

Four or Dead by G O A

Chapter 11

Logan...*Present...*

Standing in Emma's room had my heart racing. I tried so hard to push down my emotions because I needed people on the outside to see that nothing could touch me, but here and now I just couldn't. What people say is true, there is a fine line between love and hate. When I first saw Emma she looked like other girls raised in a wealthy family environment. Sure she didn't look as flashy as most of the other girls in the school but she just looked too perfect. Seeing her made the beast inside me growl in anger when she looked at me. It felt like in her eyes I was nothing more than the dirt under her shoe. So that day I made sure that she would feel as little as I did, but knowing what I know now I can't stop the guilt from eating me alive.⁶

She had been wearing a mask to hide the truth. She had been hurting even then and I hated her for no

reason.

2

"It all looks so...normal," Jayden said glancing around the room.

Jayden and I were from similar backgrounds, orphans. He had a more broody quiet way of dealing while I preferred being loud and cocky, but we understood each other.

"Yeah, it does. Just like her. She always looked so normal, and yet...did you see the scars, Jay? There were so many." I asked walking deeper into Emma's room.

We had left Asher, Leo, and Emma back at our place and Jayden and I decided to grab all of Emma's things. She told us she didn't want anything other than her clothes and a few personal items that she gave us a list for. Jayden wondered toward Emma's pink canopy bed that looked like she had kept it the same since she was a little girl, unless...no, I couldn't think about those men who touched her. If I did I would kill them all and not care one bit if I was locked away, but she needed us, and being locked up would mean I couldn't help her. 4

"This room looks so wrong though right?" Jayden asked walking around and examining everything. "It looks like it's right out of a catalog but nothing is new. It looks like she has had it all since she was

a little girl. Even the stuffed animals don't look like anything kids play with now. It's as if her room was frozen in time or something."

I took another look around and I started to see what he meant. The bed was white with a pink frilly canopy, and the bedding was white with little pink flower decals. The furniture was all white with red details, and the stuffed animals all sat perfectly on the bed. I swear it looked like it came right out of a photograph.

"It doesn't even look like she ever even used any of this stuff," I pointed out slightly confused.

I noticed another door on the opposite wall and I walked over to it to see what was inside, but something weird catches my eye. The door has a lock on the outside. I reach up to it and slip the lock away and open the door.

"Oh god," I said under my breath as I took in the scene.

Jayden cursed behind me and slammed his open hand on the nearby wall.

There were some clothes in the small closet but only a single pair of jeans, a sweater, and two shirts. The rest of the closet consisted of a couple of thin blankets piled together on the floor, a flat pillow, and a bucket.

"She...she slept in here?" I asked to no one in particular.

I closed my eyes as I felt my stomach turn at the horrible thoughts of what happened to her in this room. The bedroom must have been used for...the men who came to her. This closet was her real room. I shook my head and grabbed the few clothes and looked at the top shelf where the box she described sat. I grabbed it and held it in my shaky hands. I knew this was her private stuff but I opened it and swallowed hard at the few items inside. A beat-up copy of *The Secret Garden*, a small bunny stuffed animal, and a photograph of a small girl and a beautiful woman.

My eyes shut again as thoughts of my past tried to make their way into my mind. Jayden's hand on my shoulder pulled me out of my thoughts.

"Come on man let's get out of here," Jayden said.

I nodded and put the top back on the box and placed the clothes over it.

"Yeah let's go." I turned around and followed Jayden out, closing the door behind us.

The ride back was quiet and I was okay with that. I didn't want to talk right, not with my thoughts the way they were. I wanted to push this down by the time we got back home, and that meant struggling to bury it deep in my mind again. (3

When we walked into the front door we saw Leo and Asher lounging around in the living room with beers

in hand and I was ready to go off on them.

"Where is Emma?" I asked them through clenched teeth.

"She was exhausted, so we showed her to her room and she fell asleep as soon her head hit the pillow,"

Leo replied with a small smile on his face.

That guy was so whipped, it was a little embarrassing...for him.

"How did it go? Did you get all her stuff?" Asher asked.

1

I scoffed and walked over placing the few items on the table in front of them.

"That's it?" Asher asked looking at it and back to us.

"Yep. The rest...I would burn before I brought it here." I said, my voice growing angry.

"Why?" Asher asked with furrowed brows.

"She slept in the closet. The rest of her room looked like some pervert's gross fantasy. She didn't use any of it. All that was hers were these few items and a few ratty blankets. Asher, the door had a lock on the outside too." Jayden told them.

Leo cursed as he ran his hand down his face. "I can't believe she went through all that and never told

anyone."

"I don't know how she had never tried to run before. How did she survive so long there?" I asked falling onto the couch next to Leo and grabbing the beer in his hand before downing it. 3

"I did try once." We all turn to see Emma coming down the stairs.

She offered us a shy smile before coming down the stairs and taking a seat next to the large couch.

“I tried once when I was fourteen to run away. My father told me he would be working late one day, so I told my teacher I was sick and lied saying my father was picking me up. I rode my bike as far as I could before I got too tired. I ended up at some park only a few miles away, and it had started to rain. I just sat on a bench and waited.” She pauses for a second and looked at Leo.

“Then a scrawny kid walked up to you and pulled you into a slide to shelter you from the rain,” Leo said

with a smile.

“Yeah. He was the first person to ever help me.” She said shyly. “Leo called his mom and she drove me home after the rain stopped. When I walked in though, my father was pacing in the sitting room waiting for me. He was furious. I guess my teacher had called him to see how I was doing and to let him know what I had missed.”

“He hurt you,” Asher said filling in the next part of her story.

She nodded. “The next day Leo found me in the cafeteria, and we became friends after that. My father had beaten me pretty bad, and it discouraged me from ever trying to run away again.”

“Why didn’t you tell me then?” Leo asked carefully.

Emma sighed and lowered her head. “My father told me at an early age that no one cared about me and would never believe me. He told me this since I was a little girl, and when no one seemed to notice I was hurt, I believed him.” 1

“I’m so sorry Emma, I should have noticed something was wrong,” Leo said standing and kneeling in front of her taking her hands into his.

She shook her head. “No Leo, you were just a kid then too. There was nothing you could do to help me.”

“That won’t happen again, and this time you have four of us on your side,” Leo assured her and the rest of us spoke up in agreement. “Your guardian angels.”

She glanced at each of us and smiled. “Thank you.” 2

