

# **DYING for a DIAMOND**

**A Laurel McKay Mystery**

**By**

**CINDY SAMPLE**

**Other Books in the Laurel McKay series**

*Dying for a Date* (Vol. 1)

*Dying for a Dance* (Vol. 2)

*Dying for a Daiquiri* (Vol. 3)

*Dying for a Dude* (Vol. 4)

*Dying for a Donut* (Vol. 5)

Some women spend years dreaming of their wedding day. They plan the ceremony and reception down to the tiniest and most intricate detail. Other women fantasize about their honeymoon, devoting their days and nights in search of the perfect romantic destination to spend with their new husband.

I, Laurel McKay, have very simple needs and make only one request for my upcoming nuptials and honeymoon.

No dead bodies.

Seriously. Is that too much to ask?

## CHAPTER ONE

Many couples first meet over a cup of coffee or a glass of wine. Tom Hunter and I met over a dead body. As a homicide detective, investigating dead bodies fell under his job description. How I've managed to stumble into some of these situations remains a mystery to me.

Fortunately, my husband-to-be is not only a tall and ruggedly handsome man, he has the stamina to put up with me and my penchant for getting into trouble. Plus an excellent sense of humor, which I personally feel is the most important attribute in a man. Especially one who plans on marrying me.

When Tom proposed marriage, he received an affirmative response as well as a passionate kiss. We were in love and wanted to spend the rest of our lives together.

What I didn't realize was the complexity of choosing a date to exchange marital vows with a man who might be on assignment for days at a time. Tom was no longer chasing after criminals in our little county in the California Gold Country. Instead, in his new job with Homeland Security, he traveled from one coast to the other trying to keep our citizens safe from bad guys and terrorist plots hatched around the globe.

Coordinating the big event proved to be comparable to strategizing a military campaign. My weekends are normally filled with soccer games for my eight-year-old son, Ben. My daughter, Jenna, a high school senior, also has a full schedule with classes, a part-time job and her own social life.

I remained one determined bride, and I refused to let my wedding plans be trifled with by mere terrorists, or soccer coaches. Or teenage daughters, who can be the most terrifying of them all. We finally settled on the one day of the year when everyone in our combined families would be home in Placerville. The day after Christmas.

When I went to bed Christmas night, I was as excited as my eight-year-old son had been the evening before. I knew the best gift of all would be waiting for me at the altar tomorrow.

Late the next afternoon, I stood in front of a full-length mirror and stared at the image of a woman on the verge of matrimony. The church bells chimed five times, signifying the beginning of the next phase of my life. Was I ready for my new journey? Had I forgotten anything important?

I mentally ran through my wedding checklist. Ivory cocktail-length satin and lace wedding dress. Check. Bouquet of white and red roses nestled among soft green juniper sprigs. Check.

Something old. My grandmother's antique pearl earrings. Something new. My incredibly uncomfortable Spanx undergarment. Something borrowed. My best friend Liz's satin evening bag.

Something blue. The lacy garter my hubby would remove at the reception. My eyes sparkled

at the thought of other things he might take off me later tonight.

*Numero Uno* on my list—the unforgiving Spanx!

My makeup was complete and my coppery-brown hair professionally curled and highlighted with all hints of gray removed. Check.

I spun around as the door into the small church dressing room opened and Stan Winters entered. Stan was not only my friend and co-worker, he was the best personal shopper and wedding coordinator a girl could ask for.

“I guess I’m as ready as I’ll ever be,” I said to him. “Can you think of anything I’m missing?”

Stan lifted his arms and gave me a sheepish look.

“The groom?”

