

# *Finding Peace*

*Book 1 in the Finding series*

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## Prologue

### *Kayla*

My name is Kayla Jameson. I am a product of a union I don't believe I will ever really know about. My mother was a seventeen year old girl, who decided the best thing she could do for me was give me up for adoption. I completely agree with her. I'm seventeen now and I know at this age that I would lack the skills it takes to be a great mother. Could I do it? Sure, if forced to, but I understand her decision and would never think badly of her.

My adoptive parents never hid the fact that I was adopted. They made me fully aware of it at a very early age. It's all I ever knew. I didn't think anything of it until I started kindergarten and learned that this was not normal for every family. My father was a soldier in the Army and my mother was a homemaker. He was gone a lot, but my mother and I pressed on and did our duty to our country by keeping the home front under control. My father was always so proud of us.

I love my adoptive parents with all of my heart. The love they have for me has been overwhelming at times. I was six when my world was turned upside down. All I can remember is hearing the yelling. The non-stop yelling and my mother crying so hard she couldn't breathe.

*I try to console her. I put my small hand in hers and say over and over. "Mommy, it's okay. Are you hurt? Do you need me to go get Daddy?" She just cries harder and wraps me in her arms and squeezes me so hard I think she is going to crush me.*

*Just then, my daddy walks into the room with a suitcase and makes his way to the front door. There are tears running down his face. I run to him. I cling to his leg asking "Dad...dy, wh...ere are you going?" I can barely understand myself through the sobs that wreck my small trembling body. Daddy kneels down and looks over my shoulder at my mommy who turns her head from him. She is broken. This I know. And so is Daddy.*

*"My sweet, sweet baby girl; I'm so sorry, but daddy has to go. I promise I will see you soon. Take care of mommy and be daddy's good girl. I love you."*

*I grab him around the neck and won't let him go. He looks to my mommy for help as he tries to break my hold on him. I look into his light green eyes and I see my own. Even though he isn't my biological daddy, our eyes are almost identical. People comment on it all the time.*

*"I thought you didn't have to leave again. I thought your job changed and you can stay at Fort Bragg and be with me and mommy. Don't leave me, Daddy! I'll go with you. Who will take care of you if me and mommy aren't with you? Please, Daddy. PLEASE! Don't go." I plead with all my heart. I don't understand and no one will explain what is happening.*

*"I'm not leaving to go on a mission, Kayla. I'll still be in North Carolina. You have to go take care of Mommy now. I will call you tonight. I promise."*

*"But Daddy, who will tuck me in and sing my song to me? You always sing to me until I go to sleep. You can't leave, you just can't"*

*"Kayla, baby, please don't make this any harder. I will sing to you over the phone, I promise. I promise, sweet girl. I'll always sing to you."*

*Mommy walks up behind me and wraps me in her arms. She roughly pulls me away from my daddy. I try to pull away from her, but she is too big and I am too small. My light blonde hair*

*sticks to my face due to my tears and sweat, where I tried so hard to hold on to him. I scrub at my face so hard it hurts. My eyes hurt. My chest hurts. I don't know why, but I know this is different. He isn't just leaving for work, I know he's not.*

*Daddy stands and looks at mommy with a look of hurt on his face. "I do love you, JoAnn. I always will."*

*My mother's sobs grow louder and she falls to the floor, holding me in her lap. He turns and walks out the door and out of our lives.*

My mother did her best, but depression overtook her and she turned to drugs and alcohol to help ease her pain. Things got worse each day. She stopped taking care of me. I did everything on my own. I fixed my own food and got my own clothes for school. She couldn't see past her own sorrow. My father kept his promise. He called me every night and sang to me when I was ready for bed.

*"Hi, Daddy, I miss you."*

*"I miss you too, baby girl. How was your day?"*

*This is now our routine. I am always careful not to tell Daddy about Mommy, I don't want her to be mad at me or for him to be mad at her.*

*"Are you in bed and ready for your song?"*

*"Yes, Daddy, I'm ready."*

*"Ok, snuggle into your covers and close those beautiful green eyes." I listen to his soothing voice over the phone. "Daddy's girl you'll always be. Never a day that I don't dream, of the person that, you'll grow up to be. All the things that you have to offer... all your sweetness that you share... Daddy's girl... Daddy's girl.... Never a day that I don't wish I could give you, your every wish... Daddy's girl.... You're Daddy's girl.... Your beautiful green eyes... they pierce my soul... you're daddy's girl.... Daddy's girl.... One day you will know... You're daddy's girl.... Daddy's girl....." I think I hear Daddy crying, but I'm not sure. "I love you, sweet girl. Go to sleep. I'll see you soon."*

*I whisper "I love you, too, Daddy."*

My father's parents basically tricked him into signing over his parental rights. He had been called back to active duty and his parents took care of everything for him. So, when they told him to sign, he did. At the time, he thought they were looking out for him and for me. This ensured that they got full custody of me. My mother didn't fight them. Honestly, she knew she wasn't in any shape to take care of me. With her anti-depressants and other things, she was barely able to take care of herself. No matter how hard she tried, she just couldn't pull herself out of the downward spiral she was in. I now believe that her having to take care of me reminded her of my father too much and she just couldn't do it at that time.

My grandparents thought they were doing what was best for me. They loved me dearly and showed it every day. Never have I ever felt unloved, but I just never understood why I couldn't be with either of my parents. I rarely got to see my mother and my father was gone a lot. After my grandparents took custody of me, my father decided to start going on missions again. I didn't fully understand, but I knew enough to always be afraid for him. He did his best to keep his promise to me, but there were times that he couldn't make his nightly call and eventually they stopped. Maybe I had just gotten too old. By the time I was twelve, my father and I hardly ever spoke.

This is a loss that is hard for me to relive. Maybe even the reason that I feel that every man will leave me. Losing him the way I did was like experiencing a death. He was the one who did everything with me and for me. Loving him was easy, we connected naturally. Although I loved my mom, if my dad was there I was by his side. Always being daddy's girl.

I was his little princess and he was my king. The man that would never let me down and always protect me. He was the type of dad that would have tea parties with me, play dress up, and let me do his hair up in my hair barrettes. This rough and tough military man was always a teddy bear with me. I miss the closeness that we had. Hopefully, one day we can have it again or at least some semblance of it. Wanting my future children to have him be active in their lives, is something that I long for.

My grandmother was my saving grace and is the reason I am who I am today. She was a God fearing woman who taught me right from wrong. Teaching me to be a moral person, and that in all that we do, that we should always follow God. This woman was there for me when I felt abandoned by everyone. Holding me when I cried, helping me through my fears, and nursing me when I was sick. She wasn't the one who adopted me, that's not a choice she made, but when those that had made that choice, couldn't do it anymore, she was the one who was there.