

the
Hawaiian
DISCOVERY

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SEQUEL TO *The Hawaiian Quilt*



WANDA &
BRUNSTETTER
& JEAN BRUNSTETTER

New York Times BESTSELLING AUTHOR

SHILOH RUN  **PRESS**

An Imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc.

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Print ISBN 978-1-68322-447-1

eBook Editions:

Adobe Digital Edition (.epub) 978-1-68322-449-5

Kindle and MobiPocket Edition (.prc) 978-1-68322-448-8

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Cover Design: Buffy Cooper

Cover Photography: Richard Brunstetter III; RBIII Studios

Published by Shiloh Run Press, an imprint of Barbour Publishing, Inc., 1810 Barbour Drive, Uhrichsville, Ohio 44683, www.barbourbooks.com

Our mission is to inspire the world with the life-changing message of the Bible.



Printed in Canada.

DEDICATION

To our special friends from Kauai—Nathan & Rebecca Cotter,
Tristan Dahlberg, and Randy & Primrose Rego.
May God bless each of you.

*Cast thy burden upon the LORD,
and he shall sustain thee.*

PSALM 55:22

PROLOGUE

Middlebury, Indiana

Ellen Lambright finished sweeping the kitchen floor and paused from her work to brew a cup of tea. Since the Pleasant View Bed-and-Breakfast currently had no guests, she and her friend Mandy had spent most of the day giving each of the guest rooms a thorough cleaning. While they worked, Mandy's husband, Ken, made a few repairs on the front porch.

Mandy and Ken had purchased the B&B two years ago, soon after they were married. They'd hired Ellen to help out, since she'd had previous experience working at another bed-and-breakfast in the area. Ellen enjoyed her job and was glad her friends' business had been doing well. Many tourists came to the area, looking for lodging, and information had quickly spread about their B&B. Mandy, having been raised in an Amish home, was an excellent cook. Ellen knew her way around the kitchen too. With their culinary skills, every guest woke up to a tantalizing breakfast.

As she sat at the table, sipping the soothing lavender tea, Ellen's thoughts took her back to Hawaii, where she'd had her first taste of what quickly become her favorite beverage. It seemed like yesterday when Mandy, Ellen, and their friends Sadie and Barbara went on a cruise to the Hawaiian Islands.

When Ellen and Mandy became stranded on Kauai, it turned into quite an adventure. Thanks to a caring Hawaiian couple who owned a bed-and-breakfast in the town of Kapaa, the young women were taken care of. It was during their stay on the island that Mandy fell in love with Ken, whose family owned a business raising organically grown chickens. At first, Ellen hadn't understood her friend's infatuation with Ken, but as time went on, she realized the couple had fallen in love. The most difficult part was trying to understand

Mandy's decision not to join the Amish church. However, by the time Ken moved to Indiana and married Mandy, Ellen had accepted the changes.

A chilly January breeze blew outside, and Ellen rose from her seat to put a log on the fire in the adjoining room. Things had slowed down at the B&B since the holidays. But that was okay. It would give Ellen more free time to spend with her parents and siblings.

The phone rang. "Good evening," Ellen answered. "Pleasant View Bed-and-Breakfast."

"Hello. This is Vickie Williams. Is my son available?"

"Yes, he's around somewhere. Would you like me to see if I can find him?"

"Please do. It's urgent that I speak with him right away."

Ellen heard the anxiety in Vickie's voice. *I hope nothing bad has happened.* Just then she heard a noise in the kitchen and looked up.

"Oh, wait. Ken just came inside." Ellen held the receiver out to him. "It's your mother."

Ken reached for the phone. "Hi, Mom. How are things on sunny Kauai?" He shifted the receiver to his other ear. "What was that?"

Mandy moved closer to him.

"Oh, no!" The color drained from Ken's face as he lowered himself into a chair. "I'll book the next flight available. And don't worry, Mom. Just pray."

Ken hung up the phone and leaned forward, his face in his hands.

"What's going on?" Mandy put her hands on his shoulders. "What did your mother say?"

"Dad had a heart attack. He's in the hospital being prepped for surgery." Ken looked up, slowly shaking his head. "It sounds serious. I have to go to Kauai, Mandy. My folks need me right now."

"Of course they do, and I'm going with you." Mandy's brown eyes darkened as she turned to face Ellen. "Do you think you can manage the B&B while we're gone?"

"Of course." Ellen slipped her arm around Mandy's waist. "Now that it's winter, things are likely to be slow here anyway. So don't worry. Everything will be fine. It shouldn't be difficult to run the place by myself."

CHAPTER I

Two weeks later

Ellen was up by six and ready to face the day. After Mandy and Ken left for Kauai, she'd brought some of her things from home before new guests arrived. With people coming and going, someone had to be in the house at all times.

Once in the kitchen, Ellen fixed a piece of toast with apple butter and heated a cup of her favorite tea. She appreciated the door separating the kitchen from the dining room. The noise of her breakfast preparations would hopefully go unnoticed, and neither of the guests would be disturbed.

Ellen nibbled on the toast and watched the sun slowly climb into the sky. *The Lord can surely create beautiful sunrises and sunsets. But I can't sit here all day, taking in the view. Ken and Mandy are depending on me, and it's time to start breakfast for the guests who arrived last evening.*

After she finished eating and had put the dishes in the sink, Ellen spotted the neighbor's cat darting through the yard with a sparrow in its mouth. *Poor little bird. Wish that feline would go after mice and leave our feathered friends alone.*

When the cat disappeared, Ellen double-checked the menu she'd planned for the middle-aged couple who'd checked in last evening. She would serve them scrambled eggs and sausage, sliced bananas mixed with vanilla yogurt, and blueberry muffins with sweet creamy butter. There were also two kinds of juice in the refrigerator.

She glanced at the clock. *I need to hurry.*



After spending most of the morning and a good chunk of the afternoon scurrying to get everything done before another set of guests arrived, Ellen felt tired. She went into Ken and Mandy's room, where she'd been sleeping since they left, to freshen up before her friend Sadie Kuhns arrived.

Two boxes of Christmas decorations sat in the corner. A few days after New Year's, Ellen had helped Mandy and Ken take down the simple holiday trimmings and box them up for next year. But in the rush to get Ken and Mandy packed and to the airport, some of the boxes didn't get put away. "In one of my spare moments, I'll need to get those in the attic."

Turning from the decorations, Ellen eyed the bed longingly. She wished she could take a short nap. But with Sadie coming soon, there was no time for rest.

Things hadn't slowed down as much as she'd expected, and Ellen had soon realized it would be difficult to run the place without Mandy's help. So she'd asked Sadie to help out whenever she could. Since her friend worked weekdays at the hardware store in Shipshewana, she was available most evenings and Saturdays.

Ellen smoothed a few wrinkles in the lone-star quilt covering the queen-sized bed. Mandy's mother had made it, as well as several others for the guest rooms. Most of the rooms were decorated with an Amish theme, so it was appropriate to have homemade quilts on all the beds.

Ellen glanced at the calendar on the far wall. It was hard to believe Ken and Mandy had been gone only two weeks. It seemed much longer. But it was a good thing they left when they did. Ken's father had died three days ago, and his mother and brother needed emotional support, as did Ken.

When Mandy had called the other day, she learned that Ken's brother, Dan, had taken their dad's death harder than anyone, and he could barely function. This meant most of the duties at the organic chicken farm fell on Ken's shoulders. Mandy had also mentioned that it could be a few months before they returned to Indiana. Ellen hoped they'd be back before spring. Things slowed down during the winter months, but tourists flocked to the

area during the rest of the year, keeping hotels, B&B's, restaurants, and gift shops in Elkhart and LaGrange Counties very busy.

With only two guests in the house this morning, Ellen's load had been a little lighter. But this afternoon, another couple checked in, so Ellen was glad she could count on Sadie for extra help.

After changing into a clean dress and apron, Ellen stepped into the hallway. Glancing at her reflection in the entryway mirror, she saw the telltale signs of exhaustion beneath her blue eyes, in addition to worry lines creasing her forehead. Even her blond hair didn't look as shiny as usual. Truth was, Ellen wasn't sleeping well, and her energy level was at an all-time low. How much longer would it be before Mandy and Ken returned? Could Ken's brother handle the family business on his own, or would he end up hiring someone to help out?

Ellen hadn't said anything to Mandy, but she hoped Ken's mother might sell the organic farm and move to Indiana. Ellen couldn't imagine living so far from her parents and siblings. She figured it must be difficult for Ken too. Someday, when he and Mandy had children, it would be nice for the little ones if they lived close to both sets of grandparents.

Studying her reflection, Ellen tapped her chin. *I wouldn't want to be separated permanently from my family or friends.*

The months Ellen had spent with Mandy on Kauai had been difficult, despite the beautiful scenery surrounding them in every direction. Had it not been for the companionship of Mandy, as well as the kindness of Luana and Makaio Palu, Ellen would have given in to depression during their unexpectedly long stay. She'd always been close to her family and missed them terribly during the months she'd been gone. Ellen had developed a special bond with Luana. The generous Hawaiian woman was as beautiful on the inside as her outward appearance. Her caring, gentle spirit was exactly what Ellen needed, being so far from home.

Mr. and Mrs. Hanson stepped into the hall from their guest room, pulling Ellen out of her musings.

"We're going out to eat an early supper." Mrs. Hanson, a silver-haired woman in her midsixties, gave a rosy-cheeked smile. "Do you have any restaurant suggestions, Miss Lambright? This is our first time visiting the

area, and we're not sure which establishment to choose."

"If you're looking to stay fairly close to the B&B, then I would suggest Das Dutchman Essenhaus. They have many good choices on the menu, as well as a buffet with a variety of delicious food. Of course," Ellen added, "there are several other nice places to eat as well."

"We appreciate the suggestion." Mrs. Hanson put her hand in the crook of her husband's arm. "Shall we seek out the closest restaurant, dear?"

He nodded agreeably, then called over his shoulder as they moved toward the door, "Thank you, Miss Lambright. When we get back, we'll let you know how we liked the food."

Ellen smiled as the pleasant couple stepped outside. Of course, most of the guests who came here were kind and polite. Ellen couldn't recall anyone saying anything negative during their stay at the Pleasant View Bed-and-Breakfast.

"Guess I'd better head for the kitchen and fix myself some supper." Ellen snickered as she padded down the hall to the kitchen. Since no one else was in the house, it didn't matter if she talked to herself. But she'd have to be careful not to do that when guests were present.



Soon after Ellen started washing her supper dishes, Sadie knocked and entered through the back door.

"Sorry for being late. I had some errands to run for my *mamm* after I got off work, and it took longer than I expected." Sadie's hazel eyes, with flecks of green, seemed to sparkle as she removed her heavy jacket and hung it over the back of a kitchen chair. Her pretty auburn hair couldn't be seen under the black outer bonnet she wore on her head.

"No problem." Ellen lifted a soapy hand. "As you can see, I haven't started the breakfast casserole I'm planning to serve to the guests tomorrow morning."

"I've eaten your delicious casserole before, and I'm sure they will enjoy it as much as I did." Sadie removed her outer bonnet, placed it on the chair, and picked up a dishcloth. "I'll dry and put the dishes away, unless there's something else you need me to do."

“I could use your help with the casserole, but let’s get the dishes done first.”

As Ellen and Sadie completed the task, they talked about the weather.

“It’s sure nippy out there,” Sadie said as she placed a plate in the cupboard. “Makes me wonder if it might snow yet this evening.”

Ellen glanced out the window at the darkened sky. “I hope not. I have another set of guests coming in later, and the roads could get icy if it snows.”

Sadie bumped Ellen’s arm and gave a playful wink. “It is winter you know. Most people expect a little snow this time of the year.”

“True.” Ellen sighed. “I wonder if Mandy has been able to take a little time to enjoy the beautiful weather they’re no doubt having on Kauai. I should have asked when she called the other day.”

“I’m sure even though she’s busy helping Ken’s mother with things, she’s been able to spend some time outdoors in the sun.” Sadie reached for a glass to dry. “The balmy weather was the one thing I enjoyed most when we visited the Hawaiian Islands.”

“Same here. Although the beautiful flowers and colorful birds made it special too.” Ellen pulled the drain plug, letting the water out of the sink. “Well, that chore is done. Guess I’ll set out the ingredients for the breakfast casserole.” She made her way to the refrigerator and paused. “Unless you’d like to have a cup of tea before we start the preparations.”

“That does sound nice. I’ll put the teakettle on the stove.” Sadie got the water heating, while Ellen placed two cups and some slices of banana bread on the table.

As they ate their snack and drank the tea, Sadie brought up the topic of Mandy again. “You don’t suppose Ken and Mandy will decide to stay in Hawaii permanently, do you?”

Ellen shook her head. “I’m sure they have no plans of staying. If they did, Mandy would have said something when we last spoke.” She reached for a piece of the moist bread and slathered it with creamy butter. “She did say Ken’s mother really needs their help right now, so it could be a month or two before they return to Indiana.”

Sadie raised her pale eyebrows. “That’s a long time for you to run the bed-and-breakfast on your own.”

Ellen pointed at Sadie. “You’re here helping me, so I’m not completely on my own.”

“But a lot of work will fall on you when I’m not able to be here. Have you considered hiring someone full-time? Maybe one of your sisters could help out.”

“With the exception of my younger sister, they all have jobs, and Mom needs Lenore at home to help with chores.” Ellen took a sip of tea and set her cup down. “Besides, so far I’m able to manage on my own. And once Mandy and Ken get back, we won’t need anyone else.”

“You have a point.” Sadie fingered the edge of the tablecloth. “Let’s hope they get back before too many people make reservations and you end up with more responsibility than you can handle. Not to mention that with me working at the hardware store all week and helping out here evenings and Saturdays, it could end up being too much for me too.”

The phone rang, and Ellen excused herself and stepped into the hall to answer it. “Pleasant View Bed-and-Breakfast. Ellen Lambright speaking.”

“Hello. This is Tammy Brooks, and I’d like to make a reservation. It will be for my husband and myself, as well as our little one. Do you have any vacancies for this Friday and Saturday night? We’ll be attending my aunt’s funeral Saturday morning, and we haven’t been able to find suitable accommodations.”

Ellen found it hard to believe that all the hotels and other B&Bs in the area could be booked, but she gave the woman the benefit of the doubt. The fact that the couple had a baby might be a problem, since the policy here was to rent only to adults. And she couldn’t lie to the woman, because four of the six rooms were vacant this weekend.

“Umm. . .would you please hold on while I check on this?”

“Yes, of course.”

Ellen set the receiver on the entryway table and rushed back to the kitchen. “There’s a woman on the phone who wants to make a reservation for this Friday and Saturday night.” She moved closer to Sadie. “The only problem is, they have a baby, and we’re not set up to accommodate children here.”

Sadie rubbed the bridge of her nose. “You could borrow a crib and set it up in the parents’ room.”

“*Jab*, but what about the policy of no children?”

“Did you tell her that?”

Ellen shook her head. “She sounded desperate for a place to stay, so I thought I’d get your opinion before I responded.”

“What do you think Mandy would do if she was here?”

“I’m not sure, but I believe she might make an exception.”

Sadie patted Ellen’s arm. “Then my advice is to follow your convictions.”

“Okay, I will. After all, it’s only one little child. What could it hurt to let them stay a few days?”

CHAPTER 2

Ellen was surprised when she heard a vehicle pull in at ten thirty Friday morning. Check-in for guests wasn't until three in the afternoon, and she wasn't expecting any deliveries.

Going to the front door, she watched as a young couple got out of a minivan. The dark-haired man opened the sliding back door and took a small boy out. As the family headed for the B&B, Ellen stepped out and greeted them on the front porch. Thinking they might be lost and in need of directions, she asked, "May I help you?"

"I'm Tammy Brooks, and I made a reservation with you earlier in the week." The blond woman gestured to the man beside her, holding the little boy's hand. "This is my husband, Ned, and our two-year-old son, Jerry. We're a few hours early, but if it's possible, we'd like to check in now."

Ellen rubbed her forehead, wondering what to do. The Brookses' room wasn't quite ready. Worse yet, their child was not the baby she had expected.

She continued to massage her temples. *How would Mandy handle this if she were here? She probably wouldn't have to deal with it, because she would have said no in the first place.*

"Well, your room isn't ready, but I suppose it would be all right if you wait in the living room while I make the bed." She glanced at the little boy. "Will your son be okay sleeping in a crib? I set one up in your room, because when we talked on the phone you said he was a baby."

Tammy shook her head. "No, I said we have a little one."

"Sorry. I assumed you meant a baby." Ellen couldn't remember when she'd felt so rattled. She had gone against the "adult only" policy, and now she would be hosting a couple with a toddler, not a baby.

She opened the door wide and stepped aside so the guests could enter. "Please come in."

"I'll go out to the van and get our luggage." Ned looked at his wife. "You and Jerry need to get inside out of the weather."

"Yes, it is a lot colder here than I expected." Claspng her son's hand, Tammy led the blond-haired boy into the foyer. Ellen took their coats and hung them on the coat tree. They followed her into the living room.

"This home is lovely. I like the Amish theme." Tammy gestured to a quilted runner on the coffee table. "I guess it makes sense, with you being Amish, that you'd have this type of item here."

Ellen shook her head. "I can't take credit for any of the decor. My friend, Mandy Williams, and her husband, Ken, own the B&B. I just work here."

"Oh, then I look forward to meeting them." Tammy took a seat on the couch and lifted Jerry onto her lap. He leaned his head against her chest and stuck his thumb in his mouth.

"Actually, Ken and Mandy are in Hawaii right now," Ellen explained. "I'm in charge of the B&B until they get back."

Tammy heaved a sigh. "They're lucky. I'd give anything to be on vacation in Hawaii right now."

"They're not on vacation. Ken's parents live there, and his father died of a heart attack recently."

Tammy lowered her gaze, stroking the top of her little boy's head. "That's too bad. I'm sorry for their loss."

"Yes, it's been difficult for them."

"As I mentioned when I made our reservations, my aunt passed away. I'm sure there will be lots of tears shed during her funeral tomorrow."

Ellen slowly nodded. Saying goodbye to a loved one because of death or even miles of separation was never easy. She thought about the loneliness she'd felt when she and Mandy were in Hawaii, so far from their Amish family and friends. At one point, Ellen had begun to feel as if she was never going home. Mandy, however, seemed to adjust well to her Hawaiian surroundings. For a while, Ellen had wondered if her friend might end up staying on Kauai. She was glad when they both returned to their homes in Indiana. Then Mandy found Luana and Makaio's missing quilt by a strange coincidence, so she returned to the island for a time. That

was when Ken proclaimed his love for Mandy and decided to move to the mainland so they could be married.

Ned entered the house with their suitcases, bringing Ellen and Tammy's conversation to an end. "It's clouding up out there." He cupped his hands and blew on his fingers. "Might get some snow while we're here."

"January and February are usually our snowiest months." Ellen rose from her chair. "If you'll make yourselves comfortable here, I'll get the bed made up and then show you to your room."



When Ellen returned to the living room, she spotted Ned in front of the fireplace with hands outstretched toward the heat, while his wife slouched on the couch with her eyes closed. Ellen figured the poor woman fell asleep. She was surprised to see little Jerry kneeling on the floor in front of the coffee table. The little guy had his mother's comb, and pulled it across the exposed part of the table.

Ellen gasped when she looked down and saw a gash in the wood. She was sure it hadn't been there before. *Oh, dear, how am I going to explain this to Mandy when she gets home? Should I say something to the boy's parents or let it go?*

She didn't have to think long, for Jerry's father turned around and grabbed the comb from his son's chubby little hand. "That is a no-no, Son. You're not supposed to get into your mommy's purse."

Ned didn't say anything about the scratch on the table. He either hadn't seen the mark or chose not to mention it.

Ellen decided not to say anything about the scratch, either. She would work on it later and try to buff it out. "The room is ready for you now."

Ned shook his wife's shoulder. "Wake up, honey. Our room is ready, so you can take a nap on the bed if you want."

Her cheeks colored as she looked up at Ellen and blinked a couple of times. "Sorry for dozing off. Guess I'm more tired than I realized."

"It's all right. If you'll follow me down the hall, I'll show you to your room."

When they entered the room with a king-sized canopy bed, Tammy

commented once again on the Amish décor. “What a lovely quilt on the bed. Was it locally made?”

Ellen nodded. “The owner’s mother, who is Amish, has made several quilts for the B&B. This one, however, my own mother quilted, so it’s special to me.”

Tammy fingered the stitching along the top of the covering. “It must have taken many hours to produce something this intricate. I can’t get over how tiny and even the hand-stitching is. I do a little sewing, but could never tackle anything this big or with such a complicated design. What is this pattern called?”

“It’s the log-cabin pattern.”

Ned leaned close to the bed, as though scrutinizing the quilt. “Doesn’t look like a log cabin to me.”

“Oh, the design is there all right,” his wife said. “You just can’t see it.”

Squinting, he shook his head. “You can’t see what’s not there.”

Deciding it was time to end this conversation, Ellen pointed to the crib across the room. “Will that be adequate for your son?”

“Since it’s a full-size crib, I’m sure it will be fine. We recently put Jerry in a small bed at home because he kept crawling over the rail and getting out of his crib.” Tammy picked the boy up and carried him across the room. “I bet you could use a nap too, little man.” As soon as she put him in the crib, he started to howl.

Ellen hoped Jerry wouldn’t cry a lot while they were here. It would disturb the other guests, not to mention herself.

She turned toward the door. “I need to get some things done now, so I’ll let you folks get settled in. Let me know if you need anything.”

“Thanks, we will,” Ned shouted above the boy’s screams, which grew louder by the minute.

Ellen wanted to cover her ears as she exited the room. Had she done the wrong thing by allowing this couple with a child to rent a room? Well, it was too late to worry about it now. She’d make the best of things and hope little Jerry didn’t cause too much of a disturbance while he and his parents were here.



Ellen woke up Saturday morning, rolled onto her side, and looked at the alarm clock on her nightstand. It read 6:00 a.m. A few seconds later, Ellen heard the old clock chime faintly from the other room, confirming the hour. She felt tired and out-of-sorts because Jerry's frequent crying kept waking her. She hoped the guests occupying two of the upstairs rooms hadn't been disturbed too. If word got out that the Pleasant View Bed-and-Breakfast was noisy, business could suffer. The one thing Ellen could do for her friends during their absence was to make sure their establishment ran smoothly and without complications.

After Ellen got dressed, she headed for the kitchen to get breakfast ready for her guests. This morning she planned to serve baked oatmeal, French toast, and a bowl of fresh apple, orange, and banana slices. Between the three items, Ellen felt sure everyone would have something they liked for breakfast. She would also serve apple and orange juice, as well as coffee and tea for the adults. For little Jerry and anyone else who wanted it, she had plenty of milk.

Ellen glanced at the clock on the kitchen wall. It was six thirty, and Sadie should be here any minute. She heard a soft knock on the back door and, opening it, found Sadie on the porch, holding a wicker basket.

"It feels good in here," Sadie said when she entered the kitchen. "The temperature dipped during the night, and the ride over with my horse and buggy was chilly. I half expected to see snow when I looked out the window this morning."

"Well, I'm glad you're here, because I could use your help with breakfast." Ellen kept her voice low so she wouldn't wake any of the guests.

"I saw three cars parked outside, so I figured you must be busy." Sadie put the basket on the table. "I made two apple pies last night. Thought you might want to serve them for breakfast this morning. They'd go nicely with the baked oatmeal you mentioned you'd be fixing today."

Ellen's mouth watered. "Yum. I love apple pies, especially this time of year. Maybe I'll forget about making French toast and serve the pies instead."

Sadie removed her outer garments and hung them up. “How’d things go after I left here last night? Did the little boy settle down and go to sleep?”

Ellen shook her head. “He fussed and cried well into the night. I probably didn’t get more than a couple hours of sleep.”

“I can tell. Your eyes look bloodshot, and there’s no spring in your step.” Sadie moved closer to Ellen. “Are you wishing now that you’d said no to the parents’ request to book a room here?”

“Yes and no.” Ellen rested her hips against the table. “It’s nice to have more business in January, but at the same time. . .”

Sadie leaned closer to Ellen. “Sounds like someone is up already. I hear a muffled conversation down the hallway.”

Ellen retrieved a bowl from the cupboard and placed it on the counter. “I wonder which guest is up.”

“Oh, there you are Miss Lambright; I hoped you were up.” Deep wrinkles formed across Ned’s forehead. “I’m afraid we have a problem in the bathroom.”

“Oh?” Ellen tipped her head. “What sort of problem?”

Ned glanced at the floor, and when he looked back at her, his cheeks reddened. “My son dropped my keys in the toilet then gave it a flush. Now they’re stuck inside where I can’t reach.”

Ellen cringed. Walking along the beach in Hawaii sure sounded like a nice alternative about now.

CHAPTER 3

*Island of Kauai
Kapaa, Hawaii*

As Mandy approached the Palms Bed-and-Breakfast, she heard music drifting from the open windows and knew Makaio must be playing his ukulele. It brought back memories of times he'd taught her how to play the instrument. Makaio had even given Mandy a ukulele for her birthday when she and Ellen stayed with him and Luana. Mandy still played it during her free time, and the music always brought her back to the days spent on Kauai.

Stepping onto their lanai, Mandy set the box she held on a small wicker table. She was about to knock on the door, when it opened and Luana greeted her with a hug. "*Aloha*, my dear friend. How are you today?"

"I'm doing all right, but Ken's still having a hard time. Between dealing with his father's death and trying to keep the organic farm running, he's pretty stressed out."

"Isn't Ken's brother helping?" Luana asked.

Mandy shook her head. "Dan's taken his dad's death the hardest of all, and he's sunk into depression. His wife, Rita, said it's all he can do to get out of bed."

Luana's dark eyebrows rose. "Does that mean Ken is doing all the work by himself?"

"Pretty much. I'm helping him with the chickens as much as I can, and of course, doing inside chores to help Ken's mom. As you can imagine, neither of us has any free time." Mandy gestured to the box. "I brought the four-dozen brown eggs you requested."

"*Mahalo*. With all the guests we have scheduled in the next few weeks,

the eggs will be gone quickly.”

“Let me know when you need more. The layers are producing a lot right now.”

“Good to know.” Luana gestured to the wicker chairs on the lanai. “Do you have a few minutes to sit and talk? I have some fresh papaya and pineapple cut. It might be a nice pick-me-up.”

Mandy moistened her lips. “That does sound good, but I can’t stay long. Ken needs my help this morning, cleaning out the rest of the chicken houses.”

Luana gently rubbed Mandy’s back and shoulders. “You know what I think?”

“What’s that?” Mandy felt her tension ease a bit.

“I think Ken’s mother should hire someone to work on the farm. She’ll have to do that anyway, once you and Ken go back to the mainland.”

Sighing, Mandy sank into a chair. “It doesn’t look like we’ll be leaving here anytime soon. But you’re right—Vickie should hire someone—if for no other reason than to help Ken right now. He’s so tired at the end of the day that he can barely muster up the strength to kiss me goodnight.”

Luana slowly shook her head. “That’s not good. Why, you two are still basically on your honeymoon. Instead of wading through piles of chicken manure, you should both be swimming in the ocean and enjoying the mesmerizing sounds of the surf.”

“I wish we could spend time relaxing on the beach, but as you know, that’s not the reason we came to Kauai.” Mandy gestured to the cardboard container. “Would you like me to take the eggs inside for you?”

“No, I’ll do it.” Luana picked up the box. “Just sit there and rest. I’ll be back with some delicious fruit.”

When Luana went inside, Mandy leaned her head back and closed her eyes. She drew in a deep cleansing breath of air, relishing in all the pleasurable scents from vegetation blooming in the Palus’ yard. Back home, the only flowers around were the poinsettias left over from Christmas. So Mandy’s senses were piqued by all the colors and fragrances on the islands.

The sound of birds chirping in the trees nearly lulled her to sleep. *Luana is right. I do need some time to relax. Ken needs it too. I bet he wishes he had time to go surfing with his friend Taavi.*

When Luana returned to the lanai, Mandy opened her eyes and yawned. "It's a good thing you came back when you did, or I'd probably be counting sheep."

Luana tipped her head to one side and chuckled. "Silly me. I took you literally for a moment there." She placed a plate of fruit on the wicker table and handed Mandy a glass of guava juice. "I'm glad you had a few minutes to yourself. It's not good to work all the time."

Luana plucked a piece of pineapple off the plate and took a seat in the chair beside Mandy. "I spoke to Makaio when I was inside and asked if he knew of anybody who needed a job or might like to work at the Williamses' farm."

"What'd he say?" Mandy took a sip of juice.

"Not off hand, but if he hears of anyone, he'll be sure to let Ken or his mother know."

Mandy nodded slowly, before taking another drink of the succulent juice. She wished they sold guava juice in the stores at home, because their bed-and-breakfast guests would enjoy it as a nice change from the usual orange, apple, or grape juices she offered.

"How's Ellen doing these days?" Luana asked. "Is she managing the B&B on her own?"

"When I spoke to her earlier this week, she said she's been quite busy. But she's managing okay with our friend Sadie's part-time help." Mandy shifted in her chair. "Ellen ran into a little problem last week, though, when she rented a room to a couple with a two-year-old boy."

"So I'm guessing your bed-and-breakfast has an 'adult only' policy like we have here?"

"Yes, but Ellen made an exception and regretted it later. Would you like to hear what happened?"

Luana nodded as she nibbled on a piece of papaya.

"Well, in addition to scratching the coffee table in the living room with his mother's comb, the little guy dropped his father's keys in the toilet, and they got stuck."

"Oh, my! Were they able to get them freed without calling a plumber?"

"Yes. The boy's dad bent a coat hanger and fished them out." Mandy

helped herself to a piece of pineapple. “Ellen was so apologetic. She thought I’d be upset, but I told her not to worry. It could have happened if Ken and I had been there. We both like kids, so we would have probably made an exception and let the couple stay too.”

Luana grinned. “Running a B&B does have its challenges. Believe me, over the years of owning this business, Makaio and I have faced many unusual situations. We are thankful each day for the Lord’s help in everything we say and do.”

“One thing is certain. You two are the kindest, most hospitable couple I’ve ever met. It’s because of you that Ken and I decided to open our bed-and-breakfast in Middlebury.”

“Well, thank you. It’s nice to know we had a positive influence.”

Mandy reached over and clasped her friend’s arm. “You certainly have, and in more ways than one.” She set her empty glass down and stood. “As much as I’d like to sit here all day and visit, you have things to do, and I need to get back to help Ken.”

Luana rose and gave Mandy a hug. “Please keep in touch, and we’ll let you know if we hear of anyone who might need a job.”



Middlebury

“I’m glad you were able to take a little time off and join me and your *daed* for lunch today,” Ellen’s mother said as she sat at her kitchen table. “We don’t get to visit much since Mandy and Ken left you in charge of their bed-and-breakfast. I think you’re working too hard.”

Ellen’s father looked at Ellen and winked.

“I’m fine.” She smiled, hoping to reassure her mother and thankful that Dad understood her position. Mom had enough going on with Lenore, Ellen’s youngest sister, close to finishing up her last year of school. It seemed as if she worried about everyone in the family—including Dad and how hard he worked at his shoe store. She also fretted over Ellen’s other two sisters, who were away in Sarasota waitressing at a restaurant until they returned in the spring. Ellen didn’t want to cause Mom more concern.

“Sadie’s the one who’s working too hard, being at the hardware