



# Hotel Horrors

How about at night at Malmaison in Manchester for Valentine's day, darling?" asked Ged-the-husband with a Cupid's gleam in his eye.

"No darling. It will all go horribly wrong and I will end up having a sleepless night for all the wrong reasons."

I know other people stay in hotels without incident but for us it's just one long list of disasters and my nerves can take it no longer. In the past couple of years Zoe has smashed her head open on a glass coffee table and slashed her big toe on a marble step in two separate hotel receptions while Joe required hospital treatment due to an allergic reaction to the chlorine in a swimming pool and managed to get a fish bone stuck across the back of his throat which could only be removed with tweezers. Just check the accident book of the next hotel you stay in and there's a pretty good chance that we will feature in it. We'll be on the page splattered with blood and tears.

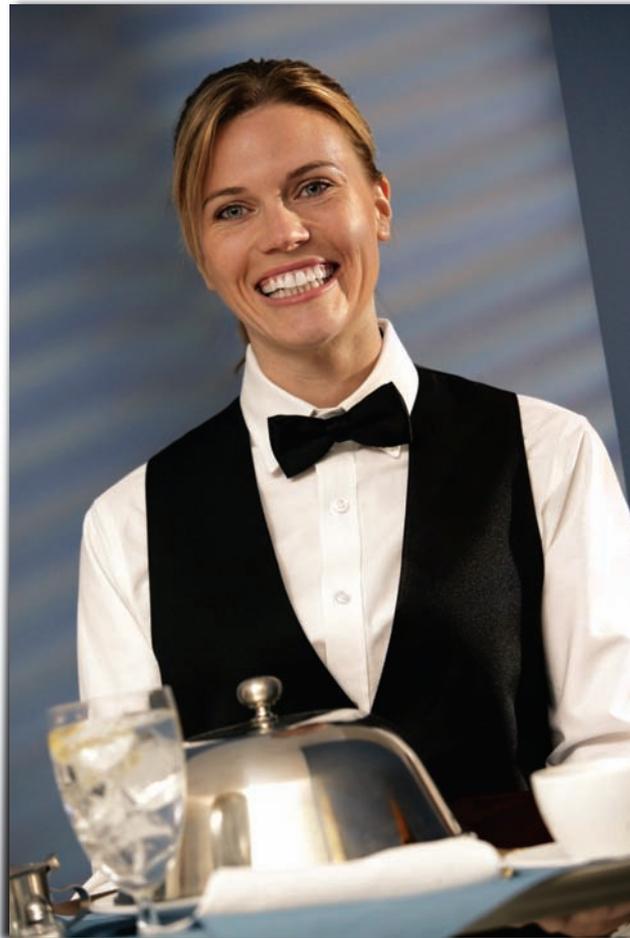
The personal accidents are in addition to the numerous other problems like; the toilet box falling off the wall, the spring sticking out of the mattress, no heating when it was snowing outside, the black curly hair in my crab cake, the corked Champagne (which the waiter tried to argue about) etc etc.

I'd like to say that things fare better when we go away without the children but that's not the case. The last time Ged and I went away on our own we were turfed out of the Manchester Hilton just after midnight, handed a foil blanket and kept on the street for two hours while the sprinkler system did untold damage to the hotel's interior.

The only advantage of not having the kids around is that I can complain loudly to the management without having Zoe pulling at my arm and begging me to shut up. When we stayed at the Liverpool Adelphi recently

I needed to have a little word with the manager and Zoe was convinced he was going to try to bump me off. He had been an absolute sweetheart when I moaned about the dreadful bed I had been forced to sleep in. He knocked a third off our bill and promised me that

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the bed would go straight in a skip. He then asked if I would like to see the view from the roof of the hotel. No malice in it, I promise. But Zoe really did think that he wanted to push me off just

because I'd complained about the bed. When your kids need counselling after a mini-break it's time to stay at home.

By far the most embarrassing hotel stay was at the Exeter Mercure. I had taken Joe up to bed leaving Ged and Zoe to the dessert menu in the restaurant.

Just as Joe was drifting off to sleep in my arms, there was a loud knock at the door.

Thinking it was Ged and Zoe I whisper-shouted, "Stop knocking and use your key!"

In the half light I saw Zoe (recognisable by her bouncy ponytail) enter the room carrying a tray. "Why on earth were you knocking? You knew I was trying to put Joe to sleep! Have you no common sense?" I berated the pony tail.

"Sorry madam, I didn't like to just walk in."

Knowing Zoe would never call me 'madam' I realised in horror that there was a stranger in the room. It turned out to be the manageress. Ged had asked her to deliver a pudding and a glass of wine to the room for me and all she got for her trouble was a telling off.

I extricated my arms from around Joe and wrapped them around the manageress, begging her to forgive my rudeness. Which is exactly how Ged and Zoe found me when they tiptoed into the room two minutes later.

So, no hotels for me this Valentine's weekend although I may try treating my own home like a hotel - which is what I constantly accuse the kids of doing. I will drop my wet towels on the floor and expect someone else to pick them up, refuse to clean the bath even though I have shaved my legs in it and eat my

dinner in bed while watching 'on demand' movies. Who needs the Hilton?

Catch up with Gill's blog at [www.gillwatson.co.uk](http://www.gillwatson.co.uk)