

Four or Dead by G O A Chapter 6 - 10

Chapter 6

Leo

The night before

"Are you serious? You want us to bring her here?" Jayden asked Asher as he paced the living room.

"You didn't see it, Jay. She has scars all over her... the one on her stomach..." Asher's jaw clenched in anger. "That was Andrea's fault!"

4

"Okay I get it, but she would never stay with us after how we treated her," Jayden said falling back onto the couch.

My mind drifted to that day as the others bickered...

Flashback – Two days earlier

*Emma was standing in front of us with tears falling and a gun pointed at me. I loved her once maybe still did, and I watched her put a gun to her head making my whole world slow. Everything we had done to her began to flash through my mind and my heart broke realizing we had led her to this point. I barely thought and rushed toward her, but I reached her only in time to make her flinch and pull the trigger. Then I watched her body fall forward and she hit the desk hard and I caught her before she hit the floor. There was blood everywhere and I started to panic. Asher grabbed her from me and laid her gently on the floor to examine her quickly. My ears begin to ring as I looked down at her blood on my hands. Asher brushed her hair aside carefully and tried to see the bullet wound but there was just so much blood. *

6

"She's still breathing!" Asher yelled to Logan who was talking to someone on the phone, I assumed 911.

#

"They are on their way! They said to lay her flat in case she has any other injuries." Logan explained, his voice frantic. *

*I looked at each of the guys, and I wondered what they could be thinking. Did they believe this was our fault like I did? We had led her to this moment, and she could die because of it. She wanted to get away from us so badly that she was willing to take her own life. How had it come to this? I saw Logan pacing and pulling at his hair as we waited for the ambulance, while Asher knelt beside Emma and watched her carefully. Jayden stood by Emma with his hands clenched tight to his sides, his eyes

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squeezed shut. He out of all of us had seen too much death in his life, but we had no idea what we were walking into when we followed Emma here. If we had known we could have tried to stop her sooner, now Jayden was reliving his past as Emma bled out right in front of us.

9

Asher moved to pick her up, but Logan held him back. "They said to leave her man." "I have to do something! She's dying!" Asher yelled. *

—

Just then the paramedics came rushing in and the three of us moved away but Asher wouldn't budge.

"Sir, we need you to move aside so we can help your girlfriend, ok?" One of the paramedics said. 3

*Asher looked up at him with eyes wide but nodded and moved away. Everything moved so quickly as they rushed her to the ambulance, but we were right on their tails. We loaded into our cars and took off behind the ambulance as fast as we could. When we reached the hospital, we parked and ran after the paramedics as they rolled her into the emergency room, even though I was pretty sure we weren't allowed to go in those doors. No—one stopped us though because all their attention was focused on Emma. They wheeled

her into a room and a nurse pushed us back, but we pushed forward trying to see what was happening. They had to call help to pull us away and escort us to the waiting room. *

Time passed so slowly as we waited to hear the news on Emma's condition, and we all took a collective breath when the doctor emerged into the waiting room.

*"How is Emma?" I asked stepping forward first. "

*"Are you her family?" He asked. *

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I didn't know what to say...what could I say? That it was us who made her do this? That to her we were the enemy? We were nothing close to family.

*"Her father hasn't come yet, but I'm her boyfriend." I turned and gaped at Asher as he stepped forward. *

What the hell was he doing?

*"Well, your girlfriend is stable now, but she is still unconscious. You said after the gun went off, she hit the desk nearby?" Asher nodded. "Well, she has a good amount of head trauma due to the impact, we need to keep an eye on her to be sure it heals properly but we don't know what conditions could be a result of it until she wakes. Thankfully the gunshot wound was a surface wound and did not penetrate the

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skull, so we were able to stitch it up and she should recover well from that. She is still not awake yet, but you can come to see her now.” * 5

“Thank you, doctor,” Asher said

“There is however another matter I must bring up.” We all fell silent and waited for his next words, and by his body language, I could tell it wasn’t good. “The matter of her long-time injuries. I need to ask if you know how she acquired such extensive bruising and scarring.”

*We all looked at him like he had just grown two heads. *

“What do you mean?” Asher asked.

*“You are not aware of her scars?” The doctor asked.

“No. She is shy about her body.” Asher lied. 7

*

“I can understand why she is. Well, she has scars covering almost her entire back and along the tops of her arms. I imagine it was intentional so that it could easily be hidden under her clothing. She also had bruising around her stomach and ribs that look pretty recent. Also...scars and bruising from what looks like a very violent sexual assault. With this information, we had to contact the authorities as per the law. They will want to ask you some questions and speak to her father as well when he can be reached.” The doctor said with a sigh. “We also contacted Psych because this was a suicide attempt, they need to monitor her mental state when she wakes. I’m sorry, I know this is a lot to take in but with help, she should be able to recover.” 6

We nodded but remained silent. The doctor turned and left us alone.

*“God. She was this bad?” Logan asks, his face riddled with guilt.

*“We did this to her,” Jayden said pacing.

2

*

“We didn’t know about the other stuff, how could we?” I said trying to make them feel less at fault, but I wasn’t fairsing any better. (

She had trusted me all those years ago and I had turned my back on her. 3

“What the hell was that man? Calling her your girlfriend!” Logan said turning to face Asher.

Asher looked back at him with his usual coldness. “The paramedics already assumed I was her boyfriend, and it was the only way we would be able to find out what was going on. None of you stepped up.”

*Logan scoffed. “Yeah, but if Andrea finds out what you said she will come after Emma worse than before.

Watch yourself, bro.” *

4

*Asher rolled his eyes and walked toward the door where a nurse was now waiting to ta

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ke him to see

Emma. 2

“So, what do we do?” Jayden asked when the rest of us say back down to wait.

* 3

“I don’t know but I don’t think I can let her go back with her father. He is the one who has been hurting her. I remember her saying that he was pretty strict, so he wouldn’t let her be around anyone he didn’t know. She told me that she wanted to keep our friendship a secret from him because he wouldn’t like it.” I recalled. 1

*“How well did you know her, you never told us,” Logan asked looking at me.

*“We were friends the whole last year of middle school. She would sneak out so we could hang out during summer, but during the last month, she started acting weird. She wasn’t able to meet me much, but I didn’t make a big deal about it because I had just met you guys then. Then

after that first day freshman year, we never spoke again.” I said lowering my head. *

“We drove her away,” Jayden added.

*I nodded. “It was my fault too. She had no one else and I left her.” * 4

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Chapter 7

Leo

Present

My phone vibrated on the table next to my bed and without opening my eyes I answered it.

“Yeah?”

“Leo, I need you to get here now,” Asher said.

I sat up quickly, suddenly wide awake. “Why? Is Emma okay?”

“No, she is freaking out. She’s scared of me, and Leo...she can’t see anything. They said she is temporarily blind.” My heart stopped for a second as the horror of that statement settled into my mind.

She’s blind? How? 3

“What do you need me to do?” I asked him.

“Just get here, maybe she will calm down if you’re here. The shrink is coming around today to talk to her. They want to make sure she won’t try to hurt herself again before they release her. Also, the cops were here asking her questions. She wouldn’t admit to anything, but the cops could tell she was holding back. They asked me who I thought was hurting her and I said they should speak to her father since he was the one who had a tight leash on her. They said they haven’t been able to contact him for two days now. Something isn’t right.” Asher rambled on.

5

“Okay okay, I’ll head there now,” I told him hanging up quickly.

I quickly stood and wandered around grabbing random pieces of clothing and pulling them on. I rushed out of the door and down the stairs passing the living room where Jayden and Logan were watching TV.

2

“Hey! Where are you going?” Logan asked. “Is it Emma? Is she okay?”

“Asher wants me to go to

the hospital. Emma is awake and she is scared of him. She...they said she is temporarily blind, and she is sort of freaking out.” I said quickly as I pulled my shoes on.

“Ok, we’ll come too,” Logan said getting to his feet and grabbing his wallet and keys. Jayden did the same and we were out the door and piling into the car in record time.

7

We

arrive at the hospital and the nurse led us to Emma’s room. I heard screaming and rushed past the

nurse to get to Emma. When I entered she was thrashing around like crazy but her eyes

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were completely closed. I glanced to the other side of the room and saw Asher watching with genuine concern, but he seemed unsure of what to do.

"What happened?" I asked standing as the others joined us the others quickly joining us

.

We stood beside Asher and out of the way as the nurses tried to calm Emma.

"They gave her some pain meds and it made her fall asleep then she woke up a few minutes ago screaming and crying. She seems to be trapped in a nightmare." Asher said running a hand down his face.

"Can't they give her something to calm her down?" Logan asked his voice laced with panic.

"They need her to stop thrashing around long enough to inject it, but as soon as someone touches her, she freaks out," Asher explained wringing his hands together.

2

"No! No! Stop please! I don't want to!" Emma cried out, her face drenched with tears.

Two more nurses rushed into the room to help hold her down and it was finally enough to inject her with

something. Her body started to relax but she was still whimpering as the nurses stepped away. The other nurses who had come to help started to leave and Emma began to fall still.

"She should be able to rest now." The remaining nurse said as she adjusted Emma's blankets.

"What happened?" I asked her.

"She has experienced a lot of trauma and earlier she had mentioned that she had trouble sleeping a lot of

the time. I think she should speak to the therapist today as soon as she is awake again."

Asher nodded in agreement and the nurse left us alone.

"Man, this is messed up. She is worse off than we knew." Logan said.

Jaden and Asher silently pulled chairs closer to Emma's bed and sat quietly watching her rest. This whole

situation had really shaken them, and I was in awe at how sad they all seemed. Logan always seemed calm

and unaffected by things, but even couldn't hide his emotions. He stood against one of the walls with his eyes fixed on Emma as well. The Dark Angel's watching over one special girl. 14

We spent several hours sitting with Emma taking turns getting coffee, waiting for her to wake. I would glance at each of my friends occasionally and would catch them watching her with regret and guilt in their eyes. After all these years of tormenting her, they were regretting everything they had done and so was I.

This had knocked some sense into us but it was also a reminder that there was a part of

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us that was still...human. We had been playing like we were cold and uncaring for a long time, but that all ended the moment we heard that gun shot off.

go

5

Emma started to move around a bit a couple of hours later and we all shot to our feet.

"Hello?" She asked in a panic. "Who's there?"

We glance at each other not sure what to say.

"It's me Asher and the other boys are here too," Asher took a step closer to her and rested his hand on the bed close to her hand but didn't touch her. 3

I could hear her breaths becoming quick and shaky and she started to move further back in the bed even though there was no more room for her to move to. Her face shifted from fear to sadness as tears began to fall from her eyes.

"Please just leave me alone. People will know if you guys do something to me." She said with a swallow.

I copied the motion swallowing down the lump in my own throat. The others looked equally as hurt by her words. She was petrified of us, and with good reason.

"Emma none of us want to hurt you, but we

also don't want you to be alone," I said moving closer to her.

She let out a small whimper. "Leo?"

A smile formed on my lips because she almost sounded relieved. I took this chance and wrapped her in my arms. "Yeah, it's me. I'm so sorry Emma. So sorry."

I didn't care if the other guys saw me or what they thought of me, Emma needed me. She let out a soft cry and I didn't think, I climbed onto her bed and took her into my arms. She didn't fight me, instead, she hid her face into my chest and cried quietly. I held her tighter and whispered calming words into her ear. Then and there I promised her that I would never hurt her again and I would never let anyone else hurt her either. She wrapped her arms around my waist and continued crying until her body relaxed and she fell back to sleep. I didn't move, not even an inch. 2

"What's going on in your head Leo?" Logan asked.

He didn't look to be teasing me, he seemed genuinely curious.

"I can't leave her again. I hurt her too badly before, and she has no one. I can't leave her again." I tell them.

"I told the doctor that we would take her to stay with us while the police investigate her abuse and try to find her father," Asher said. 5

He stood and reached over to brush a strand of Emma's hair from her face. The action was so gentle that I would have never believed it happened if I hadn't seen it myself.

I watched him in fascination, I had never seen him act in such a gentle way and I was almost like he hadn't even realized he was doing it. Logan and Jayden

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noticed it too and they watched him slightly wide-eyed. 6

"She was so scared of us; I am afraid she will never trust us enough to let us take care of her," Jayden's

expression was stoic but there was a hint of disappointment on his face.

"We just have to prove to her that she can trust us. After everything they told me happened to her, there is no way we are going back to the way things were. She needs us to protect her." Asher said with finality in his voice. 2

Just then the door to Emma's room slammed open and an angry middle-aged man in a suit was standing in the doorway.

"Get your hands off my daughter!" He yelled. 14

Four or Dead

Chapter 8

Asher.

The man I am assumed was Emma's father stocked toward Emma's bed to pull Leo away from her, but Jayden stepped in front of him blocking his way.

"Move." The man said through gritted teeth, but Jayden stood his ground with his arms crossed against his chest.

"We aren't letting you near her," Jayden said pushing the man away.

The guy must have been drunk because he stumbled back awkwardly almost falling to the ground. He stammered to his feet and

launched himself straight at Jayden, and my friend easily sidestepped and let the old man fall face first. (2)

"Hey! What's going on in here?" A bulky man asked rushing into the room. "Sir you need to calm down!"

The big guy grabbed Emma's father and pulled him back while the man thrashed pointlessly in his hold.

"This is Emma's father, and he isn't supposed to see her until the police have spoken to him," I said firmly

while standing in front of Emma's bed to block the old man's view of her.

The bulky guys who I can now see was a security guard dragged Emma's father out and the room fell silent again.

3

"Thank you." A soft voice said from behind me, and I turn quickly to see Emma's eyes looking in my direction.

I know she couldn't see me, but she must have heard where I was because I could swear she was looking directly at me.

"As I said, no one will hurt you again," Leo reassured her as he stroked her hair softly.

5

"But Emma, we need you to tell us, is your dad the one that has been hurting you?" Leo asked her.

She visibly recoiled into herself, but Leo was right, we needed to be sure she was far away from the people who hurt her.

"Please Emma," Leo asked softly.

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She nodded and sat up in the bed with her head low.

"Yes, he was

the one who cut me and beat me but..." She swallowed hard and a single tear fell.

"It's ok take your time," Logan said resting his hand gently on Emma's hand. [2

His voice was softer than I had ever heard it, something that seemed to be contagious because we had all noticeably softened around Emma.

"The other stuff...wasn't my dad...he never touched me

in that way. He let his friends touch me though then over summer when I turned eighteen, one of them raped me." She said letting out a small cry.

5

Leo immediately wrapped his arms around her and held her as close

as possible. I had an intense urge to do the same thing but I resisted. Jayden cursed and stormed out of the

room. Logan stood frozen in disbelief. Needless to say, we had no idea how to act after hearing that the girl we had tormented for three

abuse at home and worse had been raped. We were monsters who had only added to the nightmares that plagued her sleep every night. We

were part of the darkest places in her mind, and she had every right to hate us for what we had done.

A moment later another doctor entered the room and glanced at each of us with curiosity before turning

her attention to Emma.

"Hello, Emma! My name is Doctor Long, and I am the therapist your doctor requested to speak with you. Can I sit with you for a little while?" The doctor asked.

"Yes," Emma replied just above a whisper.

The doctor smiled at her and stepped closer pulling a chair as close as she could and rested a hand on Emma.

"Now I know you

can't see me right now but I am right here to your left, okay? Now boys I have to ask you to leave so I can speak to Emma alone." She said turning to give us all a stern look.

"No way! We are not leaving her. Not alone." I said shaking my head.

The others crossed their arms standing their ground, but the doctor simply shook her head.

"Look boys, Emma is going to have to talk about some very painful things that she may feel a little embarrassed by. Do you want her to feel unable to speak freely because you all will be here listening? Besides therapy is private between a patient and their doctor, so shoo!" The doctor gently pushed us toward Emma's door and we reluctantly allowed her. She was right, and Emma needed her help.

"Emma we will be right in the waiting room, okay?" Leo called out to her.

"It's okay Leo, just go home. All of you." Emma said as the doctor closes the door in our

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face.

We stood there for a moment debating whether to listen to her and leave or stay in case she changed her

mind.

"I guess she doesn't want us here anymore. Not that I can blame her." Logan said with a sigh.

"I don't want to leave her when her father is somewhere in the hospital," Leo argued.

"Me neither but she said she doesn't want us here, what more can we do? If she says as much to the nurse we won't have another chance to come to see her." I said as frustration built deep in my chest. 2

My urge to protect was off the charts and it didn't sit right with me leaving Emma without at least one of

us close by.

1

"Miss? We need to go for today but can you call me when Emma is

ready to have visitors again?" Leo asked stepping up to one of the nurses near us.

"Of course! Write down your name and number and I will call you if she asks for you." She said handing Leo a pad of sticky notes.

"Thank you." He replied quickly writing his information down and handed it to her.

She gave us all a sympathetic smile. "Just to let you know, she asks for you when she is sleeping. She has nightmares and the one person she asks for...is you."

She rests a hand on Leo's arm before walking away, leaving my friend in shock. I watched the information process and his expression

changed from disappointment at being asked to leave to one of anguish. My

own emotions were on a rollercoaster because

we made him cut her out of his life, and now she was the one asking him to leave. Guilt had been the main

emotion I had been feeling since we watched her pull a gun to her head. Right then and there though I made a pact to myself that I would make it up to them, to my friend and the girl who held his heart. 17

Now I knew why he was never very interested in other girls no matter how much they threw themselves at him. He wouldn't push them away but he also didn't show any wish to take anything further with them. He had one girl in his heart all this time and he was losing her all over again, and I couldn't let that happen.

4

"Come on bro, let's go home and wait for her call. Something tells me it won't be too long." I said throwing an arm around his shoulder and pulling him toward the exit.

Once we were in the car I watched him through the rearview mirror as he watched the scenery out the side window.

"I want to do something to make sure she knows we don't wish to hurt

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her. How do we prove it to her?" Logan asked his voice sounded strained and desperate. 12

I turned to him for a second and saw the same emotions that had plagued all of us recently. We were overwhelmed with unusual emotions from guilt to regret. He was the type to act like nothing in the world bothered him, but we knew that wasn't true. We had been with him through the worst moments of his life, and he always played off how much he felt. This was the first time in years that he was letting his true emotions show, and that meant something. He felt regret just like the rest of us and hated the thought that he could have had Emma's blood on his hands for what we had done.

"Emma isn't like other girls. She doesn't want anything from anyone. All she would talk about was silly things like reading in the park. Taking walks along the river, things that you can't buy. She never told me how bad things were at home, but if it's what I imagine, she was never allowed to do those things." Leo said keeping his eyes fixed on the world outside the window.

2

"So, what do we do?" Logan asked with a sigh of defeat.

"We be there for her. We come back tomorrow even if she throws us out, we keep coming back. We be there so she isn't alone."

1

We all fall silent but nod in silent agreement. Emma was going to be the center of our world now and we were okay with that.

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Four or Dead

Chapter 9

Emma

“So, Emma those boys who were here, are they good friends of yours?” The therapist, Dr. Long asks.

I let out a huffed laugh. “Not exactly. They bullied me for the last three years.”

She furrowed her brows at my words. “Really? They seem to care for you very much. They stood around you like they wanted to protect you.” 2

“Yeah, I have no

idea what’s wrong with them. Is it weird that I feel safe with them even after how they treated me all those years? Like some kind of Stockholm syndrome or something?” I asked with genuine concern but my voice light.

She smiled. “Although you may be at risk of

such a condition, I don’t think that is the case here. I think you feel alone and for the first time someone is there and willing to fight for you, and you want that. You need that. Did they ever physically hurt you?”

I let out a sigh and laid

my head back on my pillow. “No, never. They played a few pranks on me but they were mostly harmless. It was

more like catcalling and teasing. The girls they hang around with are the ones who physically hurt me.”

“I see. So maybe even though they haven’t been kind before, you know they won’t hurt you. You may feel put off because they are acting differently from how they have in the past, that would make anyone skeptical.” She offered. 3

I considered her words for a minute and surprisingly it made some sense. I knew Leo before all this and I trusted him like I had never trusted anyone but I had been so ashamed of what my father had been doing to me that I never told him. Not that I didn’t trust him with the truth but because I didn’t want him trying to save me or see me any different. I just wanted to feel normal and being with him let me feel that even if it was only for a short time. If he rushed in like a knight in shining armor to save me I don’t know what my dad would have done to him. I was scared of him getting hurt because of me.

“I want to trust them because I don’t have anyone else. Their behavior has thrown me off but somehow it feels...right. But what if after I leave here they turn around and treat me the way they used to? I don’t know if I could go through that. That feeling of being alone...” I said feeling tears welling up behind the mist of my eyes.

I hadn’t said anything yet, but my eyes had started to clear over the last few hours. I hadn’t said anything yet because I wasn’t sure if

they were healing or if it was a temporary thing. Besides my mind has been swarmed with

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th a million thoughts that it was the least of my worries. Of course, I wanted my eyesight back, but my fear of my father was the strongest thing I was feeling at the moment.

"We can never know for sure who people will turn out to be, which is why we have to take a leap and hope for the best. The world is like that, leaps of faith with no assurances. We may wish to know exactly what will happen with every choice and turn we make, but that

just isn't possible. So why not take a leap of faith, and if they disappoint you then you move on, but cut them from your life. You need to set boundaries for yourself that you will never let anyone cross, so you can protect yourself. Protect your heart but let people in just a little so they can

see how great you are." She said reaching for my hand and giving it a gentle squeeze. 9

"Now what I need to know is how you feel about your home situation. You told me what your father has

done, and we both know going back there now isn't

safe for you. You are a legal adult even though you are still finishing school, so we can try and find you a woman's group home for you. They provide a safe place with everything you could need. Would that be something you would be interested in?" I swallowed and considered her words carefully.

Asher said he wanted me to stay with them, but could I really do that?

"Is that my only option?" I asked her.

She shook her head. "No, like I said you are a legal adult and can choose where you live, but I recommend going somewhere your father does not

know about. Somewhere that has protection in case he does come around. We can try and request a restraining order for your father as well, in case he does find where you are staying."

I nod my head in understanding as she explains all my options. "Isn't a restraining order just a piece of paper? How is that supposed to do anything?"

"It is, but if he violates it then he will be arrested. If you see him then you call the police, and they will take him away." She explained to me further.

"No piece of paper will stop him if he wants

to drag me back home. He could beat me so there was no way to call for help. I don't see how such a thing could be any help at

all." I let out a frustrated sigh as I dash the hopes that anything the police could do would be any help.

As much

as I don't trust the Dark Angel's, they seemed to be the lesser of two evils. They were dangerous

according to rumors I had heard over the years, which could prove helpful if I had them on my side. Was it worth it to use them as my personal bodyguards? It sounded selfish when I put it like that, but my options were so limited that this could have been my only

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choice. It's like that old phrase says...out of the pot and into the fire. Except it would be the other way around for me since the Dark Angels were the lesser evil of the two. I guess my mind was already made up, now it was a matter of talking to them. 8

Would the offer still be on the

table after I told them to stay away from me? God, I hoped so.

"So, Emma what do you want to do? What would make you feel safe?" My doctor asked . 1

"Four Dark Angels," I said admitting the truth out loud even though the doctor wouldn't understand.

She was right, there were far greater things to be afraid of, and the four boys who hid in the shadows of my nightmares would soon become the heroes of my story. I needed them, and if I had to sacrifice a bit of myself to live, I would sacrifice it to them. Because now I had a reason to live, and that was to make my father pay for what he did to me. To make all those dirty men pay for what they have done my whole life. I am broken, but I wouldn't be the only one. It was time for me to fight, and I was ready to bring fire from the heavens to make it happen. The anger was pumping through my veins like a hot flame but I knew it wouldn't be as easy as it sounded. I still had a lot of fear to overcome.

Once the doctor left and assured me that she would sign off on me being released since from our talk she didn't consider me a danger to myself any longer, I asked the nurse to call Leo. I was going to make a deal, and I had to do it now before my fear got the best of me. I had been hiding in myself, staying silent and hidden but that was over now. I was angry, and that anger only had one direction...my father was going to be the one with a gun to his head and I would be the one to pull the trigger. I cleared my throat and straightened out my back with my head

held high. Emma Grace was no longer going to be a victim! I was going to stand against anyone who tried to tear me down again! At least I would try to. 10

Leo

The second I hung up with the nurse I ran out of the house and didn't even wait for the others

to follow me. Emma had asked for me, and I needed to get to her. I knew the moment I left that she meant everything to me, and I would show her from that moment on. The others followed me in Asher's car, and we made it to the hospital in record time. My eyes met the nurse's, and she gave me a nod which was all the permission I needed. When I opened the door and walked in, I saw Emma's eyes fixed on me. She didn't lower them or shy

away from making eye contact with me like she usually did. In fact, I saw the look of determination on her face.

"Emma..." I started to say but she shook her head.

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"I want to say something first." She said and I nodded quickly.
Then it dawned on me. "Wait...you can see me!"
She smiled. "Yeah, I can. Everything is still a little foggy but it's a lot better. The doctor came in a little while ago and said it should keep improving, over the next few days. I was scared to tell him I noticed a change because I didn't want to get my hopes up, but I have other things to worry about."

Before I could ask her anything the other guys barreled into the room. She looked at them and laughed a little at the state of them.
"Good everyone is here." She said setting her hands in her lap. "Welcome boys, take a seat. We have business to discuss." 3

We glanced at each other, but we did as she asks and settled in to listen.
1

"So, I want to make you guys a deal.
I need your help with a little project...revenge...justice...whatever you want to call it. I want to bring down everything my father represents, and I want to do what I couldn't do to myself. I want him dead. If the stories I have heard about you are true, then you are exactly the weapon I need. So, what do you say?" She asked looking at each of us.
4

glanced at the others but we didn't say a word, especially when identical smirks formed on each of our faces. This was a new side of the sweet quiet girl we knew but we had our own thoughts on punishing the man who had hurt her and she had all but given us permission to fulfill our intentions.
We were in.
This was going to be fun. 9

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Four or Dead

Chapter 10

Asher...Present...

The look in Emma's eyes when she said she wanted revenge on her father made me smile on the inside. I had heard people say that the quiet ones were the most dangerous and seeing the fire in her eyes just proved how true that statement was. She was angry and vengeful and hell if it wasn't totally hot! I mean she was always gorgeous, and maybe that's why we always harassed her because we all know that boys like to pull on girls' pigtails when they like them. We were just too dumb to admit we all had a thing for this girl, but hey no one ever said we were smart when it came to girls. 12

Look at my thing with Andrea for example. On the outside, we seem like we belong together, but the truth is I have been tolerating her for one purpose only...to get information on her father. He and my father had been rivals since before I was born, and I was assigned to get close to the daughter to milk her for information. My father had big plans for acquiring her family's company and all that it entailed. See my dad was the dark lord of this town. He looked like a legitimate businessman, but under all that he dealt with the darkest parts of this stuck-

up town's secrets, and I was the dark prince. I respected my father because he conquered and destroyed anything in his way, but I didn't agree with it all. 10

He loved my mother with a passion that many people could only hope to find, and she was his light. Then some drunken and high blue blood got behind the wheel of his million

-

dollar birthday present and killed her. That guy lived with just a broken leg to show for what he had done, and his family's lawyers buried us in legal hell to let him slide. Back then my father

was no one special but you would be surprised what vengeance can push someone to do. My father left a trail of blood behind him to take his place as king of the underworld of this seemingly perfect town, and he groomed me from a young age to do the same.

Some

may think a man willing to kill for revenge would be a crappy father, but my dad wasn't. He treated me well and made sure I wanted for nothing. I was a part of his world since I was a child but in truth, I wouldn't have chosen this life if I hadn't been raised in it. I was the dark prince for the simple reason that it was the life my father molded for me. He even set up a comfortable house

for me and the other boys. Logan, Jayden, and I had grown up together and they had both lost everything. So, my father pretty much adopted them and

when we were old enough, he gave us a house of our own. That was the summer we m

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et Leo, and he had a story of his own. His father and mother kicked him out that summer because he decided he preferred

fixing cars in our garage to a stuffy office job in his father's firm. 12

They wanted him to become a successful lawyer, but my guy fell in love with metal and grease. So needless to say, his parents were having none of it. That's how the four of us ended up bunking together in my ridiculously big gift of a house. The boys were happy to become a part of my father's business as well, and that kind of work kept us extremely comfortable. We also ran our own garage and made good money in that aspect as well. So, when Emma said she wanted our help getting rid of her father, she didn't even know that we are

exactly the right people to fulfill her request. There was a lot about us she didn't know, a dark side she should fear. 11

Yet we were drawn to her. She was all light and goodness wrapped in someone who has only ever known pain. She was an anomaly that both scared and fascinated me. Part of me wanted to keep her as far away from me as possible, while the other part of me wanted to pull her close and bask in her warmth. It was complicated, to say the least. 4

After everything and how much guilt we all harbored, we would have been willing to help her

for free but I was a little curious about what she wanted to offer as payment for our help. I think we all wanted the same thing...we wanted her. I couldn't explain if anyone asked but it felt like she belonged with us like she

was meant to fall into our orbit. What is that girls call it? Fate. Yeah, fate.

"So, little Emma wants to spill blood huh? How can we help?" Logan asked with a huge smile on his face.

To my surprise though, Emma smiled right

back at him. Our girl had a bit of a dark side of her own that we were only now seeing.

Who wouldn't, after all, she has endured, but I admit it was a damn good look on her. Our little dark princes. 11

"I say we take everything away from him first. His company, his money, his perfect life.

Then when he has nothing left, we let him choose...life with nothing or death." Emma said straight out without a bit of hesitation.

I had to smile now. This girl's dark side was doing things to me. Although I doubt it had always been there. See monsters aren't born they are created. Her father had no idea he had been creating a darkness in his daughter that would turn against him with a desire to kill. This was the last straw, and her beast was out and

hungry for blood, and our darkness called to hers. 12

"Anything else?" I asked her.

She turned to me and my heart fluttered at the darkness in her eyes. "I want them all to pay. Every single

man that laid a hand on me." 1

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Logan laughed and clapped his hands together. "Now we're talking! Man, I love a good revenge plot! When do we start?"

"First I need to get out of here. I feel too vulnerable here. I may want to get revenge on my father, but here he has an advantage. He could come for me at any time and there isn't much I can do from this bed." Emma explained.

I nodded. "We have to plan this out carefully, and in a more secure location."

"Emma, I know you are nowhere close to trusting us yet, but would you consider coming to stay with us?"

It would be the safest place in town for you." Leo offered.

She gave him a smile sweeter than pie. "I was hoping you would say that. Yes, there is a long way to go before I can fully trust any of you, but I need you...so I'm in." 1

Leo smiled at her like a love-

sick puppy while the rest of us agreed with a nod of our heads.

"So, when can we take you home Sunny?" Logan asked.

Emma rolled her eyes at the nickname but didn't address it. "Dr. Long signed off on my mental health but

I didn't exactly tell her about my plans otherwise she would have definitely would have had me committed." 5

Logan let out a short laugh and I snickered at her. Who knew she was so funny?

"I am just waiting for my doctor to come by and let me know when I can leave." She continued.

The door opened then and said doctor walked in stopping for a moment to glance at each of us before walking toward Emma.

"Well, Miss Grace from what I can see here your condition is stable. There isn't much that can be done here that can't be handled at home, so I say you are good to go! Are you feeling up to leaving? No other pain or discomfort you need to share?" Emma shook her head.

"What about my vision?" She asked.

"From what you described; it should clear in a couple of days. However, if it starts to get worse then you need to see a doctor right away to avoid any long-term damage."

"Okay thank you, doctor," Emma said with an appreciative smile.

"Okay then, I will tell the nurse to start the discharge process." With that, we were left alone with Emma again.

Her expression fell though.

"What's wrong?" Leo asked.

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"I don't have any clothes or anything. The ones I was brought in with had blood all over them. All my stuff is still at my house." She said with a groan of annoyance.

"There are a few shops not far from here. We will go pick out some stuff for you." I offered, standing and turning toward the door.

"Oh no, I don't want you to do that. I'm sure they have something simple in the gift shop I can wear until I can go home." She objected.

3

I turned and gave her a pointed look. "We aren't letting you back into that house even for clothes. One of us will go later to pack your things, but until then we will get you something to wear that isn't a tie-dye tourist t-shirt or something."

4

Logan laughed at that and gave Emma a quick once over. "I have a good idea what size you are so we shouldn't have my trouble finding you something."

3

"Wait, what? How do you know what size I am?" Emma asked. 3

Logan smiled devilishly. "Baby we have been watching you for three years." 10

Emma's eyes grow wide, and Logan rushed out the door before she could go off on him. Leo smiled and shook his head. Jayden sat quietly saying nothing and followed Logan out. 8

Logan hadn't been wrong though; we had been watching Emma for a long time. We had told ourselves that it was to mess with her, but at some point, that must have changed. It made us sound whipped for her, and that was the scariest part. She had worked her way into our heads without even trying, and now she was moving in with us and into our circle of protection. 2
Things were about to get complicated....

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