

TAKING A DIVE

SUZANNE WILHELM, REED MCKNIGHT, ROY A. COOK

Roger was brooding, and the more he thought about the problems of the last two weeks, the angrier he became. There had been one problem after another, and the worst part was that no one seemed to care! Not the resort, the travel agency, nor the car rental company! Worse yet, as far as Roger was concerned, he had been lied to. Blowing off steam and commiserating with Harrison, they mulled over their options—everything from poison pen letters to web postings to legal actions. In the midst of their venting, they both got a laugh or two out of how this saga began.

An Unlikely Friendship

The situation began when Roger was forced to share a tiny office with Harrison's wife, Sheena. Although they both resented being crammed into one seemingly impossible small workplace, they were determined to get along. To their surprise, they found that they shared a common interest in tropical islands, and they found themselves talking about vacationing with their spouses on one of these romantic tropical paradises as a way of easing their office space strains.

A Dream Vacation

The four of them decided to make their dreams a reality. For Roger and his wife Julie, this would be their fourth trip to their favorite island for scuba diving and they had recommended staying at their usual resort. Traveling to the Caribbean was always an adventure, but this resort was safe, had always delivered excellent service, and had always been responsive to any of their requests or concerns.

But Sheena and Harrison wanted something nicer. They wanted a resort with more of a beach to play on for their daughter who was accompanying them. From their Internet searches they thought that a nearby resort, Ultimate Scuba, which was consistently rated highly in scuba diving publications, would better suit their needs.

Having acquaintances who had vacationed there the year before, Roger confirmed that Ultimate Scuba should meet everyone's needs. The decision to change resorts was made easier since Roger and Julie had also been to Ultimate Scuba on a previous trip and enjoyed a nice dinner at the resort's romantic ocean front restaurant. Although a bit more expensive, it offered more of a beach, upscale accommodations, a good restaurant, and a great reputation for scuba diving.

As repeat customers at their usual resort, Roger had used a travel agent for their first trip, but had booked their trips directly with the resort for the last two. But having never dealt with Ultimate Scuba, Roger agreed with Harrison to book their vacation through a well-known Florida travel agency, Tropical Dive. They both agreed that using a travel agency would provide them with a sense of security. As experienced travelers, both of them knew how important a travel agent could be in effective handling of the unexpected when in another country. As a primary booking agent for Ultimate Scuba, Tropical Dive had what looked like perfect packages to meet their needs.

Storm Warnings

After dreaming, fantasizing, planning, and booking, it was finally happening. The trip down to Bonaire and Ultimate Scuba had gone without a hitch. They only had to change planes once, in Puerto Rico. And, on the final leg of the journey, the plane was almost empty, just the five of them and one other couple. At 11:00 p.m. on New Year's Eve, they landed on the Caribbean island of Bonaire, just 50 miles north of the