

Once Upon a Proposal

A Dream Come True Book 2

ALEX BAILEY



Copyright © 2019 by Alex Bailey

This is a work of fiction. The characters
and events described herein are imaginary
and are not intended to refer to any persons alive or dead.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted
in any form or by any means, including photocopying,
recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods
without the prior written permission of the publisher
except for brief quotations embodied in critical reviews.

ISBN: 9781096007159

Cover art by: Agape Author Services



Maiden Voyage Publishing

fb.me/MaidenVoyagePublishing

Dedicated to
all
who believe in
the magic of love.

Chapter 1



With fingers ready to plug her ears, Sophie was prepared to deliver the news she was positive would set her friend and coworker, Hyun into her famous shriek-fest. After placing two cups of coffee on Hyun's desk, Sophie hopped onto its edge. Working at a large publishing firm as editors of textbooks had its advantages since the women loved their jobs, but the coffee was not a benefit. It was lackluster at best. And surprising Hyun with a delicious cup of coffee was only the appetizer to her real surprise; the one Sophie wished she'd brought earplugs for. She swung her long auburn hair out of her face. "Good morning, Hyun. I brought you a vanilla latte, your fave."

"Thanks." Hyun smiled with a slight hint of disappointment and looked up from her computer screen through large black-rimmed glasses.

"What's wrong?"

"I miss the Pumpkin Spice Latte." Hyun raised the cup to her lips. "Mmm, smells delish."

"Hyun, it's January. Pumpkin's been gone for a month." Sophie took a sip of her own dark roast, testing its temperature. *Pure perfection.*

"I know, but I still miss it. First, they take away my Unicorn Frappe and then the Pumpkin Spice. What's next? Salted Caramel? I don't understand why they can't offer the pumpkin year-round." She shook her head; her straight black bangs had recently been trimmed, and they skimmed the top of her glasses, revealing large twinkling brown eyes.

"Well, just so you know, Dante put a sprinkle of cinnamon in it for you. Maybe that'll satisfy you until the fall." Sophie took another sip of her coffee.

"I'll just pretend there's pumpkin in it." Hyun held the cup up to her lips and took a quick sip. "It's scrumptious. Thanks, I really do appreciate the thought." Hyun nodded and looked up at Sophie as if seeing her for the first time that day. "Wow! A pop of color. I like it. I'm wearing off on you." Hyun's grin filled the room. Her outfit matched her disposition: a yellow below-the-knee sundress with a white shrug and rarely-worn tan pumps.

In contrast, always-suit-wearing Sophie had chosen a dark-gray skirt and matching jacket. She'd mixed it up a little today by donning a cherry-red boatneck blouse. She usually stayed away from reds, worried they might clash with her auburn hair. "Not hardly." In spite of wearing a bright-colored top, Sophie would never consider wearing an outfit with the casualness of Hyun's wardrobe to work.

Once Upon a Proposal

“How was your weekend? You had Ariel, right?” She set the cup on her desk and leaned back in her chair.

Ariel was Sophie’s nine-year-old niece who stayed with Sophie on occasion when her dad, Rick, traveled for his job. Sophie’s sister, Natalie, had died two years prior, and Sophie treasured every moment with her niece. Since Rick didn’t travel nearly as much as he used to, Sophie didn’t get as much time with Ariel as she would have liked. “Good. We only spent one day in the park.” The park Sophie referred to was Disneyland. “And then yesterday we had a picnic at Griffith Park and threw the frisbee with Pluto.” Pluto was her boyfriend, Ray’s, mixed-breed yellow-orange dog, who had flopping black ears and greatly resembled his namesake. “We had a fabulous time with Ray.” She set her cup down and picked up a pair of small Donald and Daisy Duck plush stuffed toys from Hyun’s many Disney knickknacks arranged haphazardly on her desk.

“Sounds like it.”

“How was your date?” Sophie hoped to hear a positive report and that her friend would soon find the love of her life—just like Sophie had.

Hyun leaned forward, grabbed her cup, and took a long drink. “Mmm, this is yummy good.” She examined the design on the cup, blue snowflakes on a white background. “I’d rather have been with you guys, or literally anywhere else on earth.”

“Seriously?” Sophie set the pair of toys back on Hyun’s desk among the Disney junk du jour, as Sophie lovingly referred to it. She took a gulp of coffee and listened intently, wishing she was about to hear better news. Hyun’s love life hadn’t exactly been the stuff of a romance novel, though Sophie couldn’t understand why

not. Her friend had it all: brains, beauty, and charm. She was the happiest person on earth, but when it came to men, Sophie had questioned Hyun's choices on more than one occasion.

"All he talked about was himself and his motorcycle." Hyun scrunched her nose. "The two of them would be very happily married, I bet."

"This was Roger? Or—"

"Yes. Roger. I'm so sick of the whole dating thing, Soph. I'm done. I'm not even giving this one a chance to cheat on me, because after that date, I know he's the type. Completely into himself." Hyun's perpetual smile waned for a moment, but when she took another sip of her latte, her face returned to sheer bliss.

"I'm sorry it didn't work out with him." Sophie stuck out her bottom lip. "I've got something to cheer you up." Sophie picked up a miniature Figment plush that she had given her friend for Christmas the year before. Figment, a purple dragon, was the unofficial mascot of EPCOT in Walt Disney World. She'd brought it back from a trip to Disney World, a year earlier, where she'd met her Disney-blogger boyfriend, Ray. It had been his idea; he'd reasoned that Hyun couldn't get Figment from their local Disney park, Disneyland. Sophie had also picked up a Minnie Mouse wallet with a fuzzy plush ball attached, but Ray had talked her out of it, saying Hyun could get that anywhere. Ray had found a perfectly-pink Piglet—Hyun's favorite Disney character—purse and Sophie thought Hyun would love it, which she did.

Hyun leaned forward. "Please don't tell me you want to set me up with another one of Ray's friends. No offense, but after you suggested I go on a date with

Once Upon a Proposal

Carlos, I don't trust Ray's or *your* opinion of men for me."

"I'm telling you, Carlos is a great guy. And he begged us, so what could we do? He likes you, Hyun." He'd endlessly bugged Ray about setting up a double date, but it had been a disaster.

"Uh-huh." She folded her arms over her chest. "No thanks. I'm good. I think I'll just take a break and become a hermit for a while. I don't need a boyfriend."

Sophie laughed, knowing her friend was not hermit-material. "Anyway, that's not my good news."

Hyun leaned back, easing into her chair. "Okay, let's have it."

"Seriously. It's good news. Or at least you'll think so. Ray's got to cover EPCOT's Flower and Garden Festival on his blog."

"Awesome! I love reading his blog. How's it going, by the way?"

"Doing great. After Rick interviewed him on the evening news, he got a ton of sponsors and new followers." Rick was a TV anchor at a local Los Angeles network. "And Ray's always got new ideas for fresh content."

"And with his ace editor," Hyun pointed at Sophie, "he can't mess it up."

"True." Sophie beamed because Hyun was correct. Being a professional editor definitely helped Ray in his online endeavors.

"So, what does this have to do with me? Except for me being totally jealous. I know I just spent Christmas with my parents in Disney World, but I'd go back in a heartbeat." Hyun's smile grew even brighter. "In fact, I'd live in the castle if only they'd hand over the keys!"

Between Ray and Hyun, Sophie didn't know who was the bigger Disney fan. "Well, then, I do believe this is going to make your day." She pointed to the Figment plush in Hyun's hand. "How would you like to go visit Figment?"

"Huh?"

"I'm going with Ray. Disney offered him some great deal. I guess they want the free publicity that he'll give them on his blog." Sophie plugged her ears, waiting for the familiar squeal that was likely to emanate from her friend.

"What!" Hyun delivered her high-pitched tone she was famous for.

Sophie unplugged her ears, glad that her friend's reaction hadn't lasted too long.

"That's amazing! You're going to have such a great time. But still, what does this have to do with me?"

"We're allowed to bring friends for free as well. So, I'm inviting you."

Hyun opened her mouth and Sophie's fingers shot back up to her ears, though it didn't help much, the almost-deafening shriek found its way to Sophie. Hyun stood, ran in place, and drum rolled with balled fists.

Before Sophie could respond to that quite-expected reaction, Hyun sat back down; and her face contorted into a scowl. "Wait a minute. *You're* inviting *me*. Who's *Ray* inviting?"

Ignoring the question, Sophie stared over the top of the cubicle and clenched her lips together. "So, whaddaya say?"

"*He's* going, isn't he?" Hyun leaned forward, gripping the armrests of her chair.

Sophie bit her lips and squeezed her eyes shut. "Okay. Ray did invite Carlos, yes."

Once Upon a Proposal

“And?” Hyun eyed her suspiciously.

“And of course he said yes. We saw him Saturday at the park, and I was kind of shocked, actually, when he asked Carlos. I had no idea we were bringing friends. But I’m happy. You know it’s not my favorite place. But it’s yours. And Ray’s. And well, Carlos is almost as much a fanatic as you two.”

“You don’t hate it like you used to.” Hyun leaned back and grabbed her drink, guzzling half of it.

“True. But I’d really like you to go. You know it’s still difficult for me to be there.” Disney World had been her family’s only vacation spot growing up, much to her annoyance. But she’d returned after Natalie’s death and gotten past some of her grief. She’d also made a revelation during her stay: that a lot of her animosity for Disney World came from her own jealousy of her sister and parents’ bond over their love of the place. She wasn’t over her sister’s death, and she missed her terribly. Another trip would bring up difficult memories, but having her friend by her side, someone who had helped her through her grief, would make it that much easier to deal with.

Hyun bolted forward so fast it startled Sophie, forcing her to lean backwards.

“Wait!” Hyun’s eyes darted side-to-side. “You’re going to WDW next month? With Ray’s BFF. And your BFF.” It was true. Hyun was now Sophie’s best friend since she’d lost her sister.

“Yeah?” Sophie didn’t understand her friend’s excitement. *What is she so riled up about?*

“What are the dates?” Hyun’s eyes flew to the Pixar calendar hanging on her cubicle wall.

“The tenth through the fifteenth.” Hyun’s reaction wasn’t what Sophie anticipated, and Sophie still didn’t

get the source of Hyun's agitation. She wondered if Hyun had plans on those days and wouldn't be able to go.

"Of February." Hyun's eyebrows rose to the sky; her mouth flew wide open. She pointed to the calendar, then flipped the page to February.

"Correct. Can you make it?" Sophie wished she'd just answer the question instead of all the theatrics, but that was Hyun. She'd get to it, eventually.

Hyun sunk back into her chair and rolled her eyes. "Of course I can. I wouldn't miss *this* for the world. In spite of Carlos going."

Sophie blew out a breath; she was not only relieved that Hyun had finally given her an answer, but she was also elated that her friend had said yes. She adored Hyun. And while she had been going to Disneyland more than she'd like since she had met Ray, or Professor Disney as his fans knew him, she always had fun with both Ray and Hyun. "I knew you'd say that. I told Ray there was no way Hyun, the biggest Disney fan I know next to him, would turn down a free trip to Disney."

Hyun's cheery smile turned into something larger, like she held a secret and was about to let it go, like Nick the sly fox in the movie *Zootopia*.

"What is it? You look like you're about to burst."

Hyun's pitch and volume rose, "You're going to be in WDW on *Valentine's Day*. At the very place you met!"

Sophie suddenly felt ill.

Thank you for reading this sample chapter of *Once Upon a Proposal* (A Dream Come True Book 2). If you enjoyed it and would like to purchase a copy, please follow the links below:

Amazon: getbook.at/Proposal

Other online sources:

<https://books2read.com/u/boWVeR>

Other books in the series:

Once Upon a Romance (A Dream Come True Book 1)

Be the first to find out about a new story with a splash of magic and sign up for Alex's newsletter (Alex will not flood your inbox, she would rather be writing stories or planning her next trip to Disney, than crafting emails):

<http://alexbaileywrites.com/newsletter/>