

Four or Dead by G O A

Chapter 29

Leo...Present...

“Again!” Emma growled out in frustration to Jayden as she pulled herself off the mat.

“Come on baby you need a break,” Logan called out to her but she just waved him off.

“No, I need to do this.” She said instead.

Emma had been sparring with Jayden for over an hour and it was clear she was exhausted but she wouldn't stop. We tried to get her to just sit for a few minutes but she refused. She was strong for sure and picked up the moves Jayden showed her a lot quicker than most. They had moved past self-defense moves to full- on sparring in hand-to-hand fighting. She was a natural but she was losing energy and we all could see it.

She didn't want to be seen as the weak link in our group, but the boys and I had been training since we were young. This was new for her and she needed to build muscle and endurance to spare correctly for long periods.

1

“Enough Emma. You need a break.” Jayden finally said when he pinned Emma to mat yet again.

She squirmed beneath him trying to escape his hold but she was too tired and too angry. Anger was never a good emotion to go into a fight with. When you attack in anger you tire out quickly giving your opponent an advantage.

“Emma you don't have anything to prove to us or anyone. This is simply to protect yourself if you need to.” Jayden reminded her.

She stopped fighting him and I could see a silent conversation passing between them. Jayden was a hard. guy to understand but Emma was not just anyone. She seemed to understand us better than anyone ever has. She offered each of us exactly what we need which shouldn't make sense but she was special that way.

There weren't many girls who would be able to handle the emotional baggage of just one of us, but she

was able to handle us all with ease.

I glanced to Logan and he nodded. Emma and Jayden needed some time alone so we stood and left the

workout room.

“She is a lot better than I thought she would be,” Logan admitted proudly when we walked into the

kitchen.

“She is. It was always in her, she was just too afraid to use it.” I said in agreement.

“I hate that she needs to learn this stuff. I want to be able to protect her always but I guess that’s not

exactly realistic.” Logan said dropping onto one of the dining room chairs.

“Honestly I’m worried about her dad. We don’t know enough about him or what connections he has. We

can’t anticipate his next move and that has me nervous.” I added with a sigh.

“Yeah, it’s never good when you don’t know someone well enough to anticipate their next mood.” Logan groaned and dropped his head back. “Can’t we just kill him?” 2

That made me laugh but I understood where he was coming from. That seemed like the easiest solution. but not knowing what connections he had meant we wouldn’t know what kind of problems his death could

cause.

“I wish we could but we need to be smart. We don’t want suspicion to fall on Emma.” I reminded him.

He let out a dramatic sigh in reply but nodded in agreement. “This is a mess.”

Jayden...

I was impressed by how hard Emma had pushed herself. I had a lot more respect for our girl seeing her get back up no matter what I threw at her.

“You did well,” I said but I wasn’t in any hurry to get up.

We were still on the mat and Emma was beneath me. Even after going through intense training she still looked as beautiful as ever.

“It’s still not good enough.” She said letting out a frustrated groan.

“You have the fight in you. You just need to learn to channel it in the right way.” Her eyes opened then and locked onto mine.

We laid there for a few silent moments before she brought her hand up to my hair and started running her fingers through it. It was such an intimate gesture that I hadn’t felt in so long and on instinct I wanted to pull away. Emma wasn’t just anyone though so I let her do what she wanted. I lowered myself with crossed arms and rested myself on her hips. She let out a cute laugh and continued to run her fingers in my head making my cold heart melt.

“Thank you, Jayden.” Her smile had a way of making my heart flutter in such a clique way that made me so mad. 4

My heart was not supposed to be melted so easily for a girl. Emma was just too good for me, but I needed her. She was like an addiction, with just a small taste of her I couldn’t help but keep wanting more. I had been fighting my attraction to her for years now and here she was giving herself over to me and not asking anything in return. At least nothing we wouldn’t give her for free. We would protect her from heaven and hell and not because she asked but because nothing was taking her from us now.

I sat up after a few minutes and pulled her into my lap, needing her to be wrapped around me. Holding her was like breathing and I had been suffocating for way too long. she straddled my lap and looked down at me with the softest smile. 1)

“You’re beautiful did you know that?” My body went still at her words and she let out a soft laugh. “You really are.”

No one had ever called me beautiful before. Most guys would find such a compliment degrading, but coming from my girl I knew it was the highest of compliments. My mother said I was handsome like my father but no one had called me beautiful before. Now that I’m older and I wear a cold no emotional

expression almost all the time it was hard to imagine that anyone found my looks particularly appealing. They were probably too afraid to get a good look at me anyway.

Emma placed her hands on either side of my face and lowered her head to mine. “I know you don’t like people to see what is going on inside you, but please don’t shut yourself off from me. There is nothing about you that I don’t want to know and there is nothing you can tell me that will make me run.”

From the look in her eyes, I knew she meant every word but she had no idea just how dark I was. If I told her everything I had done I knew for a fact she would never be able to look at me again.

know you think that, but that's because there is so much you still don't know," I replied hoping that we could move on from this subject.

Instead, she rested her forehead against mine and sighed.

"I know that all of you work for Devaro and the work you do involves shakedowns, hits, and more." She said straight out and I can't deny how surprised I was.

"How do you know all that?" I needed to know who had shared all this with our girl who didn't need to

know all the crap we did.

"Rumors mostly but with Devaro's visit and other things I have overheard and seen I put everything together. Jayden if I didn't know what you guys were capable of I wouldn't have asked for your help." She

had a point and we hadn't even considered that she knew more than we thought.

I was thinking it over as she moved slightly and lifted my head up to look at her again.

"I don't care about that Jay, I care about you. I care about the others and I know that you guys will never

hurt me again. At least I hope not." That last bit was meant as a joke I knew but it hit hard that she still

wasn't sure if she was safe with us.

"We will never hurt you Emma I swear. We...I...." It was too soon to say it I knew that but she needed to

know that there was a good reason why I would never hurt her again. "I'm in love with you."

Her body stiffened in my arms and her eyes went wide.

"W-what?" She asked with a shaky voice and I immediately regretted saying it, but there was no taking it

back.

"I mean that..." I had no words, my brain failed me as panic set in.

I had told a girl I loved her only once before and that didn't turn out well either. My eyes had fallen away from Emma's and I got lost in my thoughts trying to push down all my

feelings like I always did. Then her soft hands brushed along the back of my neck soothingly making me feel like putty in her hold.

“You really love me?” My heart pounded in my chest.

I didn't know how I knew I loved her. It was a bunch of little things that I just loved about her since I saw her freshman year. The way her hair looked sunkissed every first day of school, the way her eyes looked like deep galaxies with a million stars in them. I loved how big her eyes were and how innocent they made her look. I loved the sweet sound of her voice and how just the sound of it calmed me. I loved the softness of her hands whenever she touched me, and how she smelled like cherry blossoms.

I loved how she looked at me like she could see the darkness in me and wasn't afraid of it. Sure she had been afraid of me for a long time because she never tried to see me. She was too busy trying to hide that she didn't dare look me in the eye if she could help it. I just loved her for seeing me and wanting me even after everything I had done. Her heart was pure and big and more than a guy like me deserved.

So to answer her I said, “Yes. I love you.”

Her smile made my heart burst and when she leaned down to kiss me, I kissed her back as hard as I could.