## **TANGLED**

**Chapter Twenty Six** 

Soph

I don't know why, but as soon as I ended it with Kyle, my taste in men changed. I went from wanting the good guy to wanting the bad boy; the smoker, the drinker, the guy who would throw a right hook without thinking or caring.

Yep, my taste in men had changed.

Josh and I had a totally of ten minutes together, then he got a phone call. He said to stay and wait for him. But once it ticked past two in the morning, I decided he wasn't coming back, so I went to my room and spent the night tossing and turning all night.

Which is why now, as I entered the gym hall, my last class, I really couldn't be bothered. I headed for the group of girls, literally dragging my feet

Then the group parted just slightly and my eyes locked with Kayla's. Kayla's eyes were coated in anger as soon as she looked at me. I knew that look; it was the look she gave her prey before she went for the kill.

"Hi, Soph." She pushed past her so-called friends. "How was your night?"

I frowned. She didn't stay at the house last night, so she couldn't possibly know I spent most of the night in Josh's room. So I didn't say anything in case she was fishing.

"Well, I hear you were with Josh?"

I rolled my eyes. Here I was thinking she hadn't spent the night with Kyle. I put my hands on my hips. "Why is where I sleep any of your business?"

"I was just wondering." She took a step closer to me, but I heard how her voice raise. "Are going to get knocked up with his child as well? I wonder how Kyle would take the news, knowing you were going to have his child but are now having his brothers?"

Had she really just said that? The crowd around us were gasping and then whispered. I looked at Kayla. I didn't know what to do. I was just staring wide eyed at her. She couldn't have done that...

But the whispering got louder, and then the stares—who was I kidding, they were glares—became more intense. Kayla had just made it so I could never show my face again.

It was when the word slut started to get thrown at me. I turned, starting to walk away, hearing them call me a child killer to my back.

The tears started to fall before I even made it out the gym door.

I didn't know where to go. In fact, I hadn't even planned on going to him until I pulled in his drive way. I guess when it came down to it, he was the only one that wouldn't judge me. I couldn't believe that Kayla had shared that with everyone.

I was a mess. I was crying so much I could barely see while driving. It was luck that I got here without writing-off my car. I was physically shaking, tears running down, and I burst through his front door.

"Ryan?"

I slammed the door after me. "Ryan!"

I was storming through the house. I had never been this upset. Not even when Kyle broke my heart.

"Ryan, I fucked up. I—"

As I walked into his lounge and my words stopped. My eyes went from Josh to Bax and then to Ryan.

"Shit, Soph, are you ok?" Ryan was up and heading for me.

"Why... why are you all here?" I staggered out. How did three men in my life come together? How the hell did they all know each other?

"Soph, what the hell is going on? Why the fuck are you so upset?" Bax was up now and his eyes went to Ryan. "Wait, did you say you were here for Ryan?"

My mouth dropped open, but it was when my eyes locked with Josh's I started to back away. I couldn't face this. I couldn't face all three of them before one of them reached me. I turned and ran.

Seemed today was the day for running and I had to move quicker when Ryan was catching up to me. But when I reached the car, it was Josh who was right behind me.

His firm grip missing my arm by an inch.

I managed to close the car door and lock it, then threw the car into reverse. It seemed today was the day for all my worlds to collide.

My brother.

My fuck buddy.

My crush.

And my past.

All my worlds collided and as I fled from Ryan house. How the hell could all my worlds be connected like that?

I scoffed, shaking my head at my bad luck.

I had no idea where I was going, or what to do.

I wasn't a coward, or at least that's what I told myself when I pulled in to Kyle's drive way. I knew by now the word would have got to him and now was my chance to explain myself before he really did think the worse of me.

I walked in the door and could hear his voice. He was shouting into the phone. I felt pity for whoever was on the receiving end of that because I knew I was about to be too.

He turned around, his eyes landing on me. He just hung up. Didn't say bye, just hung up. His heated eyes were on me.

"So you fucking drop a bomb like that and disappear?" His voice was venomous and sent a shiver through me. The fact he was a lot larger than me occurred to me.

I just swallowed sharply, not sure what to say. I had spent an hour parked near the highway, wanting so badly to disappear.

But I knew I couldn't do that to Ryan or my parents, and mainly I couldn't leave Josh with questions.

"So you gonna start fucking explaining yourself!" Kyle shouted at me, this time causing my body to go stiff. Ok, I was now terrified of him.

"I, um..." The words just dried up in my throat.

"You umm?" he snapped at me immediately. "Fucking pregnant, Sophia! And you didn't fucking tell me! You killed my child! What gave you the right to kill my child!" he roared at me.

"Kyle, just let me explain."

His voice got sharper with each word. "Like fuck I will! What line are you going to give me? You weren't ready? We were too young?"

"Kyle, please hear me when I say—"

"When did it happen? When did you decide to kill my child?"

"Kyle-"

"And not you are fucking pregnant with Josh's kid?"

Oh my god. Why wouldn't he let me get a word in! "Kyle I'm-"

"A slut, that's what you are." His words whipped across my body. He had never directly insulted me. It was always Kayla. But he was the one to just call me slut. "A useless, coward of a whore. That's what you are, Sophia." He was pointing his finger at me now. "Your shit is at the door. Take it and get the fuck out of my life. As for Josh's baby, I'm sure you are planning on killing that to."

The tears swelled and then started falling as he insulted me, my character. He had never said one hurtful word to me, and now he was calling me a murdering whore?

"Stop fucking crying and get the fuck out!" he roared when I didn't move. "Now!"

I stumbled back as he approached me.

"I'm so fucking happy I broke up with you the way I did." His words were lower, nastier as he approached me. "If I could do it again, I'd call you for what you are. A cheap whore who might as well sell it at the corner. By the way, I phoned your parents about it."

My eyes widened. "You didn't."

He grinned. "Didn't think you would have told them. What do

you know, their perfect little daughter the slut. Now pick up the bags and get the fuck out!"

I wiped the tears off my cheeks quickly. This situation had gone from bad to fucking serious. If my parents thought for a second I was pregnant they would be back on the next flight. They were needed over there. They weren't needed here.

I was picking up the black garage bags. I could only carry two, so I left the others.

I was about to open the front door when it swung open.

"Why the fuck did you hang up on me!" Josh came in shouting louder than his brother. His eyes flickered to me. "Fuck, Soph, I've been looking everywhere for you."

Kyle scoffed. "Mate, she won't keep it. She's a murderous slut. No better than a corner whore."

Josh's eyes snapped to his brother. "What did you just say?" Josh's words were clipped short and so deadly low. A hell of a lot scarier than Kyle's shouting.

Kyle laughed. "Seriously, you want to fight for that? She's a slut, Josh. A no good one at that. Hope you had more fun with her than me."

Josh fist was connecting with Kyle's jaw, over and over, and a distinct breaking noise followed.

"Want to say that again?" Josh's voice was still low, like a snake about to bite, as he held Kyle against the wall, his feet dangling in the air.

"She's pregnant!" Kyle shouted in Josh's face. Josh's grip on Kyle was gone and he turned to look at me. The tears were still falling,

"It's yours too." Kyle wiped the blood of his lip and smirked at his brother. "Have fun bringing up the town slut's child."

I couldn't take another word. I turned and ran out the front door, dropping the bags on the way. I had never been so hurt. I thought Kyle breaking up with me was painful, but what he just did it was...

"Soph!"

A hand wrapped around my arm, pulling me to a stop. Josh's worried eyes were on me.

"Is that what's wrong? Is that why you were so upset?" Josh was being calm, so calm. Maybe cause he knew there was no chance of me being pregnant and it being his. Yeah. That had to be the reason. "Look, Ryan isn't that bad of a guy, neither is Bax. If it is one of theirs, they'll step up, Soph." He took a step towards me, his eyes holding mine. "If they don't, then fuck them, I'll be there. Every step, I promise."

His words caused more tears. How could he be so amazing? How could he be willingly offering to be there for another man's child?

"I'm not pregnant." I finally got out what I wanted to say all bloody night. But it didn't ease the tears. I was falling apart now. My eyes ran over him and I started to walk backwards. Josh was frowning at me like he couldn't understand any of his brother's ranting now.

I reached the car, opening the door, and I think I had confused him so much, he was frozen for a few moments. Enough time for me to get to my car door.

"Nice vest, Josh." My lips twitched up just slightly and then I was in the car. My words, had snapped him out of the confusion, and he was shouting at me to come back as I reserved out of the drive way.

But I didn't listen. I wasn't his problem. I wasn't anyone's. And I knew where I was going now. I was going to the airport. My passport was in the glove box.

My parents always wanted me to volunteer, and I was going to do it. Though how I was going to get in contact with them before they flew back here I wasn't sure. How did Kyle even get in contact with them? They didn't have phones, so it would have to be by email.

I pulled out my phone. Emails were the main way my parents reached out to everyone. I was creating a new email typing in urgent, typing in I'll get a blood test to prove I'm not but as I was writing the details of the email I heard a loud horn coming at me.

Chapter Twenty Seven

**JOSH** 

"Chain smoking darling isn't the answer."

My eyes went to my mother. "If you don't want me to kill your golden boy, you'll give up trying to get me to quit smoking." It was taking all my will power not to attack Kyle as he sat in one of the armchairs, not giving a fuck about the shit storm he had caused. "You proud of yourself?" I couldn't stop myself from snapping at him.

He just shrugged his shoulders.

"She's not even pregnant!" I added. Kyle was a fucking idiot.

"You mean you aren't sure if it is yours." Kyle smirked at me.

That's it, I'm killing him.

"Josh, stop it!" Mom went in between us. "Boys please don't fight!"

My fists were clenching at my side. "Move, Mom." If I didn't get this anger out, I was sure blood vessels would burst. Plus Kyle deserved to have his head caved in.

"Come on now, Josh, is that any way to talk to your child's uncle."

If my mother wasn't standing in front of him, he'd be dead. "Mom, move before you get hurt."

"Yeah, Mom, move. I'm not afraid of Josh. Plus he is really just panicking that he will have to change diapers."

Then I heard it. The tiniest flaw in his voice giving it away—he was jealous. He was so fucking jealous and now I knew how to

hurt him without physically touching him.

"You clearly let her down, Kyle." I suppressed the smirk and the pleasure I was going to get out of doing this to him. "Mom you can go. I won't touch him." I wasn't going to hurt Kyle, physically that is. "Go call Dad again, see if he has had any luck chasing down her uncle."

Mom frowned and then nodded her head. She didn't need me to say I wouldn't hurt Kyle. I always kept my word; she knew that.

"What do you mean by that?" Kyle asked as Mom left the room.

"About sex with her." I wanted to make him suffer. "Trust me, there is nothing wrong with her."

His eyes narrowed on me, and I knew I had his attention.

"The way she takes top, I swear I've never seen more of a beautiful woman. The way she takes all of me and the slight moan that comes out when she does." The truth was Soph and I hadn't had sex. But that didn't mean I hadn't pictured what it would be like. "Then those sweet noises she makes when I flip her over and go in deeper." I leaned in closer to Kyle to serve my final punch. "And the best bit? Doing all that without protecting."

And then it was Kyle who wanted to get physically, his hands going for my throat.

"Boys stop it!" Mom was back, but it was her tone that caused me to look at her, and I think it was the same reason Kyle let go.

"Mom, what's wrong?"

"It's Sophia. She's been in an incident."

Those few words were like a cold slap across my face, and it was the most fucking painful thing I had ever felt.

"They won't release details." Dad walked in to the waiting room.
"They said it was a breach that I was told she was even in an accident."

"Fuck it. I'll tell them I'm married to her." I was sick of waiting. I wanted answers. I wanted to know if she was alive or not. I wanted to know how serious.

Then there was that fucking question in the back of my mind: was she telling the truth when she said she wasn't pregnant?

"They know her, Josh. That isn't going to work." Dad's voice had a frustrated snap to it.

Fuck it. I'll punch answers out of someone.

"You agreed not to wear that vest around us."

I turned back to look at Dad. He couldn't be serious. He was complaining about me wearing my vest? I had forgotten I was even wearing it until Soph commented on it.

"Sorry, Dad, in between looking for Soph and then dealing with your son's crap, I didn't think about changing my clothes." My glare went from Dad to Kyle. "You know it is your fault she is in here." And that was what was boiling inside me. This whole thing was Kyle's fault. Another reason I wanted to kill him.

His eyes narrowed on me. "How do we not know she didn't do it on purpose?"

"How dare you say such a thing Kyle!" Mum was the first to jump on him for saying that. And for once her voice wasn't sweet when she spoke to him. "That is a horrible thing to say! She is family, Kyle!"

He rolled his eyes. "You wouldn't be saying that if you knew. In fact, all of you wouldn't be defending her."

"What is it that she's done that is so bad?" I was trying my best not to push Dad out of the way and get in Kyle's face. "Come on Kyle, spit it out."

"She was pregnant." He looked around us. "With my child and she had an abortion. Didn't even fucking tell me."

"So?" I was the first one to speak. "That's it?"

"That's it! She killed my child!"

I scoffed. "Look how you treated her, Kyle! Look at what you did to her! What you put her through! She is eighteen, her parents are never around, and she would have had to do it herself!" Was I the only one to see that Soph had made the right decision?

I glanced at Mom and Dad and they were nodding their heads.

"Josh is right, Kyle, it isn't your place to have an input after what you did to her." Mum's words were gentle but firm. "But if she is pregnant now, we will support her. Just like we would have if she

was with your child."

Kyle scoffed, shaking his head. "You are saying that cause it's Josh's child. If it was my mine, you'd be going on how stupid I am for letting it happen!"

"Why are you so angry about this?" I couldn't stop myself from asking. "Soph made the right decision and even if she didn't you should be supporting her, not fucking yelling at her and insulting her."

"Don't you get it! Are you all that stupid! It is another thing taking her away from me! It's killing me watching her live a life without me! If she has your child, or whoever's child, it won't be mine." Kyle was tearing up. "And I'll really lose her completely." His voice broke, his emotions clear for everyone to see.

I looked between Mom and Dad. Was Kyle real? He lost her and every right to be in her life when he broke up with her.

And I was about to remind him of those facts when Kayla burst in.

"Is she ok, is there any news?" Kayla was rushed and I was surprised she had even showed up. Wasn't like she got on with Soph anymore.

"We don't know." Kyle answered her and his eyes went to me. "Josh is worrying about his child."

"What are you on about?" Kayla snapped at him.

Kyle pulled his head out of his hands. "You said she was

pregnant?" He looked at her like she was stupid.

You've got to be kidding me? She was the source of whether Soph was pregnant or not? Kayla wouldn't fucking know one detail about Soph's life right now. I knew that.

Kayla looked guilty and I knew why. So I was waiting for her to cough it up.

"Kyle, we will talk about that later."

Kayla's words got Kyle's full attention, his eyes widening. "You lied about her being pregnant."

I stepped away from Kayla, glad someone could get into her.

"Yeah. I did." Kayla crossed her arms, narrowing her eyes at Kyle. "You better stop there Kyle, otherwise this conversation might lead in to another direction."

Kyle scoffed. "Fuck it." He looked at Dad. "Kayla has a picture of me doing drugs. She blackmailed me with it. So there goes your chance at running." He looked back at Kayla. "Was Soph pregnant with my child, or not?"

Kayla went silent. Her lips tight. I grabbed her by the shoulder and turned her around.

"Fucking answer the question? Was she pregnant or not?" I was more direct than Kyle.

"No." She finally spat out. She looked to Kyle. "She had a scare, but it was nothing."

Kyle's expression was blank. He was slowly coming to terms with the fact he had been lied to and he believed it.

"Fuck off." Kyle staggered out. "Now. Someone get her out of my sight before I kill her."

Mom was quick to guide her out of the waiting room, which caused my eyes to follow them, and I spotted Ryan at the nurses desk.

You have to be fucking kidding me. Ryan had some guts showing up here. When I heard Soph was in an accident, no before that, when I first saw her in the bathroom after all those years. I knew then I loved the woman she had grown up to be.

And that love for her grew until now. I wasn't letting any other guy have her. It was time I showed Ryan and Bax why I was the Vice President.

Chapter Twenty Eight

**JOSH** 

"Leave now before I fuck you up." I gripped Ryan by the shoulder, forcing him to look at me. "Mother fucker I don't give a fuck, I'll take you down now. Leave." If he had any idea how frustrated and furious I was he would take my warning and leave. He and Soph might have had a fling, but it was over. Cause she was mine.

And I was done with letting her be with other men.

Ryan whacked my arm away. "Fuck off, Vice. I'm not here on club business."

"Yeah, I know. You somehow found out Soph was here and I'm telling you to piss off."

I had already told Bax he was a dead man if he showed up here.

Ryan opened his mouth, but the doctor rounded the corner at the same time. "Ryan, are you ready to see her?"

My eyes widened. How the hell did he manage to get in to see her?

"He isn't her fiance and she sure as fuck isn't married to him." I informed the doctor rather abruptly. I wasn't letting Ryan near her. Her relationship with him was over to. In fact, her relationship with every man was over.

I was so stupid to let it go on as long as it did. I knew I had feelings for her. Yet I let her do what she wanted. I should have told her how I felt. Then at least there would have been a small chance that the baby was mine.

"He isn't the father either. I am." I added quickly, just in case he knew she could be pregnant.

The doctor frowned, his eyes going to Ryan. "You are family correct? Ryan Butcher?"

"Family!" I scoffed. Ha, that was a good line to use. "He isn't related to her."

The doctor looked down at her notes. "You're listed as her brother?" Her eyes went from Ryan to me.

Wait, he was listed? Now I was confused.

"Yeah, because I am her brother." Ryan threw me a dirty look. "Our parents can't fly out. They informed you of this?"

"Yes." The doctor nodded her head. "Come through, Ryan, you can see her and we can explain her condition."

Ryan nodded his head and the doctor turned, walking up the ward. His eyes went to me. "If she is pregnant and it is yours, I'll fucking kill you." And with that threat said, he walked off, following the doctor.

I didn't know what to say. How the hell didn't I know about this And? why was I finding it hard to believe that it was true? Not once had anyone in Soph's family mention Ryan Butcher. Not once.

Which was making me think that maybe he was lying. That somehow he had got his hands on her information and put himself down.

I walked back into the waiting room. If there was one person who might know the answer, it was my dipshit of a brother.

"Kyle, does Soph have a brother?"

Kyle looked up at me from the chair he was sitting in, looking guilty and sick to his stomach.

"Yeah, she does." Kyle sighed. "But he disappeared as soon as he turned eighteen. He was her adopted brother. Doesn't like to talk about him." Kyle ran his hand through his hair. "We should call her uncle. Kane might be a drunk, but when it comes to Soph he

cares and sobers up for her. And I have a feeling that's the only way we are going to get any information."

So it was true. Ryan was Soph's brother. It sent a wave of relief followed by nausea. It meant she wasn't sleeping with him, but he could be dragging her into his dirty drug business.

"No need," I said as I watched Kyle get his phone out. "Her brother is here."

And just like that I had the attention of the room.

Waiting... Wasn't my favourite thing to do, but I was good at it. I could wait for an enemy to break. If you ask me, it is the waiting that is the most painful of any experience. And I was getting a good dose of it now.

Hours turned into days and I still hadn't left. Unlike Kyle, I didn't answer to my parents. He had to piss off to rest. I stayed. I was craving a smoke, but I knew there was a chance if I went for one I could miss my chance to see her. So I stayed.

Didn't realize how much I depended on my cigarettes until now.

I didn't know if she was ok. I didn't even fucking know if she was breathing. For all I knew Ryan was planning her funeral or had discharged her and taken her back to his place.

These facts were getting louder in my head just when the waiting room door swung open. My eyes landrf on Ryan.

"Didn't know you had one, Vice."

I frowned. "What?"

"A heart."

I really wanted to get my hands around his throat. Yeah. I had showed my cards. I was known for being careless. Well, I was anything but careless when it came to Soph.

"How is she?" That's what I wanted to know. He could throw as many lines at me, taking down my character later. "She ok?"

"You know I never put two and two together." Ryan walked towards me. "You and her, never made the connection."

"Yeah, well that goes both ways," I gritted out, why couldn't he answer my fucking question!

"The Vice I know I can't stand and I don't want anywhere near my sister." He crossed his arms, looking at me determined. "But the Josh that Soph would gush about... well, that guy I wouldn't mind to get to know."

I frowned. Soph had mentioned me? To her brother?

"She's fine by the way. Though when I mentioned you were still in the waiting room she was threatening to have me killed." He sighed. "Her room twenty six. I need a smoke anyway."

He reminded me of my need for a cigarette, but my need to see Soph was stronger.

I got up and was heading for the door when I stopped, turning to look back at Ryan.

"So it's Bax's baby then?" I hadn't really given it much more thought. But now the answer was obvious.

"Does that change how you feel about her?"

Did it matter if she was carrying Bax's baby? Would my love change for her? I loved her, didn't I? Ryan was waiting for an answer.

"No it doesn't." I don't know why it took me so long to answer him. Fuck, why did I even have to think about it? "As far as I'm concerned, the baby is mine. And that's that." I was going to make sure Bax wasn't in the picture.

Soph needed a man that would stand by her, not a man that would fuck anything that walked while she was at home caring for his child. But at the end of the day, it didn't matter if Bax was going to be the best dad ever. He still wouldn't get the chance.

Cause Soph was mine. And that baby was mine as well.

"Well, Vice, you surprise me again." He looked at me rather impressed. "Soph may have been more right about your character than I was."

I wanted to know so badly what Soph thought of me, what she had told Ryan about me, but from what I could understand, whatever she said had Ryan questioning me and who I was completely.

I turned and left, heading up the ward. Finally I was going to see her. I don't think I'll take an easy breath until I see her. I was getting more nervous as I looked at the room numbers going up and then I was at her door.

What if she didn't want to see me? That was possible after what Kyle had done. Ok. Time to man up, and I pushed the door open. Worse case she threw something at me, or yelled at me for what

Kyle said to her.

"Josh?"

My head snapped up, I had been a coward and was looking at the ground, before getting the guts to look at her, now my eyes were locked with hers.

"Fuck Soph." My voice cracked seeing the bruises across her face, the swollen lip, and deep dark eye that looked like she had taken a right punch.

"It isn't that bad. Just some bruises." She brushed it off like she wasn't looking like a victim of family violence. "Have you really been here since I came in?"

I didn't know what to say. How can she just be brushing off what she went through? I managed to nod my head when she kept staring at me for an answer.

She huffed. "Bloody Ryan being a dick. I swear he can be selfish sometimes."

"He knew who I was, so I don't blame him."

Her eyes narrowed on me. "No. I know who you are. He knows the front you put up."

I cracked a small smile and walked towards her. "Who said it was a front?"

She started to move over on the bed and I didn't know what she was doing it for, then I realized she was making space for me. God she was so bloody sweet.

I gingerly sat down, and then took her hand carefully as it had an IV in it.

"You scared me Soph." My eyes were on her hand, that was bruised and the needle in it, giving her body fluids. Then I felt her other hand on my cheek, causing me to look at her. Into those beautiful eyes. I swallowed sharply, she was making me speechless.

What would someone like her, so beautiful so flawless, see in me?

"Josh?"

I couldn't pull my eyes from hers. Then she moved, closer to me. Her hand still on my cheek. "Umm?" I managed to get out, while watching her get closer. Those plumb red lips getting closer. Fuck she needed to stop cause I barely had will power to not act and not kiss her.

"I just wanted to say, what you said out the front of your house—

"Don't." I cut her off. "Don't say thank you, Soph. I meant it. I'll be the father to your child. I don't care if Bax is the father. He is out of your life now, Soph." I put my other hand over hers, which was on my cheek. Now was time to tell her. "I love—"

"Don't, Josh. I'm not pregnant, so you don't have to pretend you love me." She took a staggered breath in. "I don't need you to be with me out of pity. I'm not pregnant. So..." She sighed. "You can stop."

Before she could say another word, or before I did, I kissed her. It was soft and short. I needed to make a message clear to her. "No more Bax, you understand?" I was going to ease her into realizing she was mine now. But I wasn't about to tell her that directly now, I was going to earn her love.

I knew I loved her, but her love for me. I wasn't sure of that.

Her lips were slightly parted and she slowly nodded her head. "No more Bax."

"Or any other guy?"

Her lips twitched up slightly. "Well, there is another guy, and he might be hard to get rid of."

I wanted to scoff. A few minutes with my fists and he would be gone. "Name him, I'll personally tell him to piss off."

A full smile spread across her face, and she leaned in her lips nearly touching mine. "He goes by the name Vice." And then she was the one to kiss me.

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