

## Chapter One

Snapping the case of her Chanel Pirate red satin lipstick, Lizzie admired her botoxed-to-perfection face in the vanity mirror of her prized ebony BMW Z4 Roadster. Her goddess pout, perfectly pert breasts, tight arse and sexual artistry made most straight men in Sydney's Eastern suburbs weak at the knees. Just not the man she desired the most. Her brother-in-law.

Hamilton, in the driver's seat, expertly squeezed the car into the last remaining car space, near Cassius College. The working class boy from the Lake, the man who had the ear of the Premier didn't like trying to jam himself into anything – a suit, a party or a fancy pants icebreaker at one of Sydney's most elite boys schools in swanky Bellevue Hill. The lines crisscrossing his tanned face, showed how painful the last year had been.

'We don't have to stay long.'

'Promise?'

'I've got this.' Elation soared through her chest. *Got him.* Squeezing his rough builder's left hand, she stopped herself from weaving her long spray-tanned fingers through his silver hair, and leaning in and kissing his tender, heart shaped lips.

'I am grateful.' His deep voice cracked with grief.

She gasped.

He closed his ocean eyes.

A deep and abiding love for him and her sister's children bubbled over like a simmering saucepan of butterscotch. For decades her ovaries, her heart had had a hankering – a yearning for something more. She'd tried money, sex, real estate, drugs, playboy lovers and husband (briefly). Hell she'd even hooked up with a woman for a few months to try and fill the void. Nothing had made the emptiness disappear.

Until now.



**Commented [CH1]:** Love the imagery, but a lot of separate details for an opening sentence. This could send the message that reading the book will require some mental gymnastics.

Given the greater context here, might make more sense for her to enjoy Hamilton's luxury car.

**Commented [CH2]:** Instant intrigue and tension – great!

**Commented [CH3]:** Note the number of different pieces of information here. Less is more.

**Commented [CH4]:** Clarify who is speaking. I also question the italics (he is driving her car, but they both don't need to stay?)

Spending the steamy Summer months, splashing in the shallows in the emerald waters of Bondi Beach with saltwater lapping around her slender ankles, watching Teddy, Emily and Will dash in the water, with Hamilton by her side had lead to the epiphany. *They* were what she needed. A gorgeous, worthy of a feature in *Vogue* – family. Hamilton could not only make her rich and powerful. She – Lizzie – the younger sister of Ice Queen Caroline – could be the mother to those divine motherless children and a comforting wife to her widow. When *she* married Hamilton, all the threads of their broken family would be braided together. She could give the children their destiny of a fabulous five star life.

**Commented [CH5]:** A little hard to get a grip on who the character is here. I like contradictions (they add nuance), but we don't want to place them too close together when first introducing a character.

She stared at Hamilton's patrician, masculine profile. Almost sixty, he had vibrant, young blood pulsating in his veins and dazzling blue eyes that in the last year had lost some of their shine. With long lean legs and a broad chest, he had sculpted, muscular shoulders of a man who had surfed all his life. So tender with the twins, so attentive to Will, he rode motorbikes and drove speedboats, could make a mean lasagne, bring together deals, build a house, iron his own shirts, fix a leaking tap *and* talk about his feelings. All these qualities made him something of a rarity. Unlike most of the men in the East who made their money by selling cars, real estate, shares or drugs, he made and did things.

**Commented [CH6]:** Code word! B

*Oh Hamilton, I know, I know. We have got each other through this horrible time. That is why we work. I am not immortal. Time means something. Life is precious. I don't just want the house in Bellevue Hill, the farm in the Southern Highlands and the weekender at Palmie – I want love. Deep abiding love. I want to spend the rest of my life with someone of quality and status. I want to be with a man who charges into life, who draws people to him.* With an aching longing, she turned to look at her sister's husband. *Take me Hamilton, take me.*

**Commented [CH7]:** Love the sense of melodrama here.

He turned off the engine, sighed and then opened the car door, gently closing it.

**Commented [CH8]:** Great opportunity here to have a comedic moment, following on from the set up above. I.e. he leans forward to embrace her but he's just grabbing something from the back seat. This would also clarify the feelings are one sided.



Inhaling deeply, she put her shoulders back, ready to swing Stage Two of her plan into action.

Hamilton opened her door.

Impressed, she alighted, swinging her curved legs around to the road. Swimming in a sea of anticipation – she dreamed of wonderful places they would go. It had been a year and Hamilton needed a companion with whom he could travel through his serious world to shake the hand of the Premier and entertain Chinese investors. Her heart swelled in triumph, just like it did when she'd manoeuvred some anxious middle class chump into handing over five million for a property only worth close to three. He needed her.

Hopefully he needed her enough to marry her. She patted his knobby sun kissed hand and tucked her thin fingers around his. His fingers had the power to make the world safe. All the ducks were lined up in a row. What a wonderful life they were going to have together. The trips. The houses. The sex. He just didn't know that yet.

Better still – he would give her the means so that she could make a mark on Sydney. She would live on in the memory of Sydney siders. He had agreed to fund her development company to build and sell luxury oversized and over priced apartments to the fools seduced by Sydney's evil charms. They were going to make a killing. With his capital and her know how they were going to raze the Eastern suburbs and make a fortune working with developers. She just had to get rid of his awful brown RM Williams boots and get him to put the largest rock Sydney had ever seen on her finger.

Breathing out deeply to steady her growing desire, she led him down the footpath, dotted with blossoming frangipani trees towards Cassius College. Tonight would be the night.

Tonight he would see another side to her – the softer, motherly, caring side. That's what he wanted. She would deliver. And after dinner, when he drove her back to his place, even though Caroline had lived and taken her last breath there, and that made her feel slightly uneasy, he would see her in all her glory and Agent Provocateur lingerie and ...

*Don't you worry, Hamilton King. I have news for you - you are going to be my next husband and I am going to be your next wife.*



**Commented [CH9]:** Here we start to position her as the antagonist of the story. But a reader could be wondering if she is in fact an unlikeable protagonist.

**Commented [CH10]:** I love the punch this character delivers!

In the following chapter we jump into Hamilton's point of view and learn that he despises pretention and all the things that are important to Lizzie, so obviously their match will never work. (Great shift in POV).

In subsequent chapters, we see Hamilton meet another protagonist/POV character and his actual romantic interest. So we have two protagonists, and Lizzie here, who is a semi-antagonist.

Multi-protagonist stories offer interesting opportunities and challenges. Who do we empathize with, and why?

What is the role of an antagonist versus protagonist, and how do we best introduce that to the reader?