

Chapter One

The Proposal

In One Night Only, Eloise and Theo have both had heartbreak in their previous relationships. There are no specific spoilers for One Night Only as the below takes place before the story, but this is more about Eloise and Daniel's relationship.

"Eloise?" Daniel clears his throat over the breakfast table.

"Yes?" I put my coffee cup down and stare at him. He still looks ruffled from sleep, or he's been stressed about something this morning because his hair is slightly sticking up. It looks like this when he's got something on his mind. I've noticed it a lot over the course of our relationship.

"Can we go shopping today? I need your help picking something out," he says.

“What do you need help getting?” I wonder, mentally running through a checklist of his family and our friends whether there are any birthdays or anniversaries that I’ve forgotten about. I’m sure I haven’t forgotten anything.

“I’d like your help picking out a ring.”

“What type of ring?” I laugh.

“An engagement ring,” he says, his tone quiet.

“An engagement ring,” I repeat.

“Yes, an engagement ring.”

There’s a minute of silence between us.

“Is this engagement ring for anybody in particular?” I ask, feeling a little amused. If this is a type of proposal, it isn’t anything that I would have imagined as an ideal one. I wouldn’t have ever expected a big show and dance proposal, the type with flashmobs and dance routines, and a million eyes watching everything unfold, but I’d at least imagined the question being asked.

“I want us to get married, but I want you to help me pick out the ring so that it is something you like.”

“Is this a hypothetical sometime-in-the-future type of situation, or are you actually asking?” I wonder.

He flashes me a big smile. “Wasn’t I clear enough? I’d like us to get married; do you want to marry me?” he asks. When I don’t immediately answer, he leans a little forward in his seat, still smiling at me. “I already cleared it with your dad, if that’s what has you hesitant.”

“You cleared it with my dad?” I echo.

“Well, I mentioned that I was planning on proposing. He said he had no objections, that it is up to you.”

I’m still not sure how to answer. I love Daniel. The last year and a half between us have been a whirlwind, even if we have had a few bumps in the road, mostly me trying to smooth over the relationship

between Daniel and Fiona. Of course I've thought about marrying Daniel. I just always thought he'd get on one knee and surprise me. The lack of a traditional proposal, especially if he's followed an archaic process of asking my dad for permission, it feels a little jarring.

I take a deep breath, smiling at him. "Ask me and find out," I suggest.

"Eloise, do you want to marry me? Do you want to be Mrs Lennon?" he asks.

"I would love to marry you, Daniel," I murmur. I can talk to him later about the Mrs Lennon comment. I like my surname, I'm my dad's only child, I want to carry on his name, not lose it.

He beams at me. "Let's hurry into town and find you a ring," he says. He gets up from his seat, leaning over to kiss me on the forehead. "I'm going to call Eleanor. She'll be so excited. She's looking forward to being our bridesmaid."

"I'm sure Fiona will be thrilled at being a bridesmaid, too," I comment, trying not to focus on the slightly deflated feeling I have suddenly in my stomach, like I've swallowed a big stone.

"You call her and let her know the surprise," he suggests, and then he's out of the room, his phone in his hand, no doubt calling Eleanor to say how the proposal went.

For the first time in my life when something big has happened, I don't immediately rush to call Fiona. I know if I call her now, I will have the wrong tone, I'll lack the excitement I know I should have, and she'll pick up on it, question me and assume I'm not happy.

I feel bad for being slightly disappointed. I know Daniel isn't the most romantic person. He's incredibly sweet but grand gestures and huge romantic statements are not his style. He's probably been nervous about asking me to marry him and I'd hate to make him feel

guilty. Regardless the proposal, we're getting married, that's where my focus should be, on the lovely future that lies ahead of us.

I get a vision of that wonderful future, of what the wedding will look like. I know it doesn't matter *how* he proposed. What matters is that he did, that he loves me enough to marry me. I can't wait, and I know by the time I speak to Fiona later, I'll be full of the excitement and butterflies that a newly engaged woman should feel.