

Four or Dead by G O A

Chapter 26

Emma...Present...

"Asher..." I said with a whisper. "W-what are you doing?"

"Your so...beautiful." He said suddenly as he reached his hand up to cup the side of my face.

My eyes went wide at his words and my body tightened instantly from his touch. His touch was so gentle and his words so soft I was almost sure I had imagined it.

"I have been trying so hard to keep away. Why can't I stay away from you?" I had a feeling he didn't expect me to answer that, but his words hit me hard.

I lowered my eyes and tried to step back from him feeling a little hurt. What was so wrong with me that he didn't even want to be near me?

"I-I'm sorry," I replied, my voice small.

He lifted my chin so that our eyes could meet again. "Why are you sorry?" He looked confused by reply.

"I have caused you guys so much trouble." The guilt started to hit me with a vengeance.

I had been with them for weeks now with no real need for their protection. I should have been trying to

find somewhere else to go. With those thoughts in my mind, I tried to step away from him and leave but his other hand dropped to my waist and pulled me closer to him.

"Emma. You don't understand. We want you...I think we always have. We felt it the moment we saw you. There was a light in you that called out to the darkness in us. We didn't know what to do, so we tried to push you away. We hurt you because we were afraid. We...I wanted to be close to you so badly but I couldn't." His voice began to trail off as did his eyes.

"Why?" I asked before he could close himself off to me.

This was the most he had ever expressed to me and I didn't want him to lock his feelings away again. His eyes snapped to mine again.

“There is so much you don’t know...things we’ve had to do...people we’ve hurt. There is a reason we are called The Dark Angels. We don’t protect, we don’t save anyone...we destroy them. I don’t want to destroy you. You’re too pure, too good.” He doesn’t let me go though, instead, he held me tighter like he was afraid he would lose me forever if he let me go.

I wasn’t sure what to say or do. I knew his words should scare me but they didn’t. In fact what he described made sense to me even though it shouldn’t. Even though they had hurt me, I still felt like I was exactly where I was meant to be when they were near me. It scared me because I knew I shouldn’t feel that way toward them but somehow I just couldn’t run from them. Maybe it was the way their eyes followed me. Or maybe it was the look in their eyes when my eyes would find theirs like they were yearning for me.

I didn’t understand it but I felt it. Maybe that’s why they hurt me because I was being pulled toward them but they were trying to scare me away.

Asher’s body started to shake against mine like he was using every bit of his strength to control himself. I shouldn’t push him, I knew that but I didn’t want him to hold back anymore. I wasn’t afraid of him and I didn’t want him to keep hurting. So I reached for him cupping the side of his face with my hand.

“Asher...it’s ok. It’s ok. Please just let go. You don’t have to hold back because of me. I’m not scared of you.” I said it as confident as I could but my heart was pounding in anticipation.

Asher was intense in every sense of the word so when our eyes met again the look in his eyes caused a shudder to travel through me. His resolve was cracking and barely hanging on.

“Emma...” my name sounded strained and his hand clenched my waist tighter to the point I was sure it

would bruise but I didn’t pull away.

He needed me and I was willing to travel into his darkness if I needed to. Everyone deserved light in their

life, even him.

“It’s ok,” I said again and it finally broke through to him shattering his control once and for all.

His lips came crashing down on mine like a flurry of desperation and fear. I gasped at the sudden attack

and the intensity of it but I melted into him the longer it went on. He and Jayden kissed like it was the last breath they would ever breathe and it felt so much like they were trying to steal that last breath from me.

Asher's hold on me began to lessen but he didn't let me go. His other hand had lowered to the back of my

neck and he was keeping me locked against his kiss. I didn't mind because kissing him felt like I was floating and there was no way I would ever want to come down.

When our lips finally broke apart we were both, for the lack of a better word, breathless. His head lowered

to mine and we stood there as time stopped just for us to be in that moment. Asher was intense in every way including this. His kiss held every emotion he kept bottled up and he had just poured every bit into

1. I planned to lock those dark emotions away and never let them touch him again. If I was his light then I was going to chase away as much darkness as I could.

"So about that tattoo design..." I said once I caught my breath.

He let out such a pure laugh that I couldn't help but smile. "Yeah let's talk about that tattoo."

We pulled apart just a bit so he could place a last kiss on my forehead. He let out a sigh before stepping away and leading me to his desk. He dropped into his desk chair and I stood off to the side waiting. I watched him reach for a well-used sketchbook and pencil, and excitement rushed over me. Once the book was open though he didn't start to draw, he turned his attention to me instead. Before I could ask what was wrong he pulled me into his lap and wrapped his arms around me.

I let out a little squeak of surprise but laughed it off once I was comfortably in his arms. He nuzzled his face into my neck for a quick moment before turning his attention back to the sketchbook. I laid myself back further into his chest and watched as he started sketching the design that would be just for me.

The design looked more and more intriguing as he added more and more details.

"Is that a birdcage?" I asked as the design began to take a more specific shape.

He had drawn something that looked like a sun and was adding a small cage but he didn't stop there. Once the intricate design of the cage was finished, he added soft flowers to specific corners of the cage.

“You have been locked away your whole life. Hidden and hurt. I want to set you free...little bird.” Those last words instantly made me go still.

Little bird...it’s what my mom called me when I was little. She would write little poems for me and I never forgot them. Whenever i felt scared or sad I would write them down from memory and read them over and over. They were promises to me. Promises that she and I would always find a way to each other even in

death.

“What’s wrong?” Asher’s voice pulled me back from my memories and pushed by the tears that were building in the corners of my eyes.

“Nothing it’s just...my mom used to call me that,” I admitted to him.

“Really? It was the name I always thought of when I thought of you.” With that, he added the last piece to the design.

A bird taking flight through the opened door of the cage. He held the sketch up and I let out a soft laugh of disbelief.

“Asher...it’s beautiful.” I sat up and turned to him.

Without hesitating I let my lips meet his and he immediately wrapped tightened his arms around me. I let my thanks melt through our touch and when I pulled away there was a soft smile on his face. 2

“Thank you,” I say softly. “I love it.”

He places a quick kiss on my lips but there was something more on his face, something he wanted to say but was too scared to. I didn’t push, he would tell me when he was ready. In the meantime, I scrambled out of his hold to stand on my own two feet again and reached out a hand to him.

“Come on! Let’s do it now! I want to get my tattoo before I chicken out!” He quirked a brow at me but stood and grabbed the sketch before taking my hand.

I led him out of the office and the others watched us leave but didn’t ask us where we were going or try to stop us. I was glad because this was something for just Asher and me. Our moment.