

# Four or Dead by G O A

## Chapter 24

Two Years Ago...Emma...

Sophomore year. I was a fool to hope that after a year of catcalls and mean girls were enough and my tormenters would be tired of me and move on to another helpless victim. But no, as soon as I walked down the halls of our school my eyes land on them. Dark-clothed devils. They are called angels but they are. nowhere close to the creatures we imagine when that word is used. They are pure evil...at least to me.

"Ah, there's the little rat now!" Andrea called out, her voice echoing off the walls and hitting me like a bullet.

I keep my head lowered as people turned to look in my direction. No one spoke to me but I could hear them whispering and laughing as I walked past and reached my locker. My rushed steps were slowed though when a muscular arm dropped over my shoulder.

"Sunny! Here you are." Logan said walking alongside me with the other Angels behind him. "You never change! Always so reliable. Same hair, same clothes...same everything."

I didn't risk a reply, I just kept walking. When I finally reached my locker I was able to move away from him enough to put my stuff inside and grab what I needed. He started to crowd me from behind and I clenched my eyes shut when his breath tickled my ear.

Before he could say anything though he pulled roughly on the collar of my Jean jacket.

"What the hell is that?" He growled out with pure anger dripping from his words.

I quickly pulled my jacket away from him and covered my neck once again, and I turned to face him with wide eyes. No one was meant to see it especially not them.

"What is that Sunny? Huh? Why do you have a hickey on your neck?" He yelled.

My heart started to pound so loud I was sure everyone could hear it and that was why everyone was looking.

"Tell me now!" Logan growled his voice warning me not to disobey.

"I-it's nothing," I replied with my usual soft shy voice.

"Nothing? That is not nothing!" He moved closer to me and tugged on the collar of my jacket again until the side of my neck was on full display to the Angels and Andrea's crew.

Andrea and her friends laughed. "Who would want to touch her filthy skin? Who knows what kinds of diseases she could have!" (2)

Tears were starting to blur my vision and I searched for an opening to push through and run.

"Wow Sunny who knew you were so easy. So what? You think you are too good to let anyone here touch you but you go give it away freely to another guy just like that? Pathetic." Logan said harshly before storming off. 2

Leo stepped toward his friend but sent me a smearing look before walking away. Jayden passed with his usual cold angry expression that always had a way of making me feel small. Asher tugged Andrea against him and kissed her hard and knocked into me as they stumbled by not even bothering to break apart.

A shaky breath escaped my mouth as I did my best to hide the mark one of the men made on me. My father didn't give me anything to cover it with and he was furious when he saw it. The men are not supposed to mark me where it's visible but I was the one blamed. He punished me with a few lashes to my back, the ones now burning from the fabric of my jacket rubbing against them. When Logan had pulled on me he caused the fabric to dig just a bit more into the raw skin and now that they were gone I let out a whimper.

Most of the students who had stuck around for Logan's out burst had lost interest in me and moved on to whatever they had been doing before the show. I considered skipping my first class to avoid the angels and Andrea but I wasn't sure I wanted to risk my father finding out. So I took a deep breath before walking in

and scanned the room for an empty seat.

The Angels sat at their usual seats in the back where I often sat but I spotted a free chair to the far side of the room next to the window. I kept my head down and sat down in this new seat. It was in the front of the row which I would try to avoid but none of Andrea's crew sat behind me so it felt safe enough.

When the teacher finally arrived I felt somewhat at ease that all of my tormenters seemed to be avoiding me. Maybe they thought ignoring me would play some kind of mind game. Like not knowing if they will come after me any second would put me on edge. I hated so much that it worked. The rest of the day I was looking over my shoulder wondering what they would do to me next. Logan seemed so mad and he could be unpredictable.

I left school that day confused when nothing more happened. My father never came home that night so I was actually able to get some sleep without my body being on high

alert. The worst thing was being too relaxed and then being taken by surprise when your enemy appears when your guard is down.

The next day I found my dad passed out on the couch with his suit and shoes still on. His being drunk was never good since it only made him angrier and less careful. I did my best to sneak past him but I wasn't so lucky. The sound of me opening the door woke him and he sat up almost immediately.

"What are you doing?" He asked me, his voice deep from sleep.

"I am going to school," I answered lowering my head.

"Then why are sneaking around? Huh?" He growled out, standing and stalking toward me.

"I-I..." I tried to explain but he reached me with surprising speed grabbing me by the hair and pulled me

close to him.

"Spit it out!" He yelled down at me tightening his grip.

"I didn't want to wake you," I said with a whimper.

His other hand came up to my face in such a gentle way but it lasted for only a split second before his hand lowered to my neck.

"Don't lie to me." His voice was calm now...too calm.

"I swear!" I replied quickly but he simply tightened his grip. "Please dad...people will see."

He smirked. "Do they even care? Does anyone at your school even look? You are forgettable. There is nothing special about you."

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I tried to swallow and fight back the urge to shrink into myself at his words. He wasn't wrong. No one at

school ever looked twice at me even the ones set on making my school life hell. Because this wasn't the first time my dad hurt me while drunk and didn't care who saw it. When he was sober he was more careful

but drunk he had no control over his anger.

“No. They don’t care.” I tell him and he smiles.

“That’s right, so if tightened my hand just a bit more no one would care. Stay quiet and let daddy do his work. You are far prettier when you’re covered in black and purple.” He doesn’t lie, and he tightens his grip enough to make me gasp for air. “Hmmm...much better.”

His grip loosened suddenly and my body slammed down to the floor hard making my legs ache.

“Get out.” He spit down at me and I scrambled to my feet.

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When I arrived at school I didn’t bother stopping at my locker and rushed to class early. I sat with my shoulders slumped up to hide the already darkening handprint. I buttoned up my jacket as far as it would go as well but a bit still showed above the collar. Keeping my head low and opening one of the books I always carried with me I waited for class to start.

The sound of Logan’s boisterous laugh caught my attention and I turned to look at the door. He walked in with a girl under his arm and when he noticed me looking at him he smirked. I didn’t mean to watch them. but my eyes followed them until Logan sat and pulled the girl into his lap and planted an intense kiss on her lips.

“Jealous Sunny?” Andrea’s voice whispered right against my ear and I flinched away.

“N-no,” I replied turning my attention back to my book..

“Guess he found a better way to spend his time than having to look at you.” She said with a laugh before sauntering off.

The teacher arrived a moment later and called everyone’s attention.

“Ok class today I will be assigning the project groups.” My heart immediately sank because most of the teachers knew well what I had to deal with and none of them did a thing to stop it.

Our teacher read off the names of several groups before making it to my name.

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“Emma Grace. You are paired with Logan, Leo, Asher, and Jayden.” My heart stopped and the class erupted into whispers and laughs. “Now get into your groups and discuss what roles you will take on.”

I didn't move. I couldn't. The blood in my veins had gone cold and my body wouldn't move. Leo was the first to walk up to me and he pushed my books off my desk before sitting on it and turning to face the others who had moved closer to me.

"Well well, it seems like fate has brought little Sunny to us once again." Logan quipped.

"It's not fate. It's more like a curse. We can't seem to escape her." Asher said as if I wasn't even there.

"We can't depend on her to pass this so give her something simple." Jayden orders.

"No, actually I think she could handle it all. Right Sunny? You would want to make sure we got a good grade right? So make sure we do." Logan said before standing and striding over to the girl he had walked in with.

"See you Sunny. Don't ruin this." Leo added before leaving the classroom altogether.

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Asher stood too and walked over to Andrea picking her up and placing her in his lap with his eyes locked on me. Jayden gave me one last sneer before turning in his seat and turning his attention to his phone.

I stayed quiet until he turned to me once again.

"I don't care that you do all the work but you will send it to me first so I can approve everything. I am not letting my grades slip because you lack brains. Got it?" He slams a piece of paper and a pen on my desk. "Write down your email and number."

I glanced at him and hesitated for a moment. "My phone doesn't get text messages and I don't have an

email."

He immediately looked at me like I was crazy. He let out an exasperated sigh and massaged his temples.

"Fine. Meet me at the library Friday after school so I can correct your work." He ordered.

"But the project isn't due for three weeks." I remind him.

"You have one." He didn't wait for a reply before standing and leaving just like the others.

