

# Paradise Can't Wait

by S.V. Farnsworth

## Chapter One

(FEMALE MAIN CHARACTER'S NAME) stowed both of her Samsonite, hard-side, carry-on suitcases in the overhead compartment and took her seat amongst the passengers flying from Sacramento to San Francisco. There she would switch planes and continue to Oahu, Hawaii. Elbow to elbow in coach she couldn't wait for the Pacific flight where she would upgrade to first class.

A male flight attendant stopped in the aisle to make eye contact. "Miss, would you please turn off your devices and fasten your seatbelt?"

(FMC) nodded and removed her earbuds. "Sure." So much for listening to French opera. "By the way, is there a beverage service on this flight?"

"No." The attendant hustled down the aisle to take his seat and buckle in.

The plane taxied the runway.

"Traveling alone?" The woman next to her patted her hand.

Agape at the intrusion, (FMC) nodded. "I'm meeting someone."

"Oh, is he handsome?"

(FMC) put her earbuds back in and shrugged at the lady because she honestly didn't know.

Affronted, the woman faced forward in a huff.

A lurch and a thump later (FMC) arrived at the San Francisco International Airport. She grabbed her carry-on luggage and debarked the plane with the rest of the passengers. Entering the fray of the busy thoroughfare of terminals, she hurried toward her connecting flight. A man

in a touristy, red and white, Hawaiian shirt elbowed in front of her as she entered the line to check-in at the gate.

“Hey, mister, watch it.” She rubbed her shoulder. She bruised easily and didn’t want to be black and blue in her bikini on the beach.

The man whirled on her and shook a finger in her face. “No teenager is going to talk that way to me. Apologize.” Overweight with a crooked goatee, he menaced her from his superior height of maybe an inch.

“I’m twenty-one and, and, okay, I’m sorry. Please, watch where you’re going next time. You hit me pretty hard when you ran past.” She wilted like a shrinking violet beneath his dark gaze.

He smirked. “Oh, well, next time stay out of my way.” He moved forward in line.

She let out a sigh and waited her turn. The workers checked her in and handed her a boarding pass just in time to board the plane. First-class passengers boarded first and she settled into her cocoon with bliss. Hot towels, a real meal, well, sort of, and sleep.

## Chapter Two

Ammon fell in love with Hawaii before the plane had touched down. He'd always loved military planes and as his connecting flight from LAX landed, he spotted two fighter jets taking off on an adjacent set of runways. Just then, the voluminous lady at the window seat leaned forward to grab her handbag from the floor.

With a sigh, he straightened his hair. (FMC) wasn't expected to land for another hour. He had time to rent the car. Five days in Hawaii, he smiled and leaned back in the cramped airline seat. The fasten your seatbelt light went off and like a shot so did all the cramped passengers.

If Hawaii was supposed to be laid back, well, Honolulu wasn't. He liked the energy. The lady at the rental car place welcomed him with an 'aloha' and a warm smile.

"I'm sorry, sir. All we have is a compact car right now." She had the body of a Polynesian matron, round and motherly, with a warm smile.

He loved her accent. "Thank you, I'll take it."

He drove the car to the short-term parking garage. He'd borrowed a piece of paper at the rental agency and written (FMC) in bold letters on it. He'd seen a picture of her at her grandmother's house but it was so old she had missing front teeth. She was blonde with green eyes and freckles, not too many, just enough to be adorable. Though, how that helped him recognize her as an adult, he didn't know.

He jogged across to the terminals and once inside checked the board for her flight. On-time. He glanced at his smartphone. Five minutes. He strode to where he figured she'd come out and held up his sign. He hadn't had time to brush his teeth since he'd left Salt Lake. He ran a hand through his hair. It was too late to do much about his appearance now.

### Chapter Three

Someone turned up the lights and the captain's voice announced the plane's descent into Honolulu International Airport. (FMC) rubbed the sleep out of her eyes. She'd rested well. Great flight. Moments later the wheels touched down and soon after that she was smelling Hawaiian air for the first time. She grinned and pulled her sunglasses from her trendy purse.

A man in a rumpled white shirt and tie stood outside the terminal with a sign spelling out her name in exacting letters.

She wheeled her carry-on luggage up to him and extended a hand. "You must be, uh, the guy my grandma told me about." Oh, crap, she'd forgotten his name.

He pushed his dark-rimmed glasses up on his nose. "Ammon Smith." He shook her hand.

He had a firm grip that she found pleasant. "Yes, Ammon. Nice to meet you."

"I've already rented the car. May I take your luggage?" He stooped to take the handles from her hands, pushed them in, and picked the cases up from the sides.

He was too tall, a bean pole as she'd heard once. She chuckled under her breath and followed this trim man with ebony hair and ivory skin to the cool relief of the parking garage.

He popped the trunk with the key and set her luggage next to his raggedy set. "I thought you'd have more stuff."

She almost missed the comment as she stared at the tiny compact. The wheels resembled chocolate donuts or something but not real tires. It didn't even have hubcaps.

She shook her head. "Where'd you find this?"

“It was all they had left.” He closed the trunk. “I didn’t complain, it was cheaper.” He hustled around to open her door.

“Thank you.” How much money had grandma forked out to hire this kind of service?

“No problem.” He jogged around and scrunched into the driver’s seat.

His knees caught the steering wheel between them even though he’d moved the seat back as far as it would go. He turned the key and off they went. It was like watching a man drive a go-cart.

She concealed a smile. He had to hunch forward because his head touched the roof of the car. By the time they reached the hotel, his hair had mussed up into a frizzed rooster-tail. She had to fight the urge to smooth it back down as he pulled their luggage from the trunk and she pulled hers by the handles into the hotel.

“Aloha! Welcome to Hawaii.” A clerk greeted them from behind the counter in the hotel lobby. “Are you the honeymooners?”

She smiled. “Do we receive a better room if we are?”

The man laughed. “There are no bad rooms here. May I have your names?”

She released the handles of her luggage. “Only if you tell me where you’re serving breakfast.”

“I’m sorry, breakfast service has ended.” He met her gaze. “However, we have fruit available all day.” He waved a hand toward the basket at the end of the counter.

Ammon handed the man his driver’s license. “We have two rooms reserved.”

“Very well, sir.” The clerk pulled up the reservations on the computer. “You will be staying in rooms seven twenty and seven twenty-one. Do you need help with your bags?”

Ammon shook his head. “No, thank you.”

The man pulled a paper from the printer. “Sign here.”

Ammon signed, they received the keycards, and then carried their bags to the elevator. (FMC) enjoyed the flowers and vivid green plants in the lobby as she meandered after him. Through the spotless glass of the front windows, she spotted a nice restaurant across the parking lot.

In the hallway on the seventh floor, Ammon inserted his keycard and wheeled his wonky wheeled luggage inside. A man swept past (FMC) bouncing his suitcase off her rear end in his haste. She slammed against the door of her room.

“Hey!” She turned to see the man with the red and white shirt from the terminal bustling down the hallway.

“I said stay out of my way.” He inserted the keycard and entered the room next to Ammon’s.

“Sheesh.” She entered her room and shut the door.

A knock sounded on the door to the adjoining room. She opened it. Ammon stood staring at her.

“I sure wish they hadn’t done this.” He shook his head.

“Do what?” She slid her sunglasses up on top of her head, still rubbing her backside.

She would have another bruise. Maybe this one wouldn’t show. She frowned.

His furrowed brow smoothed. “Not you, I mean, this door between rooms is inappropriate. We’re single.”

She laughed. “Keep your side locked and you’ll be totally safe.”

She wheeled her suitcases to the hangers next to the window, lifted one onto the suitcase stand, and hung up her permanent press.

“I need a nap.” He yawned.

She faced him. “Didn’t you sleep on the plane?”

He scrunched up his face. “Passed out for a minute before the lady next to me shuffled past to use the restroom.”

(FMC) raised an eyebrow. “You flew coach?”

He nodded. “I’m guessing, you didn’t.”

She shrugged, feeling kind of bad that her grandma hadn’t sprung for the upgraded ticket for him. “I’m going for breakfast at the restaurant across the parking lot. It’s my treat if you’d like to come.”

His eyelids drooped. “I appreciate the offer, but I’d better catch up on some sleep.”

She grabbed her purse, watching him slip out of his shoes and stumble over to collapse on his bed. She closed the door between them. Out of habit, she locked it, then unlocked it.

She had no anxiety regarding this man. In fact, it was quite the opposite. His gentle manner had set her mind at ease. She liked the feeling.