

From Ardrossan

The True Story of
Alex & Annie Shearer



THE FAMILY HISTORY STUDIO

From Ardrossan

*The True Story of Alex &
Annie Shearer*

A true story. Every important thing in this book really happened, and comes from real records and from Alex and Annie's youngest daughter, Lex, who told her memories in 2004. A few small moments (like exactly what Alex was thinking) are gentle storytelling, never invented facts.

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1 • A Town by the Sea

Long ago, on the cold grey coast of Scotland, there was a busy harbour town called Ardrossan. Boats sailed in and out all day, and the sea was never far away.

In this town, in 1887, a baby boy named Alex was born. He grew up beside the water, and he loved to sit on his step and watch the ships and the shining sea.



2 • Two Streets, Two Families

Alex lived on a street called Harbour Place, close to the boats. His father built ships out of wood, and Alex watched him work with his hammer and saw.

Just one street away lived a girl named Annie. Her family kept a little shop full of buttons, cloth and ribbon. The two families had known each other for years.



3 • His Father's Tools

When Alex was still young, his father became sick and died. It was a very sad time, and his mother worked hard at the Post Office to look after the family.

Alex picked up his father's tools and taught himself to use them. Soon he could build almost anything out of wood. He had something special too - a deep, lovely singing voice.



4 • Off to Sea

Alex wanted to see the world, so he joined a great sailing ship. It had tall masts and wide white sails, and it sailed far across the ocean.

The ship carried wool and wheat to faraway lands. Alex worked hard as a young sailor, pulling on the ropes, all the way to Australia on the other side of the world.



5 • The Great Storm

One night a huge storm came. The wind howled and the waves rose up like hills, and with a loud CRACK the tall masts broke and fell.

All night long the sailors worked to keep the ship afloat. Alex was a young man of twenty-two, and he held on tight and was brave.



6 • Safe in a New Land

A tiny boat rowed far away to find help. At last a steamer came and pulled the broken ship slowly into Sydney Harbour.

Now Alex was safe in Australia, far from home. He looked at the warm, sunny country, and he thought to himself, “I like it here.”



7 • The Wide Flat Plains

Alex went a long way inland, to the wide flat plains where the sky seemed huge and the sun was hot. There he built sheds, fences and houses out of wood.

On weekends he loved to sing at concerts. In 1912 he won a shiny gold medal for the best singing, and the happy news travelled all the way back to his old town in Scotland.



8 • Sailing Back for Annie

But Alex still missed Annie, far away in Scotland. So he climbed aboard a ship and sailed all the way home - six long weeks at sea - just to see her.

He had come so far to ask her one question. "Annie, will you marry me?" he said. Annie smiled and said yes.



Drapers
Millinery
Dress Goods
&
Furnishings

9 • The Ship Comes In

Annie packed her things and sailed across the whole world to be with Alex. He waited at the busy Sydney dock and watched her big ship come in.

The moment she stepped down, he knew her at once. Soon they were married in a little church near the sea.



10 • A Home Named Ardrossan

Alex and Annie made a home on a country farm near a town called Mendooran. With his father's old tools, Alex made a wooden sign.

On it he painted just one word: Ardrossan. He had named his new home after the old one across the sea. Soon a baby girl named Maggie was born.



ARDROSSAN

11 • Happy and Busy Years

Life on the farm was happy and busy. Alex built houses all over the district, played cricket with his friends, and sang for his neighbours.

Two more little girls came along. The whole town knew and loved the cheerful Shearer family, and it seemed there were many happy years ahead.



12 • Goodbye to Alex

Then one winter Alex caught a sickness called pneumonia. In those days there was no medicine to make it better, and his chest grew worse and worse.

Sadly, Alex died while he was still a young man. The whole town came to say goodbye, because everyone knew him and loved him. A little later his youngest daughter, Lex, was born.



13 • Brave Annie

Annie was very brave. She had three little girls to look after all on her own.

She opened a little shop and worked hard every day. She brought fresh fruit and vegetables up from the city to sell, and she sewed clothes to help her family.



ANNIE'S

FRUIT &
VEG

FRESH
EVERY DAY

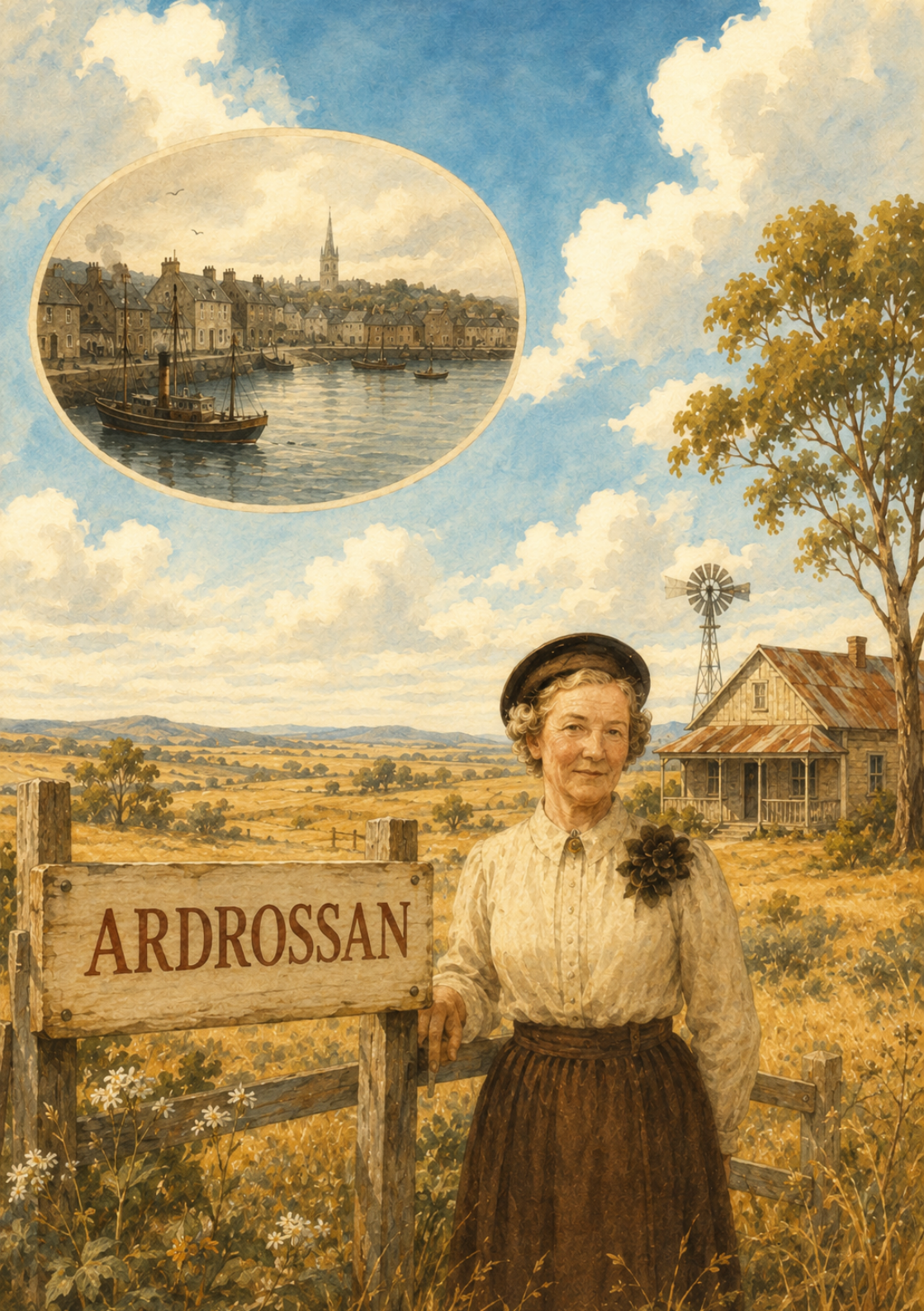


FRESH
FROM
THE CITY

14 · A Piece of Scotland

Annie chose to stay in Australia, the warm country she had come to love. In time she married a kind farmer, and they grew apples and oranges in a sunny orchard.

She raised her daughters with patience and care, and she lived a long and happy life. And the little farm still keeps its special name today: Ardrossan - a piece of Scotland under the wide blue sky.



The End. *Alexander Shearer was born in Ardrossan, Scotland, in 1887 and died in Mendooran, New South Wales, in 1921. Annie Barclay Tyre was born in Ardrossan in 1889 and lived until 1979. They married in Sydney in 1914. Their three daughters were Margaret, Catherine and Alexandra ("Lex"). This story was made for their family by The Family History Studio.*



*From a grey harbour town in
Scotland to a sunny farm across
the world - the true story of
Alex, the singing sailor, and the
name he carried all the way
home.*

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