

His Mission Chapter 3 - Forgotten Family

C3 Forgotten Family

When Trevor leaves for work before the sun rises, my day starts off blissfully. I walk around the house without watching over my shoulder, waiting for the next argument or the next blow. I don't have to walk on tip-toes or silently pray for him to ignore me so I can arrive at college without a bruise or a throbbing injury.

Today is one of those mornings. As I get ready, a faint smile stretches across my lips. I often find it surprising that I still have the ability to smile. How do I portray happiness when inside I feel like I'm slowly dying a miserable death? I'm not happy anymore and I don't remember the last time I was. This particular morning, my smile doesn't last long. I enter the filthy kitchen and release a small sigh of frustration. The stench is unbearable as I observe the rubbish littering the floors and counters.

"This whole place is a damn mess," I mutter, clearing a section of the table so I can sit down with my cereal. The rest of the house besides from my room mirrored each other, filthy and cluttered. It wasn't always like this . . . Dad and Mum were so house proud until he died and everything went downhill.

I'm midway through my breakfast when Mum enters the kitchen. I glance at her from the corner of my eye and my shoulders automatically tense in her presence. She takes a seat beside me, oblivious to the rubbish surrounding her. Trevor has definitely burned eighty percent of her brain cells . . .

"What do you want?" I ask her abruptly, my tone hostile. Mum lets out a sigh and I feel her burning stare seep it's way into my face.

"Emily, don't speak to me like that." She mutters unhappily. You suppress the urge to scoff at her.

"Maybe I'd be more inclined to listen to you if you didn't stand back whilst Trevor beat me." I say harshly, my words dripping with hate for her.

She doesn't deserve a slither of my forgiveness. My sympathy for her quickly fizzled into hate once I realized she was too cowardly to stand up for her own daughter. As much as I miss and crave a motherly relationship, I don't have any chances left to give her. There comes a point in your life where you're exhausted from providing chance after chance so you eventually give up and accept it for what it is. In my case, I lost my mother once Trevor came into the picture.

She chooses to ignore my words. I shake my head in resentment and breathe deeply to subside the anger brewing in my stomach. Her silence is typical behaviour from her. I gave up wishing she would wake up one day and choose me over Trevor. I turn my back on her and focus on finishing my breakfast.

"I want to finish my breakfast in peace." I mumble, hoping she'll get the message and leave me alone. Once again she chooses to ignore me and continue with her own conversation.

"Your Aunt Mandy called me yesterday. She's getting married and has invited us to the wedding." Mum says carefully. I choke on my breakfast and splutter milk and cereal all over the table.

"Aunt Mandy? We haven't heard from her since..." My words trail off as I realize it's been since my father died. It's a struggle to say the words despite it being years ago since he left you. Aunt Mandy is Mum's older sister who I haven't seen for ten years since my father's funeral. From what I remember, she's a big woman with dark crazy hair who has a tendency to shout instead of talk. As far as I know, Mum hasn't spoken to her in nine years either. She's probably on her fifth husband by now but that doesn't surprise me.

"Yes, I know. Her wedding is on Saturday and I told her all three of us are going." Mum explains. I stare at her in disbelief. All three of us?

"What? Trevor is coming?" I ask in surprise, wiping my mouth with the back of my hand. Mum nods her head and I clench my jaw in anger. She has got to be joking!

"Yes, he's excited to meet my family actually. It will be nice to finally rekindle the relationship after so many years." Mum responds. Her face glows with pride when she speaks of Trevor. I continue to stare at her as confusion fills me.

Why is she so blind to reality? Can she not see the bruise under my eye or the bald spot on my scalp? Is she deaf to my cries for Trevor to leave me alone?

"There is no way I'm playing happy families with you and Trevor. I'm not going," I say abruptly. Mum sighs and stands up, her chair scrapes against the cold floor. She silently digs into her pocket before emerging with money.

"Buy yourself something nice for the wedding, Emily." Mum says quietly. I grit my teeth together with anger and push the money towards her.

"I told you, I'm not going. I certainly don't want your money either." I respond bluntly. Despite the bored tone to my voice, my anger is clearly shown through my body language. The grip on my spoon tightens until I can feel the metal digging into my palm. Mum chooses to ignore me once again so I stand up and focus on getting away from her. Before I can leave the kitchen, she calls out quietly -

"If you don't play along, Trevor will force you."

I freeze in my tracks and turn around slowly to look at her. She's hiding behind her hair as she pretends to busy herself with the cleaning. Her obvious attempt to avoid eye

contact with me is pathetic. My heart thumps wildly inside my chest as I focus on regulating my breathing.

"Did you just threaten me with him?" I whisper in disbelief. My hard facade crumbles to the ground and I feel fresh tears sting my eyes at my mother's betrayal. Hatred and anger fills my body that's directed towards her. I clench my jaw to control my emotions. My eyes land on the money so I lean forward and swipe it from the table. Before Mum can say anything further to upset me, I storm out of the house and slam the door behind me.

I have to put space between us before I turn clinically insane.

I find it impossible to concentrate in class. Every time I try to, my mind wanders over to the conversation this morning. Mum using Trevor as a threat continues to ring through my ears, taunting me in a cruel manner. I feel physically sick knowing my own mother would threaten me with abuse unless I follow her rules. The thought alone is enough to cause my stomach to stir, bringing up the contents of my breakfast.

"Emily Wentworth! Are you listening?" The teacher's voice booms through the silent class. I wince and snap myself back to reality.

"Yes, I was listening." I lie effortlessly. She narrows her eyes suspiciously and looks extremely frustrated with me.

"Do you know the answer?" Mrs Wilkins asks me, her voice full of irritation.

"No, sorry." I mutter under my breath. Warmth spreads from my neck to my cheeks as several students turn to look at me.

"That's the third time today you haven't been paying attention, Emily. I'd like you to see me after class." Mrs Wilkins says sternly, turning back towards the board. I nod and lower myself further into my chair, making myself as small as possible. This day is progressively getting worse.

After continuously re-assuring my teacher that I'm fine and not distracted, she lets me leave. I sigh with relief and swing my bag over my shoulder as I make my way out of the exit. I'm too distracted with my personal issues and don't realize I'm about to walk straight into someone's chest.

I bounce backwards from the hit and groan as pain flares up my already bruised body. My balance is compromised due to the beating Trevor gave me so I find myself tumbling to the floor. I prepare myself for a hard landing but it never happens. A warm hand slides around my waist, the arm tightening around me securely. I feel myself being pulled back up onto my feet and I open my eyes in surprise —

"Thank you, I — " my words are cut short as my eyes connect with Jake Melvin's dark ones. I instantly feel the oxygen suck straight out of my lungs. His eyes darken further once he notices the surprise on my face.

"Sorry Jake," I mumble, feeling my throat tighten with nerves. I look away from his intense gaze, no longer confident enough to have another stare off with him. His hand lingers on my waist for several seconds before he drops it and takes a step back. The entire time, he remains silent which doesn't help my increasing nerves.

My eyes briefly skim over his appearance. His outfit consists of a white graphic shirt followed by black jeans. The fabric clings to his biceps that are muscular and defined. I flinch as I inspect them, knowing how hard the impact would feel if he hit me. Studying a person's strength is one of the lasting effects Trevor has left on me.

"Watch where you're going next time, that could have ended badly." Jake mutters quietly, turning his back on me. I frown at his words and narrow my eyes.

"That's not fair, at least I apologised." I stare up at fiercely and watch as he pauses before slowly turning back around. I curse under my breath and wish I'd remained silent instead.

His cold eyes flash with surprise before masking over with his usual intense stare. He chuckles quietly and takes a slow step towards me. My reaction is to step away from him but when I do, the wall greets my back. I swallow the lump of nerves lodged in my throat as I stare up at him. My stomach churns as I stare up and down the hallway for any sign of life.

Jake slowly raises his arms as a smirk stretches across his lips. He places them on either side of my body, caging me in. His body is inches away from me and my throat dries up considerably. The scent of soap and musk mixed in with the faint smell of cigarettes travels around me. I scrunch my nose up —

"Can you move? I can smell smoke on you. It's gross." I say with slight disgust on my face. I regret the words as soon as they leave my lips. Jake scoffs at me and his eyes narrow dangerously.

"I didn't realize you had a feisty side to you." He responds, his blue eyes shining with interest. Mine widen with surprise as I stare up at him. He leans in closer, his warm breath tickling my lip. I don't dare breathe as he continues to antagonize me.

"I don't." I whisper as my confidence begins to shatter to the ground. Jake shakes his head and doesn't look entirely convinced.

"Yes you do. It's nothing to be ashamed about." His smirk deepens when he notices how uncomfortable I'm becoming. I breathe in sharply and try to step aside to get away from him.

"Where are you going? I'm not done talking to you, Muffin." Jake says, a playful tone lining his voice. I pause and my eyebrows knit together with confusion.

"Don't call me that, my name is Emily." I narrow my eyes and try to keep my voice confident but he senses the insecurity behind it. I can tell because the glint in his eyes deepens and I know he's enjoying watching me squirm. The corner of his lips tugs upwards into an amused smirk. I huff unhappily and shove at his chest which causes barely any movement in him whatsoever.

Is the boy made entirely of lean muscle?

He suddenly raises his arm to free me but the action causes my instincts to kick in instead. I raise both arms and cower before protecting my head. It's an automatic reaction from living with Trevor and the constant beatings. I figured out early on that if I protect my head, it will cause less damage in the long term. I close my eyes and wait for the blow but moments of silence pass and nothing happens. I don't feel any pain, I don't hear my screams of discomfort.

"Emily?" Jake asks uneasily, prying my hands away from my face. I look up at him like a timid child and watch as his eyes flash with concern and confusion. Oh no, what did I just do?

Before he has a chance to question my actions, I grab my bag and run down the corridor as fast as I can. My trainers squeak against the floor as I attempt to speed up. I steal a quick glance at Jake from over my shoulder. He's standing in the exact same position, watching me with an intense burn igniting his dark eyes. His expression is unreadable and terror consumes me as I realize I almost gave away the secret.

Tears prick the back of my eyes but I don't stop, too terrified by the possibility of him figuring out what I've spent so long trying to hide.