

Reviews for Marble Mountain Abyss

There's certainly lots of action and drama. Lee Dixon is a great storyteller! *Peter*

Marble Mountain Abyss was just as exciting to read with the same characters from The Whiskey Tango Foxtrot Squad—Who Dares Wins novel. The WTF Squad from the retirement village sound like a hardcase bunch of oldies! I would love to see the books made into movies and I'm looking forward to reading the third one in the trilogy. *Lynette*

Wow, there's certainly a lot of full-on action in this book! I loved the twists, betrayal, surprises and humour. The protagonist old guys in the squad are certainly not ones you'd want to come up against! I'm looking forward to the third one in the series. *Glen*

MARBLE MOUNTAIN ABYSS

**WHISKEY
TANGO
FOXTROT
SQUAD**

MARBLE MOUNTAIN ABYSS

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LEXON PUBLISHING NZ

Published 2025 by



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ISBN 978-0-473-76708-2

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COPYPRESS

Printed by CopyPress, Nelson, New Zealand.

{REALNZBOOKS}

Distributed by Real NZ Books, Nelson, New Zealand.

www.copypress.co.nz

This book is dedicated to both my parents who instilled in me the love of books and learning—especially my father, who was my hero and a World War 11 veteran of the Italian Campaign. He taught me to never give up and the meaning of the word pedantic. To my grandfather who fought in the trenches of France during World War 1 and who could neither read nor write. And to all the returned servicemen and women who have served their countries. Thank you all for your service and sacrifice. Lest we forget.

CHAPTER 1

The tall man wearing cowboy boots, faded blue Levi's, and a red plaid shirt under his buckskin jacket, pushed open his guest house door. He stepped into what had been his new home for the past two weeks in a town called Canyon, several miles south from Amarillo, Texas. He took his cowboy hat from his head and tossed it onto his bed, followed by his jacket. He pulled a comfortable faux leather chair from under a wooden side table and sat down.

He ruffled his hair with his fingers, unscrewed the top from a Jack Daniel's bottle and filled his shot glass. The amber liquid went straight down his parched throat. He repeated the motion.

The tall man, who was now feeling the effects of a fourth Tennessee Whiskey, pulled his shirt from his jeans, reached in and grabbed a fat Manila envelope. He ripped it open and let its contents fall to the table. There were several American passports. They looked the real deal. They were. His contact at the U.S. Department of State had assured him they would pass any scrupulous testing.

He proceeded to open them until he found the one with his photo on it. His hair was now longer than it had ever been, with a mix of black and hint of grey. His once brown eyes were now blue—thanks to contact lenses. He sported a trendy two-week growth of beard neatly shaped to his neck crease line. The tall man no longer resembled the person he was a little while ago—except he was still tall.

Authorities looking for him would think he had fled across the border to Mexico—as that was the false trail he'd left behind in his sudden departure from New Mexico. It was a plan worked out years ago, should he need it. And now he required it.

He reloaded his shot glass, drank, and pulled another envelope from his discarded jacket inside pocket. He ripped the end open with a knife

and let the contents fall to the table and over the passports. These were airline tickets. Five were flying out from the George Bush International Airport in Houston to the South Pacific islands of New Zealand. Two had forwarding trips to Paris, France. The others were from New Zealand to various other cities in the world, then onward to Paris. There was a four day stay-over while in New Zealand.

The tall man—now known as Henry John Lewis, looked in the mirror above the table. He admired his new look and thought he now looked younger than his 62 years. He reached for the landline phone and made the necessary calls. It was time to move.

CHAPTER 2

Approximately 12,200 kilometres away from where Henry John Lewis had boarded the plane to his South Pacific destination, the screams of a young woman could be heard reverberating around the beautiful bush-clad bay with its pristine green water, golden sand and small rocky islands.

More screams, followed by frantic water splashing.

Jesse Hunter slowly ascended from his cushioned seat and casually peered over the side of his 30-foot sailing sloop to assess the shrieks. He returned to his comfortable seat.

The screaming continued.

“Should we help?” asked his companion, sitting next to him. Leo, known as Grumpy by his friends, took a swig from his green whiskey bottle, then belched.

“I guess I could throw my round rescue thingie whatsit?” Jesse suggested.

“Don’t hit her on the head,” Grumpy responded nonchalantly, flipping his hand in the air.

Jesse untied the bright orange plastic floatation ring hanging next to his cabin door and flung it over the side without looking and sat back down. He snatched the whiskey bottle from Grumpy, took a long gulp and returned it.

Grumpy rubbed the top of his bottle with a towel and took another swig.

More screams.

“You did try and help, Cappy,” stated Grumpy, followed by another resounding burp.

“Yes, I did.” Jesse unwrapped the plastic covering from a small French cigar he retrieved from his pocket and lit it with Grumpy’s Zippo lighter he’d snatched from the seat between them.

More screams.

Jesse glanced at Grumpy who was staring at him. “I’m not jumping in to help her—the water’s bloody cold!”

“Well I’m not going to either—my knee’s giving me hell.”

“Help me,” screamed the woman, “help!”

“Damn, we better do something—otherwise we’ll *never* get any peace and quiet around here,” exclaimed Jesse. He stood and looked over the side of his boat as a muscular man with tattooed upper arms and long hair once more dragged the woman back under the turbulent water. He hollered at the man. “Frankie!” The man looked up at Jesse with a grin. Then he disappeared beneath the water and a young woman surfaced, placed her hands on his head and held him under.

She looked at Jesse. “You guys aren’t helping much, are you? I’m a woman in distress here!”

The big man broke the surface of the water with a huge smile. They both treaded water for a moment then swam to the back of the sloop where there was a stainless steel ladder. Mica climbed up first and stood dripping wet in her yellow bikini. She shook her long dark hair, snatched her towel from the stern of the boat and wrapped it around her long, tanned body. She stared at Grumpy. He was naked—again.

“Grumpy, put a towel on please, I don’t want to know what Frankie’s going to look like when he’s older!”

Jesse grabbed a towel that was drying on the handrail behind him and handed it to his friend, who modestly placed it over his lap.

Next up the ladder was Frankie, a former Australian Special Forces soldier and undercover police officer, holding the flotation device. “I could arrest you for looking like that,” he said to Grumpy. “That’s indecent exposure, where I come from.” He threw the retrieved safety ring on the timber deck next to Jesse. “You missed.”

“And I would resist your arrest, young fella—this is a free country.” Grumpy grabbed his walking stick and withdrew a hidden sword from its carved scabbard. He pointed it at Frankie who quickly raised his arms.

“I give up.” Frankie gasped with faked dismay. “Please don’t hurt me!”

“Tea’s ready,” cried out a voice from the boat cabin. A woman, in her early 70s with curly grey shoulder length hair with a hint of lavender in it, appeared in the doorway. She was wearing an older style swim suit with a colourfully printed sarong wrapped around her lean body. “Grumpy—are you embarrassing young Mica with your wrinkly body again?” she scolded playfully.

“She’s not embarrassed—she saw me naked yesterday.”

“That’s twice too many times!” chipped in Mica. She took her towel, spun it and whipped Grumpy on his bare leg.

“Ouch! Did you see that officer? She just assaulted a defenceless senior citizen!”

Frankie turned away. “I didn’t see nuthin’.”

Grumpy prodded him with his walking stick. “You’ll keep young fella.”

By then, Betty had set down cups of tea and scones she had made in the yacht’s small oven for everyone.

“Thanks babe,” smiled Grumpy. “You make the best cheese scones.” He kissed her cheek.

She blushed and smiled.

Everyone enjoyed their fresh scones and cups of tea while the boat was gently rocked by gentle waves. The scenery was spectacular to say the least. Jesse, Grumpy, Betty, Mica and Frankie had been sailing along the Abel Tasman National Park’s golden sand beaches and islands for two days. They had one more night before they sailed back to Nelson City, just across the Tasman Bay. The area had world-renowned pristine beaches and bush walks and was near the top of New Zealand’s South Island.

A few weeks’ previous, the group and others who had assisted, had liberated a total of four people in two rescue missions from the clutches of Russian drug running mobsters. They had also prevented a cell group of terrorists from destroying their country’s parliament buildings and from killing its Members’ of Parliament.

One of their group; known as the Whiskey Tango Foxtrot Squad, had been shot. Ninety eight year old Ron McKain, aka The Thesaurus, had received a bullet that went through his harmonica that was in his shirt pocket, with the tip lodging just beneath the skin of his chest. He was lucky to be alive. Ron was happily recovering at home where he lived at the Peninsular Estate Retirement Village, Monaco, south of Nelson City.

Everyone was lost in their own thoughts as they nibbled on fresh scones and sipped tea, taking in the beauty of their lush surroundings.

The silence was broken by Betty. “It’s a pity Maxine couldn’t make this trip. I know she loves this area very much.” She was making reference to the Peninsular Estate Retirement Village’s manager, Maxine Archer, and Jesse’s recent girlfriend and companion.

“Yes, it’s a shame,” replied Jesse, looking out across the water to the city on the other side of Tasman Bay. Nelson City was embraced by multifarious ranges, giving its inhabitants a warm embrace. “She’s busy training the new resident nurse who replaced Jacqui—or whatever her name is, was, and keeping an eye on Ronnie. She’s coming out with me next time—but just the two of us, before we head into a cooler autumn.” He smiled at the thought.

Grumpy winked at his friend, who returned the same.

Jesse sighed as he looked into his almost empty cup of tea. “It was a crazy day, wasn’t it?” he said reflectively, to no one in particular.

“Totally unreal,” Mica said, with a mouthful of scone. She was a local senior constable who, with the assistance of Frankie, aka ‘Jackson’, assisted in the bringing down of Russian drug lord, Roman Petrov, *and* a cell group of terrorists.

“Hell of a day,” Grumpy mused.

“How’s Arthur and his wife May, doing?” inquired Frankie of Jesse. Arthur was an older American Chinese man who the Whiskey Tango Foxtrot Squad had rescued a few weeks earlier. Arthur, and his granddaughter Samantha, had been kidnapped and Arthur forced to work on his anti-gravitational flying technology for Petrov, while his wife

was held hostage in Wellington along with Samantha's friend, Tommy. Tommy had earlier attempted a rescue of Samantha, but was caught by Petrov's hit men, The Accident Brothers. The young man was whisked away to Petrov's hideaway prison cell in Wellington and tortured to see what he knew about them.

"He and May are relaxing at a friend's beach back in the Golden Bay. It's just around a few corners and over the hills from us," he explained, pointing to the west. "They have a police officer staying with them—in case of any more possible kidnapping attempts. Their location goes no further than us and Superintendent Mosley, who's handling the case."

"Understand," said Mica and Frankie in unison.

"It sure is a beautiful spot here," said Frankie, looking around the small inlet where they were anchored.

"Doesn't get much better than this," stated Grumpy. He'd finished his cup of tea and took a swig of whiskey from his bottle as a chaser, and passed it to Frankie, who passed it to Mica, who passed it to Jesse, who kept it. Grumpy glared at him.

"It's empty," stated Jesse.

"Got another." Grumpy reached into his small duffel bag and pulled out a full bottle of the tasty amber liquid he made himself. His eyes lit up as he looked at Jesse. "Swap you a taste for a cigar?"

"Deal." Jesse handed Grumpy a small wrapped cigar in exchange for the bottle. And then gave one to Frankie who also had his hand extended.

"Can't have one without the other," he said.

"I'll have to ration these out," said Jesse with a frown. "They have to last until we get back tomorrow."

"Do we really have to go back?" Mica asked, with a hint of sadness in her voice. "I want to stay here forever."

"Weather is turning to custard from tomorrow evening. Sorry." Jesse looked at his sailing companions.

"Never mind," said Betty. "I'm sure you're keen to get back and see Maxine?"

Jesse smiled. “Yes, I’m starting to miss her a tad. And I want to see how Ronnie is getting on too. He should be all healed up by now.”

“He’s a tough old bugger,” smiled Grumpy. He lifted his glass. “To Ronnie—our Thesaurus.”

“To Ronnie!” they all cheered.