



# Miranda Bay

*Susan Tarr*

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## **Miranda Bay** Susan Tarr

Miranda, a strong-minded and lovable young woman, splurges her inheritance on the old Miranda Bay Sanatorium in the sub-tropical Bay of Islands, New Zealand, simply because it bears her name. She knows little about running a business and depends heavily on loyal cousin Pansy's expertise.

In her frantic drive for success Miranda hires a local character to get cracking on the property. Hamilton, her lascivious financial advisor, seizes the opportunity to undermine her. But now with paying guests expected, she must make some serious decisions.

So the guests trickle in - hardly the sophisticates Miranda has envisaged.

At the brink of despair, she experiences deepening depression and manic behavior. She contrives an outlandish economic solution to the problem. What follow is intrigue and terror, and an emotional and tender unfolding of events in the face of financial ruin.

"Witty and wicked, scandalous and scary, this is a story to make you laugh and cry."

## **Miranda Bay Details**

Date : Published April 24th 2018 by Junction Publishing (first published March 1st 2010)

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Author : Susan Tarr

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# From Reader Review Miranda Bay for online ebook

## Melinda Ross says

From the thousands of books I have read, Miranda Bay is one of the select few that have made a strong impression on me. It's one of the books I want to reread, time and time again. What I liked most about this book and its characters is their uniqueness. Miranda Bay is not your average prototype of book, with a predictable plot and artificial characters. On the contrary, our heroine, Miranda Poole, is the essence of each one of us, with very human flaws and qualities. She is adventurous, determined, inventive, arrogant, funny, and kind. I've rarely identified so much with a book character, which makes me wonder if this work is solely fiction. I've also become very attached to the quiet, steady Pansy, and the colorful, quirky Neville. Susan Tarr has a masterful way with crafting words, and her smart, savvy humor often made me laugh out loud. The challenge of transforming a wreck of a place into a modern resort is crazy and exasperating at times, and on the whole, a fascinating experience, spiced up with hilarious scenes that will brighten your day. I recommend this book and this author to every reader, no matter their age, sex or literary preferences. Good writing is good writing for all of us, and this is definitely one of the best I've read!

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## Robert Jr. says

Susan Tarr has crafted a tale that covers the full scale of human emotions in such a way one can only be uplifted. You will walk in the footsteps of Miranda Poole and hope desperately for her financial survival as she makes every mistake that can be made in operating her new business - who in their right mind would buy a run down resort? The characters are not your normal Mom and Pop from the corner grocery store - they are unique, wonderful, and as flawed as one can get - reaching for what is good and fulfilling in a life that is perilous and at times terrifying. Set in New Zealand, and by the author's comment, partially based on fact, MIRANDA BAY is a fun and inspiring read. Enjoy.

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## Jana Petken says

This contemporary fiction novel by, Susan Tarr, was one of those books that I managed to sink myself into, easily, right from the first few pages. The story was credible and I could identify with some wrong decisions in the pages.

Miranda is an impulsive woman, who falls head first into a whole lot of trouble, when she purchases a run down piece of real estate, hoping to turn it into a popular resort. I wondered at an early stage in the book just how she was going to get through her problems. I rooted for her, prayed for a happy ending and a way out of the stress caused by this business endeavour. Thus every page was like a journey, following Miranda and a cast of interesting, funny, and emotionally charged characters; many of whom had troubles of their own.

Ms Tarr has a way with words, there is no doubting that. I particularly enjoy her writing style, which made me feel fully invested in the story. It is rare to find an author who captivates and engages me all the way through a book, but this author manages it effortlessly with an easy flow of straightforward writing and feelings.

I also enjoyed the setting in the book, the agony of a court case, and the ending, which left me feeling like I had been hit with a burst of fresh air.

This is the second book I have read by Susan Tarr. The first one was, Phenomena, Lost and Forgotten Children, which I also enjoyed immensely. I will make sure now to wait for her next and more, look out for it. Congratulations on a great book and poignant story.

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### **Michael says**

This is the first book written by my wife Susan. Not being biased, I have read the book MANY times and thoroughly recommend it for its humour and readability. It is indicative of SOME peoples view of Kiwi life, particularly as it relates to the Far North and the locals humour. New Zealand is unique in our cultural heritage, and Susan portrays her understanding of it, very well.

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### **Bridgitte Lesley says**

This is chick lit and comedy rolled in to one! From the outset you are taken on a bit of a mystery tour. Following in the footsteps of Miranda. You start wondering whether Miranda made the right decision in her purchase of Miranda Bay. Oh her woes. Being hounded by the loan manager who seems to have an absolute fixation on her. The odd characters that she meets. Things seem to get worse and worse. But there is a happy ending! You get to meet characters with odd and quirky habits. Apart from Miranda, Neville is my favourite! The descriptions that the author Susan Tarr uses are so in depth. Sometimes an absolute delight! There are quite a few twists in this tale. Prepare yourself for a most enjoyable read!

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### **Jennifer Theriot says**

Funny, light hearted but emotional read. Just loved it!

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### **R.L. says**

Miranda decided to buy what had been an old mansion and turn it into a resort. When she and her cousin Pansy arrived at the old mansion they saw that it was in a shambles. Miranda had used almost all her money to buy the giant house on the bay. Now she had to find money, so she took out a mortgage with a banker named Hamilton Sofbotham.

With Pansy, an old ex-cop named Neville as groundskeeper, a possum named possumroo and a parrot named Florisa, Miranda set about to make the resort into a lovely place to stay. She tried to set it up as a health spa, when that didn't work, she began giving lectures and charging for them.

Unfortunately, the dreaded old man banker, Hamilton, would not leave her alone with his slow and torturous ways like showing up unannounced, calling at all hours, and sexual intimidation.

Miranda began drinking, and smoking, and feeling very bad about herself and whether her venture into the hotel and resort business had been incredibly stupid.

What happened to all of these characters and especially to Miranda is what you must read the book to find out. I found that I laughed out loud in places and in some places I cried. Susan Tarr is that kind of brilliant writer.

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### **Gail Atkins says**

Unfortunately I found this book very slow and I struggled to finish it. But judging by the reviews I am in the minority.

The location of the book is rural New Zealand: Miranda decides to invest her inheritance on a beach resort. We read all about the trials and tribulations she faces making her dream come true, along with her cousin Pansy.

There's plenty of humour, despair and determination, as well as other emotions in the characters throughout the book.

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### **Christoph Fischer says**

“Miranda Bay” by Susan Tarr is a wonderful little gem of contemporary fiction. Knowing the author from her rather serious historical novel I was pleased how she managed to weave more depth and emotional undertones into a mostly humorous and light-hearted read.

The plot: Miranda decides to invest in a beach resort but the realisation of her dream is far from rosy.

Obstacles need to be overcome by our headstrong heroine and her cousin Pansy.

Out of their depth with the business side of things and many other problems the book provides great entertainment in form of situational humour but it also has some fascinating characters you will end up caring and rooting for. A very compelling and enjoyable read.

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### **Uvi Poznansky says**

Written with wit and humor, *MIRANDA BAY* is the story of an inexperienced, daring young woman, Miranda, who is learning to find her bearing in a challenging, unfamiliar situation. “Miranda would rather take risks, even though she might fail, than be a person who neither suffered nor risked much.” On a whim she buys an old mansion, sight unseen, for no better reason than it bears her name. Now she has to make something in shambles into a success, or at least prevent it from sinking her into poverty. At times the gap between her dreams and reality is too much for her, testing her resolve to the limit. She is now the proud owner of a place in ruins. “Years of neglect had undermined the outer buildings reducing them to piles of timber and corrugated iron.”

Now she must contend with an old, unpleasant banker, Hamilton, who is fixated on her and uses the mortgage she owes him as an ongoing threat. “Just the thought of seeing Hamilton in court had her, in the preceding weeks, have her hair cut twice and the color changed three times.” We watch her fighting to survive, both financially and emotionally, and our heart goes out to her. We cheer her from the sideline as she comes up with new ideas, new initiative, and overcomes the dark mood, the fatigue, and the despair that creep in upon testing moments. For me, this story is a testament for resilience.

Five stars.

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### **Anne Coory says**

Well, what a book! From start to finish, reeling with every twist and turn, the reader never knows how Miranda Poole's day to day running of her 'resort' is going to end, for her or her guests (poor fools)! Resort-savvy guests wisely leave very quickly without so much as a backward glance after taking one look at the ramshackle ex-sanatorium Miranda has invested her life savings in.

I love author Susan Tarr's characterisations. She obviously has an in-depth knowledge of what makes people tick in any given situation, without being over emotive or too over the top to be believable. In other words, the author has a genuine understanding of the width and breadth of human nature.

I particularly relished New Zealand flavours throughout the saga: Auckland's Queen Street, Pohutukawa trees, sandy beaches, and flax stands to name but a few. They paint a vibrant background canvas for characters like Neville Sykes, Jack the wavering priest, Hamilton Sofbotham, the colourful staff, all who conspire to make Miranda's venture more like a roller coaster ride than a prime of life experience. And then there are the paying guests. Enough said!

Miranda's binge drinking increases as her debts pile up. But everything is exasperated by Hamilton's obsession with her and his constant demeaning of her ability to run the resort. Depression causes her to withdraw suppressing her once bubbly personality. Her cousin and best friend, Pansy Poole, gradually takes over most of the management of guests and staff. Unfortunately, easy going Pansy is fast losing patience with her cousin, and their friendship is being thoroughly tested. Both miss romance, cafés and the excitement of Auckland city.

I won't give away the ending, but I will say that it surprised me. As the story progresses, I was beginning to think Miranda's quickening downward spiral was going to take her to the nearest psychiatric ward, never mind dilapidated sanatorium!

By the way, I wouldn't class this as a Chick Lit novel, it's way too smart and knowing for that (sorry chick lit fans). To my mind it's more of a 30-something's catapult into maturity.

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### **Susan Tarr says**

MIRANDA BAY... (READ BELOW 13 ADDITIONAL REVIEWS FROM PREVIOUS PUBLICATION)  
...morphed from a diary I wrote whilst managing a resort in the glorious Bay of Islands in the northern part of New Zealand. Some of these jottings were hilarious, others were very painful for me. Some portions of this work are fictitious (you'll soon see which) but most parts are not. Working with people who should be relaxed because they are on holiday can be hilarious but it can also be exasperating. Working for a Management Committee made up of retired bankers and control freaks can be hell. Put them all in the same bathtub and you have Miranda Bay!

"At last a truly original voice: Susan Tarr is a born storyteller. Her exuberant style, razor sharp wit, and characters so brilliantly well-developed it feels they could step right off the page at any moment, drives a

narrative that skillfully combines comedy, intrigue, terror and heartbreaking tenderness.

Miranda Bay is a wonderful debut novel."

DANIEL MYERS - author of Corporate Blue and The Second Favorite Son

'At last! Ireland's acclaimed Marion Keyes now has a Kiwi cousin - Susan Tarr's debut 'Miranda Bay' introduces us to her publicly emerging talent. Susan's ability to write about deep fear; failing dreams, the helpless spiral into substance addiction, paralysis under abuse and bullying et el, and make it humorous is a unique talent.

In modern, self-appeasing, independent Miranda we can loathe her and like her; identify and deny her as we parade, weave and crawl with her to her realisation, revelation and salvation, as she learns that hard lesson; that of reaching above our own human frailties and remembering others theirs. And this worthwhile read is set in our fair northern coastlands of NZ. Well done, Susan!"

Ngaire Riddell, Business Woman, Timaru.

"Miranda is a wonderful woman. She reminds me of the shallow nature that is in all of us though we try to hide it. And that dreadful booze! I imagine that you would have to have been through a nightmare situation such as this to write like you do, yet you manage to make it so funny! The way you write of her awful paralysis when being bullied by her banker is obviously something you know. I thoroughly enjoy the way you combine the ridiculous and the deep. Miranda's evening chats were fantastic - what a glorious resort! Where can I book in? And you know what? Every girl should have a best friend like Pansy."

....Business Woman, SI

"Miranda behaves as I'd like to sometimes. I loved how she did exactly what she wanted to do with little regard to other's feelings or the law. Flamboyant and self-centred. Inside she wanted to be loved for herself. Not for her looks or money. Her tender and philosophical side was very real at times... Miranda Bay is a funny, entertaining and touching book."

Isobel Power. Business Woman, Auckland.

"Excellent read! A journey of sharp, witty entertainment. Full of hilarious moments, yet with a recognizable undertone of the dark side of the human condition. I've just finished the book and could really identify with Miranda's financial crisis. The brilliant ending was just what I needed to give me some hope for the future!"

Jeanien van der Geer, Business Woman and mother of 2, Thames.

"At last, a truly original voice: Susan Tarr is a born storyteller. Her exuberant style, razor sharp wit and characters so brilliantly well-developed, it feels they could step right off the page, drives a narrative that skillfully combines comedy, intrigue, terror and heartbreaking tenderness. Miranda Bay is a wonderful debut novel."

Daniel Myers, Author of Corporate Blue & Second Favorite Son. USA.

"MIRANDA BAY is a wonderful romp through a year of one young woman's life. If you like the idea of taking a dump of an ex-sanatorium in the Bay of Islands and turning it into a resort and 'health spa' with a healthy overdraft, a villain of a bank manager, quirky employees and myriad guests that come and go, sweetened with lots of (too much!) alcohol, nail polish, designer clothes and high heeled sandals, then go for it! Read MIRANDA BAY – and that ending! Can't tell you; wait till you get there! You'll love it!"

Tannis Laidlaw, Psychologist, Auckland.

"Brilliant writing and the way you talk about fat people had me in hysterics. I'm 140ks. It's wonderful, excellent, made me laugh and made me cry. I've got to get another copy because I want one for me. But I'll probably keep lending it out. And the ending was brilliant. It's a fantastic read. It's got to go to the top."

Marie, Secondary Teacher. Hauraki.

'Crafted with rare skill by a master wordsmith, Susan Tarr transports you from laugh to disaster to laugh on the journey through Miranda Bay with such ability that it seems you are there watching as each new scene unfolds.

I look forward to seeing more of Susan's work in print.' - Charles Knaggs, Warkworth

"Miranda Bay is a superbly written tale of an impulsive young woman who follows her heart rather than her head; but doesn't discover the error of her ways until after spending her entire inheritance on a resort without even looking at it, simply because it shares her name. What follows her purchase is a lighthearted foray into frivolity, with her cousin Pansy trying to keep Miranda Bay running while trying to keep Miranda herself from sinking below the high tide line. Assisted by Neville the local "personality" and sometime resort groundskeeper Miranda Bay slowly begins to flourish. Susan Tarr has written a beautiful book with snappy one liners, hilarious anecdotes, wonderful nuggets of wisdom to live by and an awesome cameo from an elephant. It's definitely a book to read more than once!" - Cindy Olsen, Paeroa

'I took my copy of Miranda Bay to Australia with me when I was visiting my daughter. I read it and so did she. We both thoroughly enjoyed it.' - M Forrester. Retiree. Dunedin.

"I loved the book so much it's now doing the rounds of my sisters. We all want to know - Is there a sequel? If not, there should be.'

Nina, Business Woman. Auckland.

'Amazing!!! There is a whole person in there. I could hear their voice all the time I was reading. Very interesting read. One part I particularly liked was the ending, referring to the last chapters where that creep's character was amazingly dissected. Great depth and insight, I thought. Also cleverly ended to get you to read the sequel. Congratulations, Susan Tarr! Maura Young, Teacher, New Plymouth.

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## **James Chalk says**

### **A well written, compelling story!**

This author has done a splendid job crafting a story that is both realistic and captivating. The story is funny but touching, emotional but amusing, and above all else interesting to read. I loved the author's writing style. It is packed with humor, insight, and fantastic descriptive prose. I highly recommend this fabulous book.

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## **Brenda Perlin says**

"Miranda Bay" by Susan Tarr is a beautiful story by a very talented author who knows how to pen an intriguing tale. She writes about human issues and shares real-life raw feelings. This story has heart and pulled me right in with the light-heartedness and the moments that sent me into the chuckles. This is an offbeat story that has a eccentric main character that I fell in love with. It's a real uplift that I enjoyed from start to finish. I devoured this in one afternoon. The New Zealand landscaping was a real treat. Which, for



me, was the best escape.

I don't know who would not appreciate Miranda Bay. It's well written and inspiring. There is depth to this story that touched me. Highly recommend.

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**Hunter Jones says**

Review coming soon.

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