

TANGLED

Chapter One

Soph

It's fair to state, I did not get my fairy tale ending. If a fairy tale ending involved him breaking my heart, then yeah—I got the perfect fairy tale ending. He also slept with my best friend, which he kept from me for three solid months. How do I know it was for three months? Well, he told me that.

His relationship with Kayla just “happened.” How the hell do you just stop loving one person, who you had spent three solid years with, and suddenly, out of nowhere, start to fall in love with my best friend!

Of all the girls in our year, and years below, he picked Kayla! Why? Just to hurt me more? Because not only did he break my heart, he also took the one person I was meant to turn to away from me.

I should have known something was wrong when Kayla was cagy about who she was seeing.

It was normal for Kayla to go through men. So I thought that was what was wrong with her. She had fallen for an older guy again. And again was going to be heart broken when he uses her just for sex and breaks it off when she gets clingy.

How I was wrong.

Well she had fallen for a guy—my guy, who is really good at lying.

Really good. They got away with it for three months. I should have picked up on the small things. Like the way he started to carry her books as well as mine. The way he always made a point to sit in between me and Kayla.

The little things should have lead me to discover their secret. Instead I was a dumb blonde for three months, not seeing that my guy, the guy I loved for three years, the guy that chased me down, well, he was in love with someone else... I didn't even see it.

I didn't see him falling in love with her. Didn't notice her red lipstick on his school uniform. I didn't even pick up on the fact he would pick her up before me.

I thought it was normal for the guy you are with to care for your best friend. Because they are your best friend and you want the guy you love to love them like you do.

That is, until last month, when he thought it was a brilliant idea to break up with me and tell me the truth on my birthday. At my birthday party, publicly. Kayla stood beside him, with this evil little smirk on her face as he told me. Then linked hands with him! In front of our family, our friends! Everyone.

I swear I have never been so humiliated.

How did I react?

Well, then the tears started falling—from shock, from my heart being squeezed tight. He always said he loved me. It had been hard to believe that a guy like him would ever take an interest in me.

I was an outcast. Publicly. At school. In life.

I was the girl you didn't notice. And I wish it had stayed that way. I wish he never took an interest in me. Curse that art partnership that put us together. He was charming. I mean, he was that good looking any girl would fall for his charm.

I put up a fight. I didn't just drool over his every word when he took an interest in me. I didn't give him my number when he asked because somewhere, deep down, I knew he was trouble.

But in the end I was stupid and followed my heart, and my brain was left behind. The fact he was bad news meant nothing to me. If anything, it lured me in more.

I loved the fact he had an edge to him. I loved that there was more than just charm in his voice. It was like chocolate—sweet, so very seductive. That was the power his voice had over me.

My own personal chocolate. And as soon as I got a taste, I was addicted.

Had to get more. Needed more. Couldn't get enough. And before I knew it, we were having sex, and I suddenly had a claim over a guy, that shouldn't have even noticed the invisible girl. I was brought into the spotlight being his girlfriend.

His friends took me in.

And they quickly became my friends.

His kisses were always sweet. His smirk always wiped away any of my concerns. His touch... I melted at his touch. Loved the fact his large hand took mine. Loved it more when those hands were exploring my body.

Like I said, I was addicted. Completely and utterly addicted.

That's how it was.

I was his.

I stopped fighting the need to keep distance between him and I. I fell in love with the golden boy at school and the devil in the bedroom.

You know what hurts the most? I think what hurts the most is I don't think he ever truly loved me. Cause if he did, he wouldn't have done this to me. He wouldn't have slept with my best friend and then had a relationship with her! He wouldn't do that if he loved me.

He didn't love me.

That fact ran through my head again.

All those kisses, all those memories, all the time he wasted chasing me, well, it was all for nothing. Not one of those memories was real. And not one meant enough to him to not do what he did.

And now?

What do I have to face now?

School. First day back.

I saw his car parked. I became a mute and a social outcast again as soon as he broke up with me.

Our "friends" were really his friends. And my one best friend, well, I was watching her get out of his car. Of course they would be facing the new year together as a couple. I was an idiot to think

they would keep it a secret or at least not shove it in my face.

But in order for that to happen, that meant one of them had to care about me.

They didn't.

So I shouldn't be surprised or hurt as I watched them link hands and walk across the lot to the school.

They were facing a new year together, while I face a new year without my best friend and without my boyfriend.

Two facts that broke what was left of my heart.

I got out of the car. Darn my parents for being back from their cruise early. Otherwise I would be skipping the first day. At least they leave again tomorrow. I was going to take the opportunity to avoid school altogether.

At least, that was the plan. I picked up my bag and noticed a dozen miss calls from my mum and dad. How odd. They knew it was my first day back. Sure, I hadn't seen them yet; they got back late this morning. They were asleep when I left.

I dialled mum's number.

This just can't be happening. Nope. It wasn't happening. I couldn't accept it. Wasn't going to accept. It'd be over my dead body.

I was eighteen for god's sake!

I opened my locker. Today couldn't get any worse after the news Mum had just told me. At first I wanted to kill her, and that

feeling hadn't gone away.

I glanced to my left, and just as I thought my day couldn't get any worse, it did. Kyle was heading directly towards me.

Please don't stop. Please don't stop.

“Hey, Sophia.”

Fuck my luck!

I turned with regret to face him. “Kyle.”

“Guess you've heard then?” He leaned against the locker, standing way too close to me.

I pushed back against my locker door. He was in my personal space and he didn't have the right to be there anymore.

I kept my lips clamped shut. I was not talking to him. The last time I saw him I threw my glass of wine at him and told him and my so-called best friend to get the hell of my house.

“Look, it doesn't have to awkward. It will only be awkward if you make it awkward, Soph.” His words were gentle and like always melted me. For a second I thought he cared about me again, but that was quickly wiped away when I saw the mark on his neck.

Kayla always liked to mark her men.

“It's Sophia.” I corrected him. Only friends called me Soph. He sure as hell wasn't a friend.

He rolled his eyes. “So you want to be childish?”

I gritted my teeth. I wasn't biting back at him. I wasn't giving him the pleasure of a fight with me in this crowded hallway. My "friends" already

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had a show starring me and him.

When he dumped me and admitted to being in a relationship with Kayla.

"Look, it's only for a couple of months. I'll stay out of your way. You stay out of mine?" He was suggesting a plan that was impossible.

"So that's your plan? Me coming to live with you for two months?" I crossed my arms. "I hate you, Kyle. Hear me when I say this. I hate you!"

My parents had cut their cruise short because doctors were needed in Africa. And Mum and Dad always went when needed. Though this time, because they had watched me withdraw from my life and stop caring about anything or everything, well, they didn't want me home alone.

Their solution?

Dump me at Kyles.

Our parents had got close over the three years Kyle and I had been together. Close enough that Mum and Dad didn't see the problem in my moving in with them for two months. My parents

didn't even consult me on it! They just did it! They just decided that the best thing for me was to dump me at Kyle's. Because they "trusted" his parents to look after me.

I don't know what was worse, Kyle getting a real look at the mess I was, or the fact that I wouldn't be able to stop him from seeing it.

"Like I said, it's only awkward if you let it be. Come on, Soph." He was calling me by my nick name again, like he had a right to.

"Sophia," I corrected him again. "I want nothing to do with you."

He sighed. "I knew you would act like this. I told Mum and Dad you wouldn't agree to it."

"Well, you were right, because I'm planning on never entering your house again."

"Why aren't your parents letting you stay home by yourself?"

Because of you. I clamped my mouth shut. I was never telling him how much he hurt me—to the point that I didn't see the point in life. I couldn't get up in the morning to face yet another day with a broken heart. He betrayed my trust.

Look where trusting people got me. Sick, depressed, and lonely.

Kyle was still looking at me, expecting an answer. I turned back to look in my locker. Now I just had to get my books and leave him behind.

Hopefully we didn't have any of the same classes.

“If it makes you better, I won’t let Kayla come over.” He was being nice. I didn’t want him to be nice. I’d rather he was rude because then I could have another reason to hate him. Hating him now was becoming easier. But I realized there was nothing he could say that would ever stop me from hating him.

“Do what you want. I’m not planning on being there much.” I grabbed my books. I intended to spend a hell of a lot of time at cafes or in libraries, somewhere—anywhere—but his place.

“I should warn you Joshua is home too.”

My head snapped to look back at him. He had to be joking? Joshua had been in prison for two years. His sentence was for four. “How?”

“Made an appeal and he won. He is on parole.” Kyle took a step closer to me. “Just come and stay with us. I promise to behave.”

He was saying that like he still cared about me. I had wasted two weeks crying over him. One week smashing everything in sight. And then next realizing he didn’t love me. And now? And now I was back to crying. It was like I had done a full circle and was back at the start.

“So I’ll see you tomorrow?” Kyle said, arching his eyebrows.

I didn’t want to go there. But Mum and Dad weren’t giving me a choice. “Yeah,” I finally said with regret. “But just because I’m agreeing to come, doesn’t mean I don’t hate you.”

A sad smile crept across his face. “I really fucked up, Soph.”

“I wouldn’t say that. You just didn’t love me anymore.” I closed my locker door, ready to walk away from him.

An expression captured his face. I knew the look. It was regret. Well, there was nothing for him to regret.

“How I ended us wasn’t acceptable,” he said and started to walk beside me.

I shrugged my shoulders. It hadn’t been acceptable. He did it in front of everyone. It was like he waited until it was my birthday to tell me. Like, to make it hurt more because every birthday from now on I was going to remember what he did.

I picked up my pace, hoping he would just stop following me.

I walked to the classroom door, and his hand wrapped around my upper arm and he dragged me back, forcing me to not enter.

I was about to yell at him for touching me.

“Why do you think I did it?” he asked, gripping my arm.

What do I think? Well, this time I was going to tell the truth. “Because you wanted her over me. Simple, really.”

His lips clamped shut. It looked like he didn’t like my answer. Wasn’t that why he did it though? He loved her. Hell, he had been sneaking around with her for three months and I hadn’t noticed.

“Can you let go of me now?” I asked as his grip got tighter.

A depressing smile crept across his face. “One day you’ll know

the truth, and I hope that is one day soon.”

“Kyle, I don’t want anything to do with you. I can promise you, I’m not waiting on ‘one day’ for your actions to make sense.”

I pulled my arm from his grasp.

“Soph, I’m really sorry.” It sounded like he meant it too.

I scoffed. “No you aren’t, Kyle. Now go find that girlfriend of yours that you love so much.”

With that said, I turned and walked into the classroom just as the bell rang. But I had seen the anger on his face... But the anger hadn’t been directed at me.

“Why can’t I stay with Nana?” I asked Mum as we pulled up at Kyle’s.

“Because your nana will let you do anything.” Mum put the car in park. “Now, Soph, we talked about this. I talked to his parents and they said he is rarely home at the moment.”

Yeah, probably cause him and Kayla were on a sex bender.

With regret I got out of the car and moved the duffle bag on my shoulder. How awkward could this be?

Living with him, his parents, and his criminal brother—surely I could get through a couple of months.

That was the reasonable side of me coming out. The other side was screaming for me to run far, far away from him and this

house.

“Just behave, Soph,” Mum said as we reached the front door and rang the bell.

This can't be happening. This was like every girl's worst nightmare, being made to move in with your ex-boyfriend!

The door opened, and, just my luck, Kyle answered. He greeted Mum like they were long-lost friends. Chit chat turned into ten minutes. And then he finally acknowledged me with the biggest smile on his face.

Was he bipolar? Why the hell was he smiling at me like that? Like I was his favourite person and he was seeing them for the first time in years.

It didn't make sense so I just ignored it.

We walked in and his mum, Louise, showed me the guestroom. It was right across from Joshua's and next door to Kyle's. How many hours, days, weeks and months had I spent in that room with him?

Again, it had all been a waste of time.

Kyle's dad was running for Mayor, and like my parents, they earned good money, so the house looked similar to mine. Big rooms decorated expensively—yep, our parents were the same. Apart from Louise, she was an artist. How a hippy artist ended up with Jed, Kyle's dad, I don't know.

But Jed loved Louise's quirky ways. Like how she always had at

least ten bracelets on and always had paint or clay on her.

I never saw my mum becoming friends with her. They were opposites. But they did. They went for morning walks; Louise was always getting Mum on some herbal tablets.

Louise was lovely. And I was happy she was here. Just because I had wiped Kyle out of my life, didn't mean I had no time for his parents. They had always been kind to me.

My side was aching because Mum had been rushing me and I slipped on the stairs and hit my side on the rail.