

Margaret McKlusky smiled as she stood on the harbour front in Auckland. She felt like she was twenty years old again, just arriving for the first time. The skyline had changed dramatically since she had left but nevertheless it all seemed familiar. She sighed and pulled her mauve scarf around her, there was a chill in the air. A man who had been leaning against a nearby car slowly approached her.

‘I don’t need a taxi,’ she snapped, which she did, but she was fussy about who she went with.

‘Oh, I’m not a taxi driver.’ The man smiled. He was tall, with short blonde hair and a tanned healthy face. He looked Scandinavian. ‘I had some close friends on the Divine Vessel, I wondered if you knew where they were.’

‘Oh,’ Margaret said. ‘I don’t know anything about that. Sweetie?’

The man took a liquorice-all-sort. ‘Thank you. Of course you don’t, but perhaps if I take you for a coffee and lunch. Maybe you’ll remember something, anything that might help me.’

She stared at the stranger, he was at least twenty years younger than her and very handsome. When was the last time anyone asked you out for lunch? she asked herself, especially by a man like this. But she still hesitated.

‘I don’t think so, I’m er, busy.’

‘I know a place that does fantastic Belgian Chocolate ice cream, and always serves coffee with cream.’

She reconsidered. Come on Margaret this is a new beginning for you, just go for it!

‘Ok then, I hope it’s not far, I’ve got these heavy bags.’

‘That’s not a problem,’ said the man as he picked them both up displaying a couple of muscly brown arms.

‘Ooh you are strong. You know, I don’t normally eat puddings, but seeing as this is a special occasion. I like to keep my figure you know.’ And she wiggled her hips as she followed him to the car. ‘Where are you from, I can’t quite place your accent?’

‘The accent’s from Finland, but I’m from much much further away.’