as an intriguingly named family history group.

Blurb: Fake I.D.

Some kids use fake ID. But to find your Gran used fake ID for years is a shock. For Zoe's family history assignment, she had to interview Gran, her oldest relative. But Zoe was too late to talk with her. On the day of Gran's funeral, Zoe found Gran's 'not to be opened until after my death' package. So she opened it.

Turns out, Gran was not just Magda, she had other names too. And other lives.

Had she been a 'con-artist' or a political activist?

What could you inherit? Just red hair? A big nose? Or maybe 'bad' genes? Zoe finds out, with the help of her hockey playing, 'techie' mates Luke, via www.finalthoughts.com, the Dead Persons' Society and Red Cross International which finds Missing People.

And, who are the others in the digitally enhanced 'family' photo? Not all families are as they first appear. And yet, do the labels really matter?

Fake I.D. Historical Issues for Discussion

- Under-age Kids using Fake ID to get into a bar. In what ways is that different from using Fake ID to get out of a warzone? Fake documents? Living under a false name?
- Link to family history, migrants, refugees and wartime displacement.
- Pretending to be someone else. Is that a crime? Does the end justify the means?
- Is it a crime to keep a secret if you think that 'telling' will make it worse for others?
- 'Cluey' skills of how to find out about the past. Tracking missing people. Surveillance. Who are the professionals? State Trustees? International Red Cross? What is genealogy?
- How important are genetics in deciding how a person will act? Are you going to be like your 'olds'? Family feeling and wanting to belong. What if you do/don't look like them?
- Using the Internet to trace someone, internationally. Espionage. Eco-politics. White collar crime.
- Historic events: Olympic Games 1956 in Melbourne. Hungarian revolution 1956
- Is it a crime to change your mind about which political side you're on? What if family members were on different sides? What if you find out something bad about your relatives?
- What does your family tree look like? Any family secrets? Can you imagine your grandmother's life as a girl? Do you have any facts to

check or only the family stories you've heard? How far back can you describe your family?

- Electronic wills and 'e-mails after death'. Macabre or practical? Have you written your will?
- How can photos be digitally enhanced?
- Unusual names for historic societies e.g. 'The Dead Person's Society.'
- How do you prove who you are? ©Hazel Edwards

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