

C H A P T E R 1

She hated men. So many years of dating online blurred them all into one horrible image. At first it was exciting; champagne, sunsets, walks on the beach, romantic candlelight dinners and dancing on a moonlit deck. Not any more. Sweet anticipation had become a bitter reality.

Audrey tilted her glass and sucked the last few drops of wine as she reached for the bottle. Her once slender body was now heavy with disappointment. Her over bleached hair was tied back in a stumpy ponytail and disguised with a cheap, worn hairpiece. Audrey's heavy breasts were unwelcome companions kept tightly braced in an unflattering Genie Bra. At times she felt as though she had entered a hormonal fog that clung to every corner of her mind. The only clarity of thought was accompanied by a deep-seated anger. Everything made her angry.

Today she had plans. She had bookings in both chalets. One was made by a man who enquired about the local fishing spots and the other from a young couple on their honeymoon.

Remembering that she had work to do she gulped the last of the wine, picked up the pile of freshly ironed linens and headed out into the bright sunshine.

Suite C was her favorite suite even though it was the smallest. It had a wonderful view across the rolling green farmland and out to the glistening blue waters of the bay. The room was spacious and airy. Marble tiles in the bathroom and terracotta tiles in the main room made it easy to keep clean. Audrey put fresh towels in the bathroom and stripped off the soiled bed linens and replaced them with crisp clean sheets and covers. The morning sun soaked the native wood kitchen in a golden glow. Audrey polished the thick kauri bench top with concentrated dedication. She had created everything from the tropical gardens to the beautiful furnishings and transformed the old chalet style building into four-star plus luxury accommodation. Her guests came from every corner of the world. New Zealand was a tourist's dream vacation and her Chalets sat perched on a Maori pa overlooking one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Audrey kept busy. Busy stopped the dark from forming in her mind. Plenty of time for that, she thought as she placed fresh flowers in the chalets, a bottle of local wine in each fridge and a welcome note neatly on the native, wood crafted tables. When all her work was done Audrey went back to her suite and waited for the guests to arrive.

It wasn't long before she heard a car heading up to Suite A. It was the honeymoon couple. She made her way up the stairs to welcome them. They were so young. Audrey looked enviously as the young girl in short, shorts and small t-shirt. Her skin was bronzed and taut. Perfect red lips widened over white, straight teeth. The boy was obviously smitten by her. He carried the luggage from the car and they made their way inside. Audrey waited for the usual gasp of wonderment. She was not disappointed. There were not many suites like this one. 'Three levels of pure luxury' she had called it on the website and it was. Audrey showed them how to work the fifty-inch widescreen TV and operate the hot tub on the deck. She wished them happiness during their stay and made her way back downstairs.

Then she saw him. He was pulling into the parking space in front of Suite C.

She immediately put him into balding, boring and bumptious category. He would be an easy target.

She waited until he had carried his luggage into the suite and made her way over to greet him.