

Four or Dead by G O A

Chapter 23

Emma...Three Weeks Later...

Things grew quiet the last few weeks with news going around that Andrea was taking time off of school for a mental healing retreat. Her friends kept to themselves during her absence, only offering me the occasional look of disgust but not much else. I hadn't heard from my father either and that was what had me the most worried. My father was by no means a patient man, so the fact he hadn't come storming in at dragging me out had been a bit of a surprise.

Things with the boys had gotten a lot better though, and I was starting to become more comfortable with the idea of being a real part of their group. I was still nervous about pursuing more of a romantic relationship with them as a group because my mind couldn't wrap around the thought that they all wanted me. There was no way that was the case, and I wasn't sure how that could work.

Asher and Jayden especially confused me in this regard because they didn't really show much emotion at all, to begin with. They made it clear they wanted me here but as what I wasn't sure. Leo and Logan were the total opposite. They were very obvious about their feelings after that night together, but they have been patient with me about taking our time. 2)

I liked the way Logan and Leo wrapped me in their arms, it was something I had needed for a long time. I had been starved for any form of kindness and especially of physical interactions that didn't include pain. Logan liked to take me by surprise and steal a kiss at least a few times a day, but Leo was a bit more reserved and went for cheek kisses instead. Asher and Jayden spoke to me some but kept any physical

contact to a minimum and far between, which I accepted.

The last couple of weeks I had made it up in my mind to find a way to pay them all back in some way, so I started watching every tutorial I could find on cooking. The boys were sweet enough to buy me a nicer phone and it allowed me to watch YouTube. They told me I didn't have to worry about cooking and cleaning for them but I figured it was the least I could do. So I buckled down and got to work on learning everything I could.

A morning finally came when I was sure I could make something. I woke up and shimmied out of my Logan and Leo sandwich to sneak into the kitchen and make breakfast. I hadn't been expecting Jayden to be sitting at the kitchen table when I arrived though and seeing him made me jump and a small squeak of surprise escaped my mouth.

My hand came up over my heart as if that action alone was keeping it from leaping from my chest. "God, you scared me."

1

He looked at me and his mouth quirked up at the corner just a little bit. "What are you doing up so early?"

I smile and take a seat beside him. "I wanted to take a shot at making breakfast."

He lifted a brow at me. "Really? Can you cook?"

"I have been watching some videos on some simple recipes and I think I can do it if we have all the ingredients," I assured him.

"What will you make?" He asked me.

"Omelettes!" I replied with an excited smile.

He hummed in response. "If we don't have everything thing you need we can get them later so we have them for next time. Just give me a list."

I smiled. "Thanks! I'll try and work with what we have for now."

"Very well. He replied before turning his attention back to his phone.

I smiled to myself before standing and heading toward the fridge. That had been the longest conversation. we had ever had and it felt like a huge accomplishment. Ruffling through the fridge I found cheese, bacon, and eggs which were just enough for a simple omelet. I took everything out and set up my phone so I could watch the steps and follow them exactly. The kitchen was silent other than the sound of clanking utensils and the soft voice of the instructor. I brushed my long hair aside and started working, blocking everything else out.

I was too focused to notice Jayden had moved until his hand brushed back the small section of hair that had fallen over my shoulder. I flinched a little, and I turned to look at him. He nodded his head in a way to tell me to go back to what I was doing. I did so but my heart had started pounding loudly in my chest. We were so close and I immediately started panicking. I continued to mix the eggs I had cracked into a bowl but slowed when I felt his fingers thread through my hair. 2

"When my mother and father were first married my mom would always ask my father to tie her hair back when she was cooking. My father was confused at first because men

don't usually carry hair ties around with them. But she kept asking every day, so my father stopped by a store on his way home from work and bought some thin black hair ties. He started wearing a couple on his wrists at times from that day on. So when my mom would ask for him to tie her hair back he would tug one off and wrap it in her hair. He did this every day and when I got older I asked her why she did this every day." He paused for a second and I waited desperately wanting him to keep talking.

"She said that a man finds a special girl in his life he will always look for a way to care for her. This small thing let my father show how much he cared for my mother. She said her father and mother did the same thing, and a small act like that made their relationship stronger. So after that, I also started wearing the ties on my wrists. A few times my father let me tie my mom's hair instead of him. For some reason, I thought that if I could learn to do more than just tie her hair back it would show how much I loved her. So I learned how to braid hair." He continued but then fell silent.

"Is that what those things are on your wrist? Hair ties." I asked.

"Yes. I never took them off even after she died." He replied softly.

Silence fell between us again as his fingers weaved through my hair.

"My mom made me promise that when I met the right girl that I would continue the tradition. There was a girl that I thought would be the one I would share those moments with, but she was gone before I could. Now I am getting a second chance to keep the promise I made to my mom." I swallowed hard as tears pricked my eyes.

When he is finished he let his hands fall away and I turned to look up at him.

"Thank you," I said gratefully.

He simply nodded and we stood like that for a few seconds before he reached out and brushed his thumb gently across my cheek. I expected him to pull away but his hand lowered just enough to lay against the back of my neck. My eyes searched his for a clue at what he was thinking, but I never expected him to pull me to him and crashed his lips against mine. The intensity of it took my breath away and I could almost

feel how desperately he had been wanting to share a moment like this with me. When he finally pulled away I looked up at him, my eyes wide. He offered me a small smile before his hand dropped away again and he took a step back.

"Just ask and I'll be there to tie your hair back." He said softly before turning around and returning to his seat as if nothing happened.

I, on the other hand, stood stunned for an embarrassing amount of time. The sound of footsteps coming down the stairs finally broke my trance and I quickly turned back to the

omelet mix I had completely forgotten about. Logan came in and walked up behind me and wrapped his arms around my waist.

“Hey, you! Whatcha making?” He asked resting his head on my shoulder.

“Breakfast!” I replied turning and smiling up at him.

He gave me an expression that looked both excited and surprised.

Wow! Can’t wait to try it!” He planted a sweet kiss to my cheek before giving me one more squeeze.

He stepped away when Leo came up on my other side.

“Morning Em.” Leo said leaning down and matching Logan’s kiss on my other cheek.

My cheeks flushed red once I was left alone again, and I had to force myself not to spontaneously combust so I could get back to cooking. 3

Asher came in grumbling a few moments later and continued his tradition of rummaging the fridge for a carton of juice followed by Leo going off on him for not using a glass. When each of their omelets was finished I set one in front of each guy and stepped back to wait for their reactions. I was too nervous to eat myself, so I stood there waiting. The silence following their first bite was deafening and made me even

more nervous.

“Wow! Emmy this is so good!” Logan spoke up first and I let out a sigh of relief.

I turned to look at Leo next. “So?”

“Best omelet I have ever had!” He said with a huge smile on his face.

I blushed a little, but those two would say it tasted good even if it tasted like dirt. They were my sweetest angels and always said the sweetest things to me even if I didn’t deserve it. It was Asher and Jayden’s

reactions I was worried most about. I waited as they both took several more bites.

“Not bad,” Asher said giving me a quick glance before continuing to eat.

I turned to look at Jayden and he offered me a nod of approval and relief flooded through me and I smiled

brightly. I hadn’t realized just how nervous I was until I stood there waiting.

“Aren’t you going to eat too?” Logan asked shooting me a worried expression.

“Oh, I was way too nervous to eat,” I admit.

Logan shook his head and pulled me down on his lap. “We can share.”

“No that’s okay,” I said trying to stand but his arm locked around my waist.

I let out a sigh but relaxed against his chest and picked up his fork. I cut into the omelet and took a bite, then cut off another piece and offered it to Logan. He happily accepted it and I did this several times until

then cut off another piece and offered it to Logan. He happily accepted it and I did this several times until the whole thing was gone.

The others finished eating as well and were focused on their phones, so I turned to look at Logan. “So? Since it’s the weekend what are you guys going to be up to?”

Logan smiled down at me hugging me closer. “We’re going to the garage today but Leo offered to stay with

you.”

“Would it be ok if I went with you to the garage?” I asked hesitantly.

Logan’s eyes lit up. “You really want to watch us work on run-down cars all day?”

“Yeah, I would actually really like that!” I replied honestly with a hint of excitement in my voice.

“Okay. Let’s go find you something to wear!” He said lifting me and setting me down on my feet again like

I weighed nothing.

Before I could even get my balance he grabbed my hand and rushed up the stairs with me stumbling

behind him.

What exactly did a girl wear to a mechanic’s garage anyway?