

## Tutu Lady's Unicorn

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*Haven't they ever seen a unicorn before?* Malia Kalani thought as she watched the auction house employees set the small, aged ceramic Unicorn on table. She was near enough to over hear the two large Hawaiians talking about the piece.

"Brah, wat dis?" the extra-large guy in the loud Hibiscus print shirt asked. He nodded toward the small unicorn they had just placed on the table.

"No can tell." The second man answered shrugging his large shoulders, his tank top moving up to expose his belly. "Horse?"

"Fo' real?" asked the first guy looking puzzled.

"Fo' real, cuz." The second guy nodded his head wisely. They gave the small Unicorn a last glance, both men moved on to the finish setting various items out. Malia rolled her eyes, *Lolo Buggahs!*

This auction was one of the smaller, open air auctions scheduled this month in Honolulu. Malia had been going to each one, looking for this exact unicorn. Setting there, it didn't look like much, but to her... it was the only thing left of her Tutu Lady. She'd been away at school on the mainland when Tutu Lady Leilani had died. She hadn't been able to come home for her services. Money was tight in those years. Malia had often joked with her roommate at school that nothing but mini dust bunnies inhabited her billfold. Once she had come home, she found that the one thing she really wanted of Tutu Lady's was this little unicorn.

Malia walked up to get a closer look at it. Yes... this was it. A wave of nostalgia for her early years, the times she'd spent at her Tutu's small house near the beach washed through her. She reached out and stroked the fading gold flaked horn, her fingers finding the small chip in it. She smiled.

Ah... she'd been seven when that had happened. She'd just come from the local hālau, still in her little hula skirt. She'd been so excited! The hālau was going to perform at the Ala Moana shopping center on King Kamehameha I Day. In her haste to tell Tutu Lady, she'd knocked the little statue over on the table where it sat. When she'd seen what she'd done, she'd let out a howl as tears formed in her eyes. Tutu Lady just wiped her tears away, kissed each of her cheeks, and set the Unicorn upright. The only damage done had been the chip in its horn. A voice broke into her memories.

"E komo mai." A small, wizened man was standing at the auctioneer's stand. "Welcome." Malia stepped back to her front row seat, seating down and clutching her numbered paddle tightly. The man could hardly see over the stand. His voice sounded rusty as he started the auction.

"First up is a nice painting of Madam Pele, rising from the lava of Kilauea, on Big Island." He paused, looking out over the group gathered in front of him. Or rather, those that he could see. "We'll start the bidding at..." another pause, as if he was deciding what to start the bidding at. "Ten dollars."

A woman's voice called from the back, "Ten!"

"Eleven!" a man counted from the right of Malia.

The auctioneer didn't seem to be in any kind of hurry to move the auction along. In fact... *Had he fallen asleep?* Malia asked herself, looking at him, seeing his head nodding, eyes closed.

"Eh!" a deep voice called out, again from the back. "Braddah! Lesgo... no Moi Moi!"

The little man startled awake. He banged his hammer on the stand. "Sold!" There was a confused murmur in the crowd. The little man looked befuddled for a minute, "To the man there for eleven dollars!"

He pointed to the little unicorn, "Next up... this little horned pony." Malia tensed up, she wasn't expecting any competition, but still... "Opening bid will be Fifteen dollars!" Malia's arm shot up, her paddle waving in the air.

"Fifteen!"

"Twenty!" a deep, husky voice countered instantly. Malia whipped her head around, trying to see where the voice was coming from. She couldn't see a paddle in the air. But she wasn't going down that easy.

"Twenty-Five!" There was note of determination in her voice.

"Thirty!"

*Who the hell was this guy?* Malia thought, once again turning and seeing no one. She frowned and held up her paddle to bid again.

"Fifty!" There were twitters coming from the other bidders now as if enjoying the battle that was going on. All over a small ceramic unicorn.

"Five hundred!"

Malia sat stunned. She couldn't go that high. Her paddle slipped from her fingers as she realized that she had lost this last connection to her Tutu Lady. Tears formed in her eyes, slowly rolling down her cheeks.

"Going... going... going..." the old auctioneer whizzed "GONE!"

Malia sat in seat for a few minutes, her tears flowing. A shadow fell over her. She looked up, into the rich brown eyes of a tall, muscled man. He smiled at her.

"Hello Malia." He spoke her name softly. In his hand was Tutu Lady's unicorn. Her eyes widened, recognizing this man.

"Kade?" she whispered. He nodded his head and he smiled at her. They had been sweethearts from grade school all the way through high school. When she'd gone to the mainland for college, he'd stayed in Hawaii, choosing to attend University of Hawaii at Manoa. The distance proved too much for their relationship.

"Malia" he said as he dropped to his knees next to her. "I've been looking for you. I'd heard you were home and..."

"You were looking for me?" She interrupted.

"Yeah. I know it's been a long time, but I've never stopped loving you." He confessed. "I've waited for you to come home." He paused, "Is there a chance for us again?"

Heat washed though her body. Kade had been her one true love. Seeing him now as a man and not the boy she'd left behind years ago, she realized he'd always been the only one for her.

"Yes... yes." She whispered. "Oh, Kade!" She threw her arms around him almost knocking him over.

"Whoa, sweetheart!" He chuckled. He moved her back into her seat and held out the small unicorn.

"Malia Kalani..." he asked "Will you marry me?"

"YES!" She squealed, taking the small statute from him, her eyes shining brightly, her tears now from the happiness she felt. He stood, sweeping her into his arms and turning, he walked toward the small helicopter setting in the parking lot, waiting for them.