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My Best Friend's Girl (English Edition)



Par Dorothy Koomson
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Par Dorothy Koomson : My Best Friend's Girl (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Best Friend's Girl (English Edition):

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurWhat would you do for the friend who broke your heart?Best friends Kamryn Matika and Adele Brannon thought nothing could come between them - until Adele did the unthinkable and slept with Kamryn's fiance, Nate. Worse still, she got pregnant and had his child. When Kamryn discovered the truth about their betrayal she vowed never to see any of them again. Two years later, Kamryn receives a letter from Adele asking her to visit her in hospital. Adele is dying and begs Kamryn to adopt her daughter, Tegan. With a great job and a hectic social life, the last thing Kamryn needs is a five year old to disrupt things. Especially not one who reminds her of Nate. But with no one else to take care of Tegan and Adele fading fast, does she have any other choice? So begins a difficult journey that leads Kamryn towards

forgiveness, love, responsibility and, ultimately, a better understanding of herself. Extrait Chapter One

The postman jumped as I snatched open the front door to my block of flats and eagerly greeted him. Usually when we came face-to-face, he'd have buzzed up to my first-floor flat and I'd come shuffling down to the ground level, pulling on my dressing gown as I tried to rub dried sleep drizzle off my face. Today, though, I'd been hanging out of my window waiting for him. I was in my usual dressing gown and had sleep-sculpted hair, but this time my eyes weren't barely open slits, I'd washed my face and I was smiling. "Special day, is it?" he said without humor. He clearly didn't like this reversal of roles. He wanted me to be sedate and disorientated when he handed over my post. It was probably the only power trip he got in a day. Ahhh, that's not fair. He was lovely, my postman. In fact, everyone in the world was lovely today. "It's my birthday." I grinned, showing off my freshly cleaned teeth. "Happy birthday," he commented, dour as a priest at prayer time, and handed over the post for the four flats in our block. I keenly took the bundle that was bound by a brown elastic band, noting that almost all of the envelopes were red or purple or blue. Basically, card-colored. "Twenty-one again, eh?" the postie said, still unwilling to be infected by my good humor. "Nope, I'm thirty-two and proud," I replied. "Every birthday is a bonus! And anyway, today I get to wear gold sequins and high heels and brush gold dust all over my cleavage." The postie's small brown eyes flicked down to my chest area, then he immediately snatched his gaze away. It'd probably occurred to him that he shouldn't be eyeing up the women on his delivery route especially when said lady wasn't even undressed enough to make it worth his while. He started backing away. "Have a good day, love," he said. "I mean, dear. I mean, bye." And then he legged it down the garden path far quicker than a man of his girth and age should be able to. "You too," I called after him as I shut the door. I flung the letters that weren't for me but had the audacity to arrive at this address today on the floor of the hallway. They landed unceremoniously on top of the other, older letters that sat like orphaned children, longing to be rescued. I usually felt sorry for those letters, wished the people they'd been sent to would give them a good home, but they weren't my problem today. I barely gave them a second thought as I took the stairs two at a time back up to my flat. In my bedroom I had already laid out my birthday breakfast feast: fresh croissants with smoked salmon, three chocolate truffles and a glass of Mot. Everything had to be perfect today. Everything. I'd planned it that way. After I'd devoured my special brekky, I'd stay in bed until midday, opening birthday cards while receiving calls from well-wishing friends and relatives. Then I had an appointment at the hairdresser to get my hair washed, deep-conditioned and cut. I was going for a radical change ditching my usual chin-length bob for a style with long layers and a sweeping fringe. After that, I'd come back home and get dressed up. I really was going to wear a dress of gold sequins that set off my dark skin in spectacular fashion. I was going to squeeze my feet into gold high heels and I was going to brush gold dust over my cleavage. And then a few of the girls from work were coming round for drinks and nibbles before we went into town to dance the night away. I slipped carefully under the sheets, not wanting to spill any of the special spread, then took a swig of champagne before I tore through my cards like a child. Around me the pile of brightly colored envelopes grew as I tugged out the cards and smiled at the words written inside. It wasn't dim of me, then, not to notice it. It was like all the others. Slipped in among the bundle, innocuous and innocent-looking. And, like all the others, I didn't really look at it, didn't try to decipher the handwriting on the envelope, ignored the picture on the front. I simply opened it, eager to receive the message of love that had been scrawled inside. My heart stopped. I recognized the handwriting before I read the words. The words I read with a racing heart. Dear Kamryn, Please don't ignore this. I need to see you. I'm dying. I'm in St. Jude's Hospital in central London. Yours, Adele x P.S., I miss you. Slamming it shut I registered for the first time that the card had "I love you" on it instead of one of the usual birthday greetings. The glossy cardboard sailed across the room as though it had burned my fingers. It landed on the wicker laundry basket and sat there staring at me. With its white front and simple design and three treacherous words, it sneered at me. Daring me to ignore it. Daring me to pretend the words inside weren't carved into my brain like they were scored onto the card. I took a slug of my champagne but it tasted like vinegar in my mouth. The croissant, carefully sliced and filled with smoked salmon, was like sawdust as I chewed. The truffles were paste on my tongue. Still the card stared at me. Goading me. Ignore me if you can, it mocked. Go on, try it. I threw back the covers, got out of bed and went over to the card. Dispassionately, I tore it in half. Then tore those pieces in half again. I stomped into the kitchen, stamped on the pedal of the trash bin to open it and dropped the remains on top of the rotting vegetables, greasy leftovers and discarded wrappers. "There. That's what I think of that! And you!" I hissed at the card and its sender. I returned to my bed. That was better. Much better. I sipped my champagne and ate my food. And everything was all right again. Perfect, even. Just like it should be on my birthday. Nothing

could ruin it. No matter how much anyone tried. And they were bloody trying, weren't they? You don't try much harder than with that message, dressed up as a birthday card. Very clever. Very bloody clever. Well, it wasn't going to work. I wasn't falling for that nonsense. I was going to carry on with my plan. I was going to make my thirty-second more special than my eighteenth, twenty-first and thirtieth birthdays combined. Because when I am thirty-two I shall wear gold sequins and six-inch stilettos and brush gold dust over my cleavage, just as I promised myself ages ago. The door was ajar and didn't protest as I gently pushed on it. I didn't knock. I never knocked on an already open door because to me it always said, "Come, no knocking required." From her place amongst her white pillows, she smiled as I stepped into view. "I knew you'd come," she whispered. Chapter Two Dolce Gabbana. Even now, at what was probably one of the darkest hours of her life, Adele wore designer clothes a white DG T-shirt peeked out from under the covers. She always did have more style than sense. At one time, that thought, twisted as it was, would've been out of my mouth callously uttered to her because she would've appreciated it. I couldn't today. Things had drastically changed between us. I hadn't seen Adele in two years, and the last time I saw her, she had her fingers buried in her hair as though on the verge of ripping her blond locks from their roots, mascara was running down her face and snot was dribbling out of her nose. She was talking, stumbling over her words, saying things I didn't want to hear. I was grabbing my clothes and my bag and blinking back tears and trying not to collapse in a heap. Things don't go back to being normal after you part on those terms. Now, she was ill. We didn't speak as a nurse fussed around Adele, noting the readings on the machines, checking the lines on the drips, plumping up the pillows so they propped the patient upright. The nurse had a round, friendly face with big brown smiling eyes. She grinned at me as though she knew me, told Adele not to talk for too long and left us to it. Still we didn't speak. "Hi" seemed a pretty insufficient way to greet someone I'd sworn never to communicate with ever again. "That nurse reminds me of your mum," Adele said when the silence had started to drown out even the hum of the machines. I nodded in agreement but couldn't bring myself to talk. I just couldn't. This wasn't the Adele Del as I called her I'd come to see, this wasn't the Adele I'd braced myself to talk to after all this time. I don't know what I expected, hadn't really thought about it when I got on that train to travel two hundred miles from Leeds to London, but I didn't expect her to look like this. I could close my eyes and see the Del I expected to see. That mass of curly honey-blond hair, always trimmed to shoulder length, would be there. As would that smooth, healthy glow of her creamy white skin. What would be the clearest thing about the image? Her eyes, which were the blue-gray of highly polished steel, or her smile, which lit up everything around her? Whichever it was, behind my eyelids, the real Del would be there.

So perfect and three-dimensional I could reach out and hug her. With my eyes open, Del Brannon was different. Altered. The Del who was propped up in bed had skin that was a blotched patchwork of gray, white and yellow. Her face was hollowed out by weight loss, and under her sunken eyes, conspicuously missing their eyebrows, deep dark circles were scored. Around her head was tied a royal blue scarf, probably to hide her lack of hair. My body went cold. Her beautiful, beautiful hair was all gone. Stripped away by the drugs that were meant to make her well. I didn't know she'd look like this. Frail. Like an anemic autumn leaf so dried, brittle and fragile that one touch would crumble her into a million pieces. "It's good to see you," she said, her voice a low rasp that was probably as painful to create as it was to hear. "I'm glad you came." "What's with the voice?" I asked. "It's the treatment. Makes my mouth dry and my tongue feels like it's grown shag pile." "God, remember when we felt like that because we'd actually enjoyed ourselves by getting drunk the night before?" I commented, then mentally slapped myself. I didn't mean it the way it sounded I was trying to express sympathy but it'd come out wrong. Del's dry, cracked lips pulled up into a smile. "Trust you," she said. "No one else has dared say something like that to me. Too scared of making me cry, I suppose. Too scared that I might break down and die on them. Trust you to break the taboo." "It wasn't intentional," I replied, suitably shamefaced. "Just being myself." "I wouldn't want you any other way," she said. "What's wrong with you?" I asked. That sounded wrong too. Harsh. Unfeeling. Admittedly, part of me was still that woman who was picking up her belongings and swearing to herself she'd never be that hurt again, but most of me was brokenhearted. I was helpless and I didn't "do" helpless very well. "I mean, you said you were . . . What are you ill with?" "Leukemia," she replied. "I thought only children got that," I said before I could stop myself. "That's what I said!" she exclaimed. "You know, when the doctor told me, I said those exact words. It went down like a cup of cold sick, I can tell you." "Glad to know it's not only me who says inappropriate things," I muttered loudly. "Yep, even when I'm at death's door." She said that so blithely, calmly, that I had an urge to reach out, take hold of her bony shoulders and shake her. Violently. So violently that she was reminded what was going on. How could she be so laid-back about it? So comfortable

with the notion of dying? I was still struggling to understand how someone who was my age, who went to the gym, who ate relatively healthily, who had never smoked, who drank as much as I did, had woken up one day to find there was a clock ticking over her head; discovered she was one step closer to knowing when she'd meet her maker than I was. I'd been wrestling with this thought since I read the card she sent me. "It's all right, you know, I've accepted what's happening to me," Del reassured me, as though reading my thoughts. "It took a while but I'm here. I know it's going to take you a while to catch up." "Only a little while," I said sarcastically. "I had to get here quickly," she continued, ignoring not what I'd said but how I'd said it. "I had to make plans. It's not just about me. So, no matter how much I wanted to pretend it wasn't happening, I had to remember the most important person that needs taking care of." Tegan. She was talking about her daughter, Tegan. How was she taking this? If I was having problems dealing with it, how was a clever little five-year-old coping? "I suppose you've worked out why I wanted to see you," Del said after another long silence had passed. "To make me feel guilty for ignoring you for two years?" I replied. "Apart from that," she said, a sly smile playing around her gray lips. "Well then, no." "After I'm gone . . ." Del paused, took a deep breath. "I want you to adopt Tegan." "What?" "I want . . . No, I need you to adopt Tegan after I die." I could feel the frown creasing my forehead, and my face twisting itself into an Are you mad? look. But she stared back at me as if she expected an answer to what she'd just said. "You're joking, right?" "Do I look like I'm joking?" she replied, exasperated. "If I was joking there'd be a punchline and it'd be funny. No, Kamryn, I'm not joking. I want you to adopt my daughter when I die." "All right, Adele, if you're serious, I'll give you a serious answer. No. Absolutely no." "You haven't even thought about it." "There's nothing to think about. You've always known that I don't want children. I told you enough times, I'm not having kids." "I'm not asking you to have kids, just my one." Del inhaled deeply, a move that seemed to take all her strength and added to her gray color. "I've done all the hard stuff, morning sickness, losing my figure, twenty-four hours in labor . . . You just have to look after her. Be her mother. Love her." "Just" look after her. "Just" be her mother. Like that was easy. And anyway . . . "Del, we haven't even spoken in two years and now you're asking me to adopt a child? Can you see what's wrong with this picture? Why I'm having problems with this?"

From Publishers Weekly
When Kamryn Ryn Matika gets a call from college friend Adele Del Brannon, she reluctantly heads to the hospital where Adele is dying of cancer. The two had been odd couple friends (working-class Ryn is black, posh Adele is white) while attending Leeds University, but their friendship did not survive Del's admission of an affair with Ryn's fianc Nate Turner, which also ended Ryn's relationship with Nate. The affair did result, however, in the now-five-year-old Tegan, and Del has called Ryn to ask her to adopt the adorable girl. Ryn agrees, but must face down Del's stepmother, Muriel, to do it. She finds surprising help from new boss Luke Wiseman, who, after meeting her unceremoniously, loves Tegan (and eventually Ryn, too), but the return of Nate, who doesn't know Tegan is his daughter, promises to reopen old wounds. Koomson's U.S. debut is a three-hankie delight. (Mar.)

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