

## Four or Dead by G O A

### Chapter 28

Two Years ago...Emma...

Jayden was sitting at an empty table in the library waiting for me. He hadn't seen me yet so I could run if I wanted to but he would find me and I wasn't going to risk that. Out of all of the Angels, he scared me the most. He was cold and never showed his true emotions. I was also intrigued by him because of his lack of emotion. While Asher was stoic and broody, Jayden is unmoved and unreadable.

"H-hi," I said as I stepped up to the table.

He didn't bother looking at me he simply says, "Sit."

I did as he asks as quickly as possible leaving one seat between us.

"Where is the paper?" He asked me, his eyes fixed on his phone.

I ruffled through my backpack and pulled out the slightly thick packet of paper and slid it over to him. He let out a sigh like I had already made a mistake.

"Why is it this thick?" He asked.

"I-I included references for all the information I found in case you wanted to see how accurate everything

is," I explained.

I wanted to be as thorough as possible but he seems to not appreciate the extra paper. He grabs the packet with slam of his hand and I flinch. The motion catches his eye and he smirks just a tiny bit.

"You're a jumpy thing aren't you." He says his voice just a little amused.

He was letting things slip through his cold facade and it had my insides twisting with nerves. Just like when a kidnapper doesn't bother hiding his face because he plans to kill you anyway. The slips of emotion. coming from Jayden had me wanting to run in the opposite direction so badly. I had no idea that those moments were showing me how much he wanted me to see the real him, and run away forever. I watched him skim through the packet and I am well aware that he had barely read it. When he quickly closed it he stood and walked to the nearest trash can and dumped it inside. 2

My mouth dropped open and my eyes followed him as he returned to his seat.

“Nothing about that meets the standards our project should be at. I gave you time to do this right and you still can’t manage that. Just how stupid are you? This isn’t an elementary school book report. Do it again. You have one more week before I kick you out of our group and I take over. You will get an incomplete and that will be the least of your worries.” He threatened and I nodded and lowered my eyes from him just like I always did.

I always tried to never look anyone in the eyes if I could help it. The eyes are the window to the soul and I was sure if anyone really looked they would see the darkness where my soul should be. That innocent part of me died a long time ago and my body was just a shell that wouldn’t die nearly fast enough. I knew that I could end this myself but I had been too scared to try just yet, and not because death scared me. It was because I didn’t want to accidentally survive and be locked away without a chance to try again. When I do it, I would be sure it was final. I had been thinking of all my options because one day I would know that it was time and I would revel in my freedom. 2

One day enough would be enough and I wouldn’t care the mess I’d leave behind. In fact, I would hope that my father would have to wash away the blood I left behind. It would be symbolic actually, having my

blood on his hands.

“Emma don’t waste my time again. I don’t take kindly to people wasting my time.” Jayden had reached across the table and grabbed my face and squeezed. “Do you hear me?”

I had been so trapped in my thoughts of death that I had gone numb to the world, falling into an almost trance. His booming voice though snapped me back. For the first time that day, my eyes met his and there was a flash in his expression that looked almost like concern but it was so fast a blink whipped it away.

His hold on my face was painful and I knew it would bruise but what was a few more bruises anyway. Why did I even care anymore? Pain is pain it didn’t matter where on my body I felt it. My dad would see the bruises and have a fit but he would just add to them in his rage. (3)

I did something unexpected as I was trapped in Jayden’s hold. I laughed. Not a happy laugh, but a laugh of someone who had accepted their fate. I would die by his hand and I welcomed it, better him than my father or even my own hand. He would be sure it was done right, and no one would ever know who did it. Instead, Jayden dropped his hand and stepped away from me. He could see it, I was giving up. He watched me for a second and I stood and walked right out of there, not looking back. Maybe it was time after all; I was done. Why was I waiting? A dramatic exit wasn’t really my style anyway. I didn’t bother staying for the rest of my classes.

I walked right out and grabbed my bike and headed to that park. The one where I met Leo. It was pretty much run down by then and no one ever went there. I dropped my bike and climbed into the little place we hid from the rain and I held a small blade tight in my hands. The sharp thing was what I used to punish myself. At one time I thought if I hurt myself I would become numb to pain altogether. It hadn't worked yet but I was persistent.

Another helpless laugh escaped me as tears fell from my eyes. I held the blade to my wrists and sliced as deep as I could before doing the same to the other side. My hands had been shaking but it was done. I rested my head back and waited to drift away. It wouldn't take long and I would finally be free. My eyes fluttered shut and I waited for that bright light everyone said I would see when my time was up.

I wasn't sure how long it took but it didn't take long because I started to feel cold. Really cold but also peaceful. Then suddenly I felt a warmth around me and I frowned. My eyes slipped open and I whined because someone was holding me and was warming me up much against my wishes.

"Come on. Don't die on me!" I heard the man say and I focused my eyes just a bit.

I didn't recognize the guy but he looked really worried. His face lowered to look at me and the warmest blue eyes met mine, golden hair brushing the tips of his eyelashes.

"Just hang on ok? Fight just a little longer." He said softly to me.

He was a stranger. He didn't go to my school I was sure of it, I would have remembered his beautiful eyes. I was too weak to try and figure out if I knew him and the sound of his soft warm voice was lulling me into the darkness. If his voice was the last thing I would hear then I was ok with that.

Soon the warmth increased and I opened my heavy eyes to see we were in a car with the heat blasting I guessed.

"Take us to the hospital." The man holding me said.

"Yes sir! Will she make it there?" The man driving asked.

"I think so." The man holding me said brushing hair away from my face. "Come on beautiful stay awake."

I felt like I was floating between wanting to just sleep and wanting to know who this guy was. Why did he save me? Why was he helping me? I was no one special. No one cared about me and no one would miss me so why would this stranger care?

"We are five minutes away."

I let my eyes close completely and I took in the warmth around me. It had been so long since anyone held me in such a gentle way.

I must have finally passed out because I couldn't remember anything else until I open my eyes and saw white and grey all around me. I turned my head a little and I realized then where I was.

"Hey! You're awake." Someone said coming in through the door to the room.

My eyes fell on him and I froze. Who was he?

"Yes...I guess so..." I replied hesitantly.

He smiled at me and walked toward the bed and my breath hitched a little when he reached out and took my hand. His eyes were deep blue and his golden blonde hair was a little long and messy in the best way.

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"You scared me there but I'm glad to see you're ok." He said brushing his thumb over the top of my hand.

"I-I'm sorry do we know each other?" I asked as politely as possible.

He smiled and shook his head. "I found you at the park and brought you here."

My eyes widened as the events of my attempted death came flashing through my mind. It was then that I

notice the bandages wrapped around my wrists. Then another scarier thought came to mind.

"What time is it? How long was I out?" I asked him in a panic.

His smile fell and he looked at me with concern.

"You were out overnight. Why?" He asked confused by sudden panic.

My heart started to race. "I have to go! I have to get out of here." I said trying to climb out of the bed.

My feet hit the ground and my legs gave out under me.

"Hey, it's ok." The guy said immediately catching me and helping me take a seat back on the bed.

"No, you don't understand...if he finds out..." I started to say before a knock came at my door.

The door cracked open and in walked my dad. He smiled at me but I saw the anger in his eyes and with the

tightness of his jaw. He was furious and when his eyes fell on the guy helping me he quirked his head to

the side.

"Who might you be?" He asked the guy holding me up.

"Just a friend. I was the one who found Emma." How did he know my name?

My father looked him over and smiled wider. "A true hero! Thank you for helping her but you can go now

that I'm here."

I didn't want to be alone with him and the guy sensed it and promptly said, "No I'm staying."

Idiot.