

Seeing Red

By Zoë Scott

Dave felt uneasy as he entered the Red Dragon. It was the first visit to his local since the accident. Nobody spoke. A sea of faces looked both embarrassed and sympathetic.

A few months ago he would have confidently walked up to the bar and taken his place on one of the high, red leather topped stools. Now he had to negotiate his wheelchair between the tables.

A pint of Dave's usual beer was placed on the counter and with an unsteady hand, he reached up to grasp the misty glass. Tears welled up in his eyes. Life would never be the same again.

He had thrived on life in the fast lane; surfing, white water rafting, mountaineering. These outdoor pursuits had drawn him to New Zealand. Snow capped cloud piercing mountains contrasted with the colourful life jackets and red faces, exposed to the sun and wind.

Then there was Jenny who always seemed to be wearing red. Red for danger and Dave's heart was dangerously close to being captured. Before the holiday ended, there was one ultimate challenge. It was a 'must' for the real adventurers to jump and abseil from the Kawarua Bridge which spanned a rugged gorge.

"Shall we try a jump, in unison?" asked Jenny. What an invitation! How could Dave resist that.

On that final day, cheerful red turned to blackness. Dave's battered body spelt out an utterly black future.

The landlord broke Dave's concentration.

"Hey Dave, there's someone wanting to chat with you. Go in the Snug, its a bit quieter in there."

Maneuvering his wheelchair through the archway, he couldn't believe his eyes. Wearing her ever cheerful smile sat Jenny. Dave's black veil lifted and he was unable to believe the happiness he felt again as he clasped her hands.

"Hi-ya! Dave. Goodness, we look like a pair of geriatrics in our bath chairs"

"What happened to you Jenny?"

"Don't you remember? We misjudged it. The rocks were like glass and we ended up in the river. I gashed my leg and broke an ankle and" her eyes filled up "and my stupid spine"

Together Dave and Jenny said, "Who the hell invented bungee jumping?"

And together they laughed. Their lives were ready to begin again.