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Opening extract from

Lula Does the Hula

Written by

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Hello and aloha, gorgeousnesses!

There are hints in this book of my murky past. Like the time my friends and I went caravanning in the summer holidays. Carrie's dad dropped us and the caravan off, and as soon as his exhaust fumes had wafted away we'd struck up a friendship with the boys in a nearby tent.

They were gorgeous and fun and all you could wish for in next-door holiday mates.

Except they never had teabags.

Not a problem until they WALK IN UNANNOUNCED when, you know, a person could be GETTING DRESSED! All, like, 'Have you girls got any teab– Oh, hel-lo!'

'Erk!' I shrieked. 'Out! Out!' But it was too late. All that boy talked about for the rest of the holiday was 'Sam's Specialities'.

I did my best to pretend it never happened.

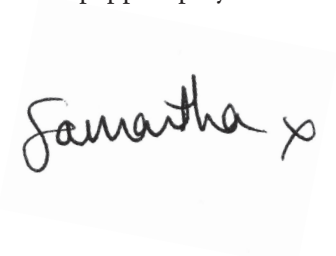
But not so long ago, a million miles and a million days since that campsite, I walk into a live-music gig, and what do I hear across the crowded room?

'SAM! SPECIALITIES!'

Yep, the boy from the tent. Oh HOW? Why? Whyeee?

I hope this kind of thing doesn't happen to you, but if, like me, you're a bit of a Lula and constantly suffering total humiliations, keep your head held high, your best friends close and your spiky hairbrush-slash-pepper spray at the ready . . .

Big hugs,



Read the first Lula adventure/rom-com/tale of total humiliation



'A hilarious, hectic, full-on diary saga'
Julia Eccleshare, lovereading4kids.co.uk

'Laugh-out-loud funny' Bookseller

'Girls will wish they are Lula' thebookbag.co.uk

'Extremely exciting' chicklish.co.uk

'So much fun' goodreads.com

Find Lula's blog at www.lulabooks.co.uk

Who's kissing, who's missing and who's making complications for our favourite girl next door?

Lula does the Hula



Samantha Mackintosh

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We bring stories to life

Lula Does the Hula
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For my mother



Chapter One

Monday 5 a.m. Some witchy instinct has woken me up
My boyfriend is dead. Apparently.

I kissed him goodbye two weeks ago and will never ever see him again. He did not die of natural causes. Oh, no.

Everyone says it's my fault. Most of the village of Hambledon where I live think I'm terribly jinxed – that's the reason all the boys I go out with end up in A&E sooner rather than later. And no one has seen my one true love since we first kissed.

Ohhhh, that kiss . . .

Um. Where was I? Oh, yes. So my boyfriend is dead.

But I know better.

In the pitch black of early, early morning, the start of summer just a breath away, I grinned happily to myself and stretched. It was the perfect start to the day, that velvet dark, the gorgeous luxury of a cosy bed I didn't have to get out of just yet, the feeling that something wonderful was going to happen. I didn't give a flying fig about the dead-boyfriend rumours.

Total silence.

Thank heavens I lived out here in the annexe rather than the main house where my littlest sister Blue yodelled

at the break of dawn more often than not.

Still, I guess I was getting a wake-up call, regardless. I smiled in anticipation.

The phone shrilled right on time. I grabbed the handset, but before I could speak a warm voice was in my ear.

'Hey, sleepyhead.'

I grinned and clicked on the bedside light, squeezing my eyes shut against the glare. 'Hey, yourself. What's happening in London town?'

Before he could reply I was squealing like Miss Piggy on Prozac as something shifted under the sheets next to me.

Could it be I was not alone in this bed?

'NYEEEEEP!'

A panicked voice came down the phone: 'Tallulah? Lula? What's going on? *LULA! Answer me!* Oh, geez, oh, man, I'm gonna hang up and call 999!'

I catapulted out of my bed, across the room and squinted back at my tumbled duvet and scattered pillows, phone still in my hand.

'Wait!' I hissed into the handset, watching for another movement from under the duvet.

A dark-haired head lifted from my pillow and sighed.

Oh, frik.

It was Boodle . . . Boodle had spent the night with me.

The gorgeous voice from the phone interrupted my *I'm gonna die, I'm gonna die* thoughts:

'Lula? Lula? You okay?' asked Jack.

'No,' I replied. 'Not really. It's Boodle. She spent the night.' I got back into bed, shoving Boodle the Poodle over so I could get my snug nest back. There was the sound of muffled laughter from the other end of the line.

I coughed, sternly. 'Apart from me dying at the hands of my sister when she discovers her dog has decided to move in with me, I'm fine, *thanks*.' I said this last bit in a sarky voice to disguise the lie. The one about me being fine. No way was I going to let my boyfriend of only a fortnight know that I had anxieties, AND issues, AND maybe even some highly charged emotional baggage.

With Jack interning in the city with Channel 4 these last two weeks, the old rumours of me being a wEiRdy witch girl who damaged every boy she ever went near had started to resurface. So not fair! It took a lot for me to get my first kiss and prove There Was No Jinx – you'd think I could put all that behind me! But no one in this village was ever going to forget I had a history of injuring boys and a witchy grandmother, even if Grandma Bird was six foot under. It doesn't help that crazy stuff always happens to me, but still. People shouldn't jump to conclusions. People should stop muttering stuff every time they lay eyes on me. I have exceptionally good hearing for a girl who loves loud music, and I can hear the whispers:

Where has Jack de Souza disappeared to?

The city?

Nuh-uh – I don't believe it. I bet he's lying in an intensive care ward somewhere . . .

I heard he died.

Yep. He's a goner. Should have stayed away from Tallu–

'Hey? Tallulah?'

I was jolted out of my memory banks. 'Uh! Yeah?'

'So what do you think?'

'Erm . . .' I said, scrunching my knees up to my chest and pulling the duvet round me. 'Sorry. I missed that. I'm not quite with it at 5 a.m. Pen's been moaning about you waking the house up every morning, actually.'

As soon as the words were out of my mouth, I wished I could hit the rewind button.

'She has?' Jack sounded worried. He should be. My little sister is fierce, even for a fourteen-year-old. 'It's just that your mobile is never on. Or you never answer it. Should I stop calling?'

'Noonnoonoonoo!' I said in a panic. Jack laughed. Oh, GOD. Why did I have to be the uncoolest girl in the world? I coughed. 'What I mean is, I'll remember to charge my mobile. I will. I really will. It's just that I can't find my charger, so I have to keep using Pen's, but she won't let it leave her room, so I end up either not charging my phone, or else forgetting that it's charging in there, or –'

'Okay,' said Jack easily. 'It's just I don't wanna pee

Penelope off. She's the type that would take revenge.'

'Yes,' I said with sad certainty, thinking I was already in for it, for sure. 'Calling on this landline number is fine.'

'I don't want to wake up your family, though.'

I smiled. What a considerate boy. 'Don't worry. I pick up the extension out here really fast.'

'You do.' I could hear the grin in Jack's voice. 'You cannot *wait* to speak to me.' Before I could bluster a response he said, 'What's happening in Hambledon?'

I sighed. Life in this town slash village had no way of competing with what Jack must be doing in the city. 'Well, Dad's writing a really bad song at the moment. So awful. The worst is he says he's inspired by our young love.' I flushed. FRIK! I'd just done it again! I'd said the love word. While referring to us.

'Love, huh?' said Jack, and he laughed. 'Yeah.'

Okay, hold the phone. Just pause there for one smidgeony second. What does 'yeah' mean? Oh, frik. If only I had the phone on speaker right now, and Alex right beside me. She'd know for sure.

I coughed again, desperate to fill the silence. 'So, um –'

'So, um,' mocked Jack. 'Can't wait to hear the song.'

'Oh, the song,' I babbled. 'Be happy to wait. It's bliddy bliddy badly bad. Though knowing my luck it'll be in the top forty by tomorrow.'

'Good,' said Jack. 'I'll be back by then.'

And, shamefully, at the thought of my brand-new, first-ever, totally awesome boyfriend being back in a matter of hours, *I squealed*.

Then, *NO, TATTY LULA!* I yelped to myself. *DON'T SQUEAL AT THE LOVELY BOY!*

'Sorry,' I murmured. 'I thought I saw someone at my window.'

Which wasn't a total lie, but I'm a courageous type and flitty shadows at my bedroom window have me reaching for my spikiest hairbrush, not doing ninny squealing. 'Are you coming back on the train?' I asked. 'Today? What time? Should I, um, meet you at the station?' A vision of *Casablanca* flooded into my head and I liked it.

But – oh, woe! – that vision was dashed.

'Nah. I'm gonna drive in with Jazz at noon today, and go straight to the journ department. Could I see you this afternoon maybe? I'll text you when I know where I'm gonna be after school.'

'Driving?' I said. 'With Jazz?' I think I sounded quite calm, but spinning round and round in my head was: *JAZZ? WHAT THE FRIK? JAZZ?* JAZZ?

'Sure,' said Jack. 'You sound squeaky . . . Don't you want me to drive? Have you had a witchy premonition about ice on the roads or something?'

I laughed. Well, I did my best to laugh. 'No no. I – I just hadn't realised you were there with Jazz.'

'Seriously? Didn't I –? Haven't I –?' He spluttered to a halt. 'Whoa, weird. I guess I've just been so into hearing what's up in your neck of the woods that I haven't really said anything about her.'

'Are you saying I do most of the talking in these break-of-dawn sessions?' I teased, trying to sound light-hearted.

Jack laughed. 'You've got the most to say. I've just been work work work.'

'With Jazz.' *Oh, now why couldn't I just leave that alone?*

'Yep,' replied Jack, oblivious. 'She came up to the city last week. She knows a lot of media types, which is good. Her dad, y'know, *owns* newspapers and whole channels. She's got great connections. You remember her, right?'

Yes, I remembered her. You, dear reader, probably won't, because she drifted in and out of my last adventure with scarcely any mention. She was part of a posse of Jack admirers, all hanging around him at the cinema the first time we met. Even then I got a hostile vibe from her. A sense that she wanted Jack for herself.

Oh, boy. I felt a prickle of unease that I tried to squash immediately. No frikking way was I going to turn into a mad psycho jealous type. No way.

'Jazz . . .' I said, bright and breezy. 'Sure I do. Shouldn't she be back on campus already for the start of term, though?'

'Nope,' said Jack. 'We're doing the same course, so she's kind of joining me in this special project work I'm

doing, and Channel 4 are keen for us to keep it moving together. Our profs and tutors have said it's all good.'

'Oh,' I said. 'All good.'

But it didn't feel all good at all. Noooo. Not good AT ALL.