

Of Pixies, Kisses And
*Fairytale*s



by
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by Alessa

Cailin *hated* the way the girl popped her bubblegum. The girl in question was an 8th grade transfer student. This was her second day in Cailin's class, and she probably would never have noticed her if it weren't for that particularly annoying sound coming out of her mouth.

Actually, when Cailin really thought about it, unless it was strictly necessary and unavoidable, any sound coming out of people's mouths was generally quite annoying. She couldn't bear inane chitchat. She couldn't bear the disgruntled arguing. She couldn't bear polite curiosity or the ploy of flirting.

In fact, she wasn't a fan of talking, full stop. She didn't need it. It just wasn't necessary. If she couldn't get her point across with five words or less, then it was just too much effort. And she supposed she could be extremely grateful that she could easily get into most girls' panties with a heated stare and a quirk of the lips. Nobody could put the blame on her if so many Hillside High schoolgirls were that inclined. They were all Daddy's little princesses with their plump trust funds and precious ponies, saying please and thank you while seeking her out in the dark of night, searching for the next forbidden adventure.

But she didn't mind playing the Bad Girl for them. After all, it wasn't foreign to her because not only was she an out and proud dyke at school, but she also happened to be from the wrong side of the tracks. At fourteen, she had a bad reputation and the leather jacket to prove it. She smoked pot, skipped school, fought with teachers, and flirted around with all the good girls who secretly wanted to be bad like her.

Sometimes Cailin wished she could find the energy to have a better ambition than that, to be studious, to have real friends... But with her father being an abusive alcoholic and her mother being completely out of the picture, she figured her boundaries were already set as far as they would go. She might as well enjoy what life sends her way instead of foolishly setting her sights too high and her hope out of reach.

And it wasn't as if life sent a lot of joy her way anyway. Here she was, an 8th grade misfit and a loser, with a touchy black eye and a pounding headache, courtesy of the fight with her Dad from the previous night, and one more reason the popping and clicking from the little blond girl sitting to Cailin's left was not appreciated. As if English wasn't unbearable enough already.

Cailin couldn't put a name to the girl's face. She couldn't even remember when she first appeared in their class. Girls simply never really made much of an impact on her unless she'd dallied with them in some devious act of same-sex flirting that eventually led to make-out sessions behind the bicycle shed. Or beside the gym lockers. Or inside the art room. Or on the school rooftop...

So if it weren't for the continuous popping and clicking from her mouth, Cailin probably would never have noticed her. She probably wouldn't have looked twice at her.

But Cailin was looking now. The girl was blond, but then, so were seventy percent of the girls at their school. Except, unlike the rest of the blondes, instead of having the latest hairstyle, this girl looked like she rarely ever brushed her hair. It was done up in two plaited ponytails, either side of her head, haphazardly arranged so that neither was symmetrical, and both contained pieces that had fallen out of the plaits into lone ringlets. And upon closer inspection, which Cailin did very discreetly, she thought she might have seen a few multicoloured feathers and flowers, or beads in the mess, as if she had crashed into a peacock on the way to school.

She was also tiny, as if she were either a child prodigy or had mistakenly entered the wrong classroom and now sat here pretending that she belonged. She wore thick, black-framed glasses, and Cailin couldn't see the colour of her eyes, but what she did happen to notice, quite abruptly, was the girl's mouth. Perhaps it was the way she was continuously chewing and popping, or perhaps it was the way she pouted whenever she turned her head up in thought. But whatever it was, she was absolutely riveted to her lips.

Cailin was a big fan of girls' mouths, which was kind of ironic because she rarely ever liked what came out of them. But she was definitely an avid admirer of the perfect pair of lips, which evidently this girl had.

How had she never noticed her lips before? They were a delicious-looking red, plump Cupid's bow with the perfect pout. After careful appraisal of her profile, she concluded the girl had the perfect mouth made just for kissing. She was kind of dreading seeing her from the front and possibly being disappointed. If her hair was any indication of her looks as a whole, then there was no hope in hell that she would be the sexy little vixen her mouth was promising her to be. And if her personality was as odious as the clicking noise her gum was producing, then she'd have to kiss that pretty mouth goodbye. Figuratively speaking, of course. Because that noise grated on Cailin's headache like an electric drill, digging into her skull until she was ready to make the girl choke on it.

Perfect mouth or not, it really needed to stop making that obnoxious sound.

"You know, that's really annoying," Cailin grunted finally, giving her classmate the intimidating glare she was so well known for.

The bubblegum girl turned to her with a half-dazed look on her face, as if unsure whether or not someone had actually spoken to her, and upon seeing her daunting expression, she released a melodic giggle, along with an equally eloquent, "Huh?"

Great. She was a giggler—another annoying sound to tick off the list. It was a shame really, that with such sinful lips, all she managed to do was aggravate her. Cailin supposed she could put those dirty little fantasies with that beautiful pout to rest.

"Your popping is splitting my head in half."

She giggled inanely again, completely unmoved by Cailin's glare or the threatening tone of her voice.

"My whating?"

Cailin almost let out a growl. "Popping. Your gum? It's annoying. Please stop."

Her eyes—green, she now noticed—cleared with understanding, and of course, she giggled again, as if laughing through her sentences was just the natural way she spoke.

"Oh. Right. I thought you said *pooping*. Sorry 'bout that."

Cailin sighed and looked away from her towards their teacher, whose back was turned to them, as she wrote a long list of things she was never going to get around to reading. She sent a lazy glance around the room and noticed almost every other student was either zoned out or enraptured in mini-conversations with those beside them. Their teacher wasn't really known for her discipline, so they always managed to get away with it.

She heard the scrape of a chair and desk against wood before she felt a soft thump from beside her, and then the start of a discussion she hadn't realised she'd initiated.

"It's just that," the blonde began, totally unaware of Cailin's disinterest, "I had my braces taken out yesterday, and I'm absolutely brace-free for the first time in three years. See?"

And with as little warning as that, she poked her face in front of Cailin and opened her mouth wide for a few seconds before closing it with a grin. "Neat, huh?"

Cailin stared at her as if she were crazy... probably because she was, and replied, "What?"

"You have no idea how liberating it is not to have a metal brace clamped to each individual tooth," she rambled, running her tongue along the front of her teeth and then leaning her elbow on Cailin's desk while she rested her head on her hand and stared at her curiously. "Have you ever had braces?"

Cailin was too bemused to answer. This girl had just shoved her desk into hers, completely invaded her personal space, and forced her into this whacked conversation while she stared intently at her mouth, and she was expected to participate?

"Well, have you?" she reiterated, her eyes wide and inquisitive.

"No."

She nodded. "You're lucky. Can I see?" And then she lifted her right hand to Cailin's mouth and pried her lips open with her fingers, pushing her face closer to Cailin's in an effort to see better. And then she nodded again. "Oh. You have lovely teeth."

Cailin jerked her head away and stared in disbelief. "What the fuck are you doing?"

The girl's eyes rounded in surprise as she gasped. Then she bit her lip and whispered, "You said a swear word."

Cailin wasn't sure whether to laugh or shove her back to where she belonged. She settled for doing neither and replied, "I say several and often."

The girl bit her lip again in thought, and Cailin couldn't take her eyes off the action. Really, *really* good lips. Shame she was such a fucking nutcase.

And then she did the most striking and most surprisingly erotic thing Cailin might have ever witnessed her mouth doing. With intentional slowness, her pink tongue snuck out to wet her lips, and on a hushed whisper, she said, " *F u c k* ". As if to test the sound and to see if lightning would strike and kill them both on the spot. And then she tried again: "Fuck... Fuck..."

And before she could say it again, she burst into helpless giggles, her head fell forward, and her hair brushed Cailin's bare arm while she stared at the girl's shaking form and wondered if she'd just stepped into some alternate universe.

This crazy kid with beautiful lips just rocked her world a little bit, and she didn't know why. Cailin was used to girls making passes at her when they wanted to piss their boyfriends off or give Daddy a scare. Girls doing unexpected things to get her attention for all the wrong reasons was not something uncommon and it usually left her heartbroken because there was never any true love behind all the flirting, and drama, and playacting.

But having a girl throw herself at her because she wanted to inspect her teeth, reprimand her language, and then whisper naughty words to her face was enough to keep her frozen in astonishment. And it wasn't only because of how weird the girl was, but because of the weird effect she was having on her.

Cailin was entirely puzzled by the antics of the new transfer student. The girl was obviously insane, for one thing, and though most teen girls, including herself, were insane to some degree, this girl seemed to have mental asylum stamped across her forehead. She was odd looking too—the artless conundrum of a hairstyle, the thick geeky-looking glasses, the childlike, multi-coloured, sparkling dress that looked like it was missing the fairy wings, over the bright pink tights—if it weren't for the succulent sexpot mouth, she'd probably have her dismissed for the coked-up hippie she obviously was from the start.

That would have been enough to make Cailin stand up and head for the door, keen to keep distance between the two of them for the remainder of the school year, but then the girl's teeth pressed into her lips and she said the magic word three times, and Cailin found, to her absolute horror, something constricting her chest and her heart speeding up in that familiar way as if bracing itself for yet another heartbreak.

It was disconcerting to say the least, because even with her head bent as the girl pissed herself laughing, Cailin's heart saw a whole other reason for the girl's head to be bent over her lap, and it would not refuse to let the image die—the image of the girl's lips doing exactly what they looked like they'd be best at. And cackling like an idiot was not one of them.

"Oh my god," the girl murmured as she gasped for breath. "I can't believe I just said the 'F' word. My Grandmother Eleanor would scrub my mouth out with soap. Especially now that I don't have my braces on," her button nose wrinkled in distaste. "Gross, could you imagine getting soap stuck in your braces and you'd be like—" she started giggling again, "trying to flick it out with your tongue but you'd just keep tasting it so you'd stop but then you'd still have soap in your mouth and it would just be this endless cycle that would have me *never* swearing ever again." She twirled a strand of yellow hair around her finger as she stared into space. "That would be the worst."

Cailin stared at her in stunned disbelief and wondered if she was aware she was speaking such rubbish out loud to a complete stranger. And then she wondered vaguely how it was that her heart was still so interested in this dork. Was she giving out a scent? Was it pheromones? Was it a cosmic thread between two souls? Some untimely reminder? Or was it invisible Cupid shooting arrows at her like some trashy picture on a cheap Valentine's card?

And to her further disbelief, the girl started up again. "You know what else is so annoying when you get it stuck in your teeth? Popcorn! You know, the little shell bits? I absolutely hate that. Especially when it's digging into your gums and you're like, tonguing it and tonguing it because you can't get it with your fingers, and when all else fails, you have to go and get a toothpick or dental floss? Well, when you've got braces, it's even worse!"

Cailin opened her mouth to order her to shut the fuck up, but the girl carried on. "But I don't have braces anymore, and to celebrate, I went out and bought every type of gum the store had because, did you know, I'd never had gum before? How crazy is that?" She didn't wait for Cailin to answer—not that she would have. "My grandmother *never, ever* allowed me to have sweets; she'd say, 'Pixie, lollies are for the Devil's children. Are you a child of the Devil?' and then I'd be like, 'Well, I don't know. Are you a child of the Devil?' cause like, if she was, then I was, right? But she never really found that funny, and then she'd send me up to my room, and I'd have to copy out a verse of the Bible," she shook her head. "I probably shouldn't be so happy that I'm not living with her anymore, though, huh?"

And before Cailin could stop herself, her mouth opened, and she asked, "Why not?"

And she really didn't know why she did it; it wasn't like she was actually interested in this cute little lunatic and her unconventional life. And it wasn't because she was polite because she didn't have a polite bone in her body, and yet, something had made her join in on their one-sided conversation, and if she wasn't so shell-shocked by this weird event and the girl's absurd name and her freaky appearance, she would have slapped herself upside the head.

Pixie blinked her bright green eyes up at Cailin, as if bringing her into focus, like she may or may not have forgotten she was actually talking to somebody, and then sent her a sweet, maybe even grateful smile, and Cailin thought perhaps that may have been another thing her beautiful mouth had been made for—kissing and smiling.

"Because she died," she stated matter-of-factly. "And so I got sent here to live with my Aunt Beatrice. She's great. She's so much more fun. And she said, 'Pixie, honey, you're twelve, so we'll get those braces off of you in a year.' And a year later, my braces are gone. Do you want some gum?"

Cailin blinked, stunned and speechless once again, and shook her head in response.

"Are you sure?" She grabbed her bag and opened it up. "I have all sorts of flavours. You can have any one you want. They're *really* good. I really like the strawberry ones. That's the one I'm chewing on now."

And sure enough, in her bag, amongst books, papers, pens and what looked to be a stuffed bunny, lay numerous packets of gum scattered amongst her things. Her belongings seemed to be as disordered and

as random as her head, and the longer Cailin sat beside her, the harder it was to classify her—to put her in the cliché group that everyone else went by. She was a freak, for sure, and her sense of dress and her crazy hair could class her as arty, but her personality and the way she talked made her sound like a hippie, while her clear innocence put her with the bible bashers.

When Cailin was so accustomed to dealing with the sluts, the popular girls, and the outcasts like herself, what was it about this adorable fruitcake that held her confused fascination?

Whatever it was, she didn't have time to find out because the bell rang and signalled the end of English, and all she could think was, *thank fuck for that*.

"That's the bell!" Pixie proclaimed cheerfully, just in case Cailin didn't know. "What do you have next?"

"History," she answered shortly, picking up her bag from the floor.

"Oh," she sounded almost disappointed. "I have math. Do you want to sit together at lunch?"

God no. "No."

"Oh." And this time, it was disappointment she heard in her voice. Cailin may have actually felt bad if she had a conscience, but Pixie shrugged it off and smiled anyway. "Well, it was nice talking to you."

"Mm-hmm." Cailin stood and slung her bag over her shoulder.

"Are you sure you don't want some gum?"

"No."

"No, you don't want any, or no, you're not sure?"

Cailin sighed. "Fine. Give me the strawberry."

The girl grinned up at her and handed her the gum. "That's my favourite!"

Cailin's answer was a frown as she popped the gum in her mouth.

"My name's Pixie, by the way," she chirped with enthusiasm.

"Uh... I've noticed."

"What's your name?"

She didn't know? Everyone knew who she was. It was a simple matter of self-preservation because everybody knew it was unhealthy for their social status to associate with the school dyke. Her ego was big enough to actually be offended by Pixie's ignorance, but then, since it was so obvious she associated with fairies and other non-existent creatures that were so common amongst crazy people, Cailin probably shouldn't be too surprised.

"Cailin," she finally answered.

"Cailin," she repeated with a small smile. "I like it!"

Cailin raised an eyebrow. "Well, that's a relief."

Pixie simply grinned at her and held out her hand. "Nice to meet you."

Cailin rolled her eyes, shook her hand, and swore it was the last time she would ever have anything to do with this little freak.

"Enjoy the rest of your day," Pixie beamed with a smile, wishing her farewell with one last pop of her gum.

Cailin put her headphones on and cranked up *Babymetal* to the max in hope of purging the past hour from her mind, then turned and walked away. Her easy dismissal was an assurance that this would be her first and last encounter with one Pixie the Weirdo.

It wasn't.

Somehow, each day through English class, no matter which desk she changed to, Pixie followed her like a puppy, always finding a way to be sitting beside her. *Right beside her*. Pushing her desk to connect with hers without any qualms in the world and without ever being reprimanded by the teacher. Everyone else in class, not to mention the school, found the situation amusing and never ceased to send the two of them knowing glances and curious smirks throughout the day. But Pixie the Oblivious took every opportunity to greet and converse with her newly found friend.

There wasn't much Cailin could do other than endure it. It was either that or order her to please fuck off kindly, but the longer she was around her, the harder that became. Telling her to fuck off would be like dropping a puppy into a shark tank—just plain mean.

The bad girl, who was so well known for being such an outcast and a ruthless asshole, was finding it impossible to stare the ditzy blonde in the eyes and tell her to go far away from her. She didn't even play nice to the girls she liked, which ironically attracted them even more to her, so why was she being so tolerant of a girl that could offer her nothing in return? Because even if Pixie's mouth could elicit such dirty fantasies, it didn't mean she wanted to get into her panties, let alone deal with her mental problems. At thirteen, Pixie was a year younger than her, for Christ's sake, and she even behaved like a little kid on top of everything! Wouldn't that make her some sort of sick pervert?

So the only options Cailin was left with was to ignore her as best she could.

But even that became harder. Each of Pixie's discussions was always something so completely senseless that Cailin wondered if she was losing brain cells just by listening to her. And then she'd say something totally out of the blue, and Cailin would be laughing out loud at her comment because it was either that or swearing very loudly. And since the last time she swore out loud made Pixie react in a way that made her heart go all jumpy in her chest, she had to refrain from ever doing that again.

By the end of that week, Cailin could have sworn she knew everything about her—from the first pet she ever had to the first flavour of ice cream she ever ate. She even learned of her parents' car accident and how she had been the only survivor, and how that had made her want to live each day as if it were her last because it very well could be, but her desire was stifled by a strict, God-fearing grandmother

and the entrapments of homeschooling—or something to that effect. She told her everything, and when there was nothing left to tell, she'd start in on Cailin.

She asked her how she got her black eye, and if it still hurt. She asked her if she liked school and what she wanted to be when she left. She asked her what her favourite meal was and if she had any pets. She asked her why she always dressed in black and if she had a boyfriend. She even asked her about her parents.

And what was even stranger was that Cailin would answer her with the truth, and it never fazed Pixie one bit, even when she told her she had no friends and was beaten up by her Dad or that she smoked pot and kissed girls behind a bicycle shed.

Pixie seemed so harmless, despite her ability to talk and talk, until Cailin felt her head was about to explode. But other than that, there was nothing dangerous about her. She wasn't a girl who was out to play mind games. She wasn't using Cailin to make some guy jealous or to piss off her parents by coming out at the family reunion. She wasn't using her to prove how brave and rebellious she could be. She wasn't using her to advance her social status within school. She wasn't using her at all.

And therefore, she was no threat to her. It was the first time anybody had ever asked about her out of sheer curiosity or ever listened with genuine interest, and she found the idea oddly... welcome. Even if she did tell Pixie her deepest, darkest fear or her best-kept secret, whom was she going to tell? She didn't appear to have any other friends, and other people didn't seem to have such a hard time telling her to piss off. So what about Pixie could ever harm her?

That reasoning alone was what allowed Cailin to endure her presence so easily. The next time Pixie asked to sit beside her at lunch, she let her. Other students sharing their table didn't care to question her and permitted this odd little girl into their space. Since it was so plainly obvious that Cailin didn't see anything in her other than the strained tolerance one shows towards a child, they stopped sneering at them and sending them disdainful glances and just let them be. And funnily enough, it didn't take long for Pixie to charm even the most scornful of tormentors.

Her overall dopiness and beguiling innocence soon had the table in fits. They started calling her Tinkerbell because she was so tiny and dressed like a little fairy without the wings. And then there was her wacky name and her habit of offering bubblegum to everyone like pixie dust and just being generally... fluttery.

Like today, for example, after a few weeks of having Pixie hang around her, instead of guiding Cailin to their lunch table, she asked her to sit alone with her instead, just the two of them under the shade of the big oak tree overlooking the school playground, so she could eat her lunch and blow soap bubbles at the same time.

Blowing soap bubbles from the plastic tube that hung around her neck while holding her stuffed bunny. If that wasn't enough evidence to suggest she may have the mentality of a six-year-old kid, Cailin didn't know what was. She hadn't seen a person blowing bubbles since preschool. She hadn't seen someone

enjoy such a mundane activity for years, and it stirred something inside her whenever she was around this girl who was genuinely filled with joy every second of her waking life.

And for some reason, Cailin indulged her the way one would indulge a child. It could have been because, since the first day Pixie had met her, she'd been bringing lunch for her too. Or it could have been that, despite her endless chatter, being around her made Cailin smile for the first time in months. She didn't have to deal with mind games or the sneering remarks and disdainful scorns. She didn't need to maintain her solitary existence or her aloof façade. She didn't need to talk back at jeers or defend herself with inane threats. She was just able to be. Pixie was a rare kind of girl; she wasn't afraid to let close to herself. She was like the little sister she never had or never even knew she wanted to have.

But even though, after every few bites, she'd take out the bubble wand and blow, and then smile as the bubbles floated up into the air and sparkled in the sunlight, Cailin managed to notice that she wasn't her usual bubbly self. Sure, she still giggled inanely at absolutely nothing, but she wasn't as talkative or as bouncy, and for Cailin to notice, that was enough to prove her point.

"You're relatively quiet today."

Pixie's grass-green eyes glanced up at her, and she quirked her lips into a smile. "I am?"

"More so than usual, yes."

She shrugged and took another bite of her sandwich, staring absently into the distance while she chewed, then, having swallowed that mouthful, she replied, "Sometimes I like the quiet."

Cailin snorted into her can of drink. "You could've fooled me."

Pixie playfully nudged her shoulder against Cailin's in reprimand. "What's that suppose to mean?"

"Sometimes it seems like you're talking just to avoid the silence."

She giggled and shook her head. "I'm quite sure everything I say is completely relevant."

Cailin rolled her eyes. "Yeah, because I really needed to know what colour your tongue turned out after you chewed on strawberry bubblegum."

Her eyes widened in protest. "Not just you. *Everybody!*" Cailin chuckled, and Pixie looked away from her and back into the distance before saying, "Plus, I didn't see you at lunch the last two days, and—and I missed you."

Well, she certainly wasn't expecting this turn of events because the last two lunch hours she'd spent making out with Rachel Summers in the janitor's closet. She was another cheerleader trying to get back at her cheating boyfriend by, of course, cheating on him in return and with a girl to boot, as if that wasn't enough, just to show him what a pathetic failure he really is. And why not do it with the one and only dyke in school because, if anything, there wasn't a chance of falling into the relationship trap or suffering the pains of long-term commitment?

She'd forgotten that Pixie might be waiting for her with her lunch in her own, newly acquired lunchbox, sitting at their table amongst the ever-spiteful classmates. When a random girl was willing to share her

lips with her while her boyfriend had basketball practise, Cailin wasn't about to turn her down. It was a sure way to keep her relatively upbeat for the rest of the day. But she had never thought that her presence would be missed. Apparently, she was wrong.

"Yeah," she cleared her throat. "Sorry about that."

Pixie turned sad eyes in her direction. "What were you doing, Cailin?"

Cailin raised an amused eyebrow. Like she was really going to tell her. "I... I had to finish my English essay."

Pixie got a determined look in her eyes, as if she could see through her lie and was going to try to pry the truth from her. Cailin probably would've enjoyed it if she'd tried, but the motion was put to a stop when her eyes widened as she stared over Cailin's shoulder and a dark shadow fell across her face, and Cailin might have questioned what had made her so suddenly distressed right then if she hadn't been interrupted.

"What do we have here? Little kidlings skipping class again?"

Cailin stared up at the tall, 12th-grader Trevor Hackley, a regular asshole and the resident drug dealer at Hillside High. It wasn't as if they were enemies, but they both knew the score. He knew how his life was going to turn out, so he took advantage of whatever came his way. And what came Trevor's way was his ability to dish out poor quality drugs and earn money from them. He was also, no doubt, prospecting for some gang, so that made Trevor classed as someone not to be crossed.

She felt Pixie shift closer to her, sliding up to Cailin's side to press her chin softly into the back of her shoulder, but before Cailin could look at her and ask what was wrong, she saw Trevor's eyes slide to Pixie and watched as a creepy smile crawled across his face.

"Well, hello, little Pixie," Trevor said in a slow drawl. "I didn't see you there."

"Hello Trevor," she mumbled, and Cailin felt her hand clutching the back of her shirt with uncommon intensity.

"You look nice today," he said with a hint of mockery.

"Thank you."

"You didn't want to sit with me at lunch?" Trevor asked in a curious lilt, a smug gleam in his eyes.

Cailin felt Pixie's hand clench tighter as she answered, "Not today."

Trevor licked his lips. "Maybe tomorrow then?"

"Maybe," she replied softly.

Cailin might have questioned her uncharacteristically brief answers if she hadn't caught Trevor's eyes taking a slow journey down Pixie's body and feeling that little body curl closer to hers in response. She was soft and warm and needed protection, but from whom and why?

It was then that Cailin realised that Trevor was actually checking her out. He was doing the symbolic manoeuvre of a guy who was looking at something he liked, something he wanted, and something he intended to possess, and Cailin felt the overwhelming urge to kick his ass for even thinking something like that about her Pixie.

She slowly drew out her pocket knife from behind her back, unsure of what she actually intended to do with it, or if she even had the courage to use it. But before she could act on her initial instinct, before she could question when this new development had begun and why she was being so aggressively protective of Pixie, Trevor met her eyes and smirked.

"Well, as much as I'd like to stay and..." his eyes shifted to Pixie again, "have lunch. I've got some business to take care of." He turned back to Cailin, "Watch your back, dyke."

Cailin stared at him with an indifferent expression, even though she was shaking with fear and rage, and a multitude of other emotions she couldn't understand.

Trevor looked at Pixie again and smiled. "See you later, Tinkerbell. Save me a seat tomorrow."

Cailin felt her chin bump against her shoulder in a tentative nod. "Bye."

And with one last perverted glance down the length of her body, Trevor threw them a mock salute and walked away.

Cailin felt Pixie deflate with a heavy sigh, and she turned to stare at her, which was a hard task to do since today her hair was piled on top of her head and all she could see was the unruly mass of golden curls with her regular multicoloured flowers and feathers scattered amongst it. She leaned back and put her arm around Pixie so she could try to gain her attention. It was then that she realised Pixie was trembling like a leaf.

Almost immediately, once she recognised the opening, Pixie shifted so she could snuggle closer into Cailin's side, her knees tucked into her so that she was practically sitting on her lap. Cailin's brow wrinkled at the sudden show of intimacy, but all she did was move her head so that she didn't have a mouthful of her hair.

"What was that all about?"

Pixie was silent for a moment before replying, "What do you mean?"

"Do you know Trevor?"

She hesitated and started fiddling with the bottom of Cailin's t-shirt, her head down, watching the play of her fingers. "Not really."

She tried another route since her answers didn't seem too forthcoming. "Have you been sitting with him at lunch?"

Pixie shrugged. "You weren't there, and he sat in your seat."

Cailin frowned—maybe at the idea of her reluctance to talk, maybe at the idea of someone taking her place—whatever it was, it didn't particularly make her happy. So very hesitantly, she asked, "Do you like Trevor?"

Pixie shrugged and shook her head at the same time—a very ambiguous answer for a very unambiguous person. And then she said, very quietly into Cailin's chest, "He makes me feel strange."

Cailin's jaw clenched, and she realised it was because she was gritting her teeth, and she couldn't understand why. She only did that when she was angry, and never in Pixie's presence had she ever been angry. But those five words didn't sit well with her. "What do you mean, he makes you feel strange?"

She stared up at her then, her green eyes wide and almost anxious. "He asked where you were. I thought you were friends."

Cailin's eyes narrowed, wondering what it was she saw in her gaze. "No. He's an asshole, a drug dealer, and a bully."

Her brow creased. "I'm sorry, Cailin. I- I didn't know."

Cailin's mouth quirked, and she held her friend closer, enjoying the warmth of her small form snuggled against her. It was getting colder. Pixie's head dropped back to Cailin's shoulder again, and she sighed, "I don't think I like him either."

Cailin's eyebrows rose in surprise. "You? I thought you liked *everybody*."

Pixie started fiddling with Cailin's shirt again. "He does bad things."

Cailin's face cleared with understanding. So that's what this was about. She knew Trevor dealt drugs, and her little golden pixie heart and her little golden good girl morals were having a hard time dealing with the fact that she was hanging around with people who so proudly broke the law. Maybe it had been a bad idea to leave her all alone during the lunch break, but since she wasn't exactly the easiest person to say 'no' to, she should probably consider this situation as half her fault. Cailin would hate to think what Pixie thought about the things she got up to in her spare time. If she knew the truth about her whereabouts during lunch the past two days, her pretty little head might pop, just like her bubblegum.

Cailin sighed into her hair and resisted the urge to chuckle. The poor kid, she thought with amusement, had fallen down the rabbit hole when she wanted to get to know her better, and now she was desperately wishing for a ladder.

But despite the fact that she should probably lie a little, if only to keep her rose-tinted world just the way it was, she instead answered honestly, "Yes. He does bad things. But so does everybody in some way. It's just human nature."

Pixie nodded slowly. "Yeah, but not everybody touches me the way he does."

Cailin thought she might have misheard her. She mumbled the sentence into Cailin's chest as if she were deeply ashamed, so she could have possibly mistaken her words. But that wouldn't have explained

why she felt a burning ball in the back of her throat, or why she felt the sudden urge to stick her pocket knife into Trevor's chest.

"What do you mean, he *touches* you?" She said finally, her voice deceptively calm. Only her hands shaking with rage gave out the clue to her true feelings.

But as if not hearing her, Pixie started on her own rant: "And he shouldn't touch me like that because I... I asked him not to touch me like that. But he does. And he looks at me even when he's not touching me, and I know he shouldn't do that because it's not the nicest thing I've seen, but I can't seem to make him stop." She stared up at Cailin then, her eyes deeply troubled. "I don't like it, Cailin."

Cailin had to look away from her so she wouldn't see the fury written across her face. She had to turn away from her plaintive eyes and her trembling lips. She had to look away because if she didn't, she might do something she'd regret, when what she really needed to do was hunt Trevor down and punch a hole through his chest. And she most definitely had to look away from her because she didn't want to risk glimpsing a faint trace of returned desire for someone who was in no way, shape, or form deserving of her. Because how could someone as innocent as Pixie deserve her when she wasn't even able to be there for her when she needed to protect her from an asshole like Trevor?

So, without looking at her, she asked, "How does he touch you? Does he hurt you?"

Cailin felt her shake her head in denial. "He doesn't hurt me. But-" she sighed, as if dreading the recollection, "At first he started by playing with my hair. And then he sort of turned it into stroking, which I didn't really mind because it kind of felt nice. But then he'd start doing it to my neck and then my back, and then his hand would drift down and sort of touch my..." she stopped, took a deep breath, and continued, "Well, you know. And then the other day he kind of came up behind me, and he sort of..."

She broke off then, and Cailin stared at her, not caring any longer whether her eyes were burning with rage. "He sort of *what*?"

Pixie swallowed and answered in a very meek voice, "Kissed my neck. And then he said I tasted delicious." Her eyes lowered while she stared intently at nothing. "It made me feel scared," she shook her head. "He shouldn't do that. Not when I asked him to stop doing it."

Cailin didn't know why, but she needed to find a way to ease her mind. "I'm sorry I missed lunch with you." She put her arm around Pixie's shoulder and drew her closer to herself. "That wouldn't have happened if I was there to protect you."

Pixie's eyes glanced up at her with surprise. "It's not your fault, Cailin. I don't need to be looked after. I'm not a baby, right?"

"No, you're not," she smiled at her. "But I... I don't want you to get hurt."

"Maybe he only wanted to be friends," Pixie tried to reason.

"Yes," Cailin stopped abruptly, shook her head, and started again. "I mean, no. No, I think he wants to be a little more than friends with you. Boys like him don't care about your feelings, Pixie. They take what they want."

Her eyes dropped to her chest. "They do?"

Cailin took a deep breath before asking, "Do you like boys, Pixie?"

Her brow crinkled in thought, and Cailin almost despaired knowing her answer. She definitely knew she didn't want it to be yes. That much she knew for sure. But Pixie surprised her by saying, "I... I don't want my first kiss to belong to someone like Trevor."

Cailin noticed that she blatantly didn't answer her question. She needed an answer. Even if it was the wrong one. But her answer also fascinated and scared her. The very idea that something that seemed so pointless and yet so precious to Pixie could be given with such detrimental consequences and concentrated purpose almost gave the notion of a first kiss infinite power. She never really gave thought to a person's first time being coveted—not their virginity and certainly not a kiss. But it being so important to her friend made Cailin feel almost humbled and made her realise that no one, and certainly not Trevor or her, was deserving of Pixie.

And even though she knew she shouldn't ask it, even though she probably already knew how she would reply, Cailin asked it anyway. "Who do you want to kiss then?"

Pixie's contemplative eyes landed on her lips, and she had to swallow the sudden catch of breath in her throat. "Is Rachel Summers your girlfriend?"

Cailin frowned, completely gobsmacked by the question. "Who told you that?"

"Trevor."

"Of course he did," she grumbled under her breath—another reason to rip into him.

"Is she?"

"No. She's just..." Cailin sighed, unsure how to explain it. "She's just a friend."

"Am I your friend?"

She looked into her troubled green eyes and smiled for the first time in a long time. "Pixie, you're a lot more to me than just a friend."

"But—what do you do with her?"

And since she was always honest with her, she replied, "We kiss in the janitor's closet."

"Even though she's not your girlfriend?"

Cailin sighed, frustrated now. "You don't have to be in a relationship to make out with a person, you know?"

And now she's probably just officially cracked Pixie's rose-tinted glasses. It wasn't right for a thirteen-year-old girl to be so innocent. Surely she at least had television to put a bit of sense into that pretty, ditzzy head. Surely she'd read a magazine or a smutty book sometime in her existence. She was in a public high school; for crying out loud, how was it that she was so bloody dense? Even if she had been homeschooled by the Bible-bashing granny for the first twelve years of her life, surely she'd been in the real world long enough to know what it was about.

But instead of going off on a preaching spiel about monogamy and virtue, Pixie surprised her by saying, "I suppose." And then she shrugged, "Well, that's good then."

Cailin's eyes narrowed, surprised by her answer. "It is? Why?"

"Because then I can do this and not feel guilty."

And before she could ask what the hell she was on about now, Pixie lifted her head and kissed her.

It was close-lipped. It was sweet. It was soft. It was very chaste. And it just about made her pass out.

But before she could respond, before she could teach her how to kiss properly, before she could open her mouth and dive in wholeheartedly, Pixie pulled back, opened her eyes, smiled, and said, "I want you to have it."

"Have it?" Cailin asked, dazed by the mischievous gleam in Pixie's eyes.

"My first kiss," she stated simply. "I don't want to give it to a boy like Trevor. At least now that it's yours, nobody else can have it."

This moment shouldn't have meant so much to Cailin. That small little peck, that innocent little meeting of the lips, shouldn't have touched her so. But with her kiss and her disclaimer, she almost felt a burden crash down upon her. That burden being the need, the want, the will to try and be a better person for her. The extremely heavy burden to be a deserving person of this incredible girl that had entered her life out of nowhere. And she didn't want it, but she couldn't let it go because letting go would mean letting Pixie go, and that she couldn't do in a million years.

After an insurmountable length of time, Cailin's shock and horror wore off enough to let her respond. "You shouldn't have done that."

Her words made Pixie's shoulders drop in despair and disappointment. "Didn't you want it?"

Cailin sighed, licked her lips, and said cautiously, "That's the problem—I want it. But, Pixie... I'm not good enough for you."

Pixie's head shot up in astonishment. "Why would you say that?"

"Because it's true." Cailin's voice was a whisper, and she couldn't look at her for fear of letting her see the first tears in her eyes. "I couldn't even protect you from Trevor. I wasn't there when you needed me, and I'm only going to end up hurting you, and—and I'd rather die than see you get hurt, Pixie."

Pixie shook her head in quick, emphatic jerks. "I don't believe that, Cailin. Not at all. And even... even if or when you don't want to be friends anymore, at least I can walk away knowing that you'll always be my first kiss and that I'll never take it back. Not for the world," her hand lifted to cup Cailin's cheek so she would meet her eyes and see her trembling chin. "I'll always be happy that you have it. *Always.*"

Cailin's eyes teared up. Here she was, a tough girl who was about to stab Trevor with the knife, now crying real tears over a kiss from the little fairy girl with a Hello Kitty T-shirt and an addiction to bubblegum. She was just too undeniably sweet. Even when Cailin knew for certain that, maybe not purposefully, but in some way or another, she was going to end up hurting her, or ruining her, or possibly breaking her innocent heart. When she knew that there was too much darkness in her to ever be given reassurance, Pixie always managed to force a light through and give her hope. If she could find it in herself to face the demon head-on, then she could do nothing less than stand by her side. Pixie made her want to be a better person. Well, she made her at least want to try.

Cailin placed her hand on top of the one that held her cheek, lacing their fingers, and asked, "Promise?"

Pixie nodded, blush spreading across her cheeks. "Cross my heart and hope to die; poke a needle in my eye..." She stopped and frowned. "No, wait, that's not right," she shrugged. "Oh well, I promise... I promise that no matter what, I'll always want to be your friend, and I'll always want you to keep my kiss."

Cailin smiled—a full-hearted, genuinely happy smile—one that she only ever did around her. "Well, in that case, we should probably make it a good one."

And this time, she kissed her like she wanted to. She kissed her and thought that perhaps this was something she could keep forever too. She could take this away, store it in her dreams and her memories, and know she meant it. And besides, she'd always been told she was a good kisser. If Pixie was ever to grow tired of her, she was going to give her something to remember—something to hold for comparison and hopefully always find any other lacking.

So she opened her mouth and nibbled at her bubblegum-flavoured lips and felt them open on a gasp as their tongues touched, and she taught her how to do it right. Cailin grasped the back of her head, her hand lost amongst the mass of her blond curls. She pulled her by the waist onto her lap, and she kissed her and kissed her and kissed her until they ran out of breath.

By the time she pulled back, Pixie's eyes were wide, her mouth was open, and her chest was heaving. And when she gained enough bearings to form words, she said, "Show me more."

Cailin chuckled helplessly and kissed her on the nose. "One thing at a time, fairy-girl."

Even if she did end up disappointing her in the long run, even if she accidentally broke her heart and made her cry, at least they had this. At least, for the moment, they could confidently say they'd found a friend in each other, and she'd given Cailin her first kiss, and Cailin had given her her heart, and they could walk into the sunset and be content in their happiness.

Even if it was a cliché, the good girl finally tamed the bad girl. It had taken a bubblegum-chewing fairy to find Cailin's heart, and all she wanted to do now was be worthy. And all she wanted to do was be hers.

And so they lived in Pixie's fairytale... happily ever after.

The End