

Chapter 1 - Loss

Aurora is an island in the Pacific that has a population of around 300,000. Oh and angels live with us now. They called it the 'fall' when the angels came nearly 78 years ago, but they never really fell. They were told to come here. I guess it's just the Big Guy trying a new approach in guiding us humans down the right path. It was apparently scary at first, but they made a pact with the government and everyone relaxed. I do listen in history class!

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The island is small in comparison to the mainland, but we live quite comfortably. Palm trees dance in the wind here and green grass sways along with the music of the waves, giving the whole place a melodic feel. I have only left the island once and that was when my dad was rushed to hospital eight years ago when I was nine. I remember it like it was yesterday.

"Emma, get your shoes on NOW!" My mother snaps. Hurrying to obey her I scramble out of their bedroom. My dad had been laying on the floor covered in blood, holding my mum's hand in a white knuckle grip. I hear sirens pull up so I open the door for them, watching in shock. Hoping my daddy won't die.

"Thank you miss." The paramedic runs up the stairs two at a time. Not even two minutes later, Grams pulls up and ushers me into her car.

"Wait! What about daddy!" I cry, but Grams already has me strapped in.

"Now child, we will meet them on the mainland." She's about to drive to the dock when a helicopter arrives. But that is not what has the neighbours attention. No, it was the angels landing on the houses. With wings each a unique colour. All of them just sitting there staring at my home.

Why won't they help? They are supposed to help people! Grams just keeps driving and I'm confused and scared. I want my daddy!

When we reach the main road to the docks, I notice two angels following us. One has wings like a dove with brown where they come off his back and the other has ones that are pure white with a really light green at the tip of each feather. "Why are the angels following us?" I ask. She can no doubt hear the wonder in my voice.

"They're just doing their job sweetie, just ignore em' and you'll see your dad soon." She replies.

We are on the ferry slowly and it goes full speed. The two angels land next to our car and Grams walks over to them with confidence. I can't hear what they are saying but I want to meet the angels, so I climb out and walk over.

Their conversation stops and they all look at me. The dove winged angel smiles, but the one with green just stares. "Go back to the car Emma." Grams says. "These angels have things to do." Like the good girl my daddy taught me to be I go back to the car.

Twenty minutes later the ferry docks and the angels take off to follow from the sky. There is heavy traffic and everyone is stopping to take pictures of the angels. This makes Grams mad. So she drives half on the pavement and half on the road. I would have laughed if I wasn't so worried.

When we get to the hospital, the two angels got us through immediately. A corridor with security locked doors open and I see two more angels, both have bronze wings that reflect the light beautifully, making them sparkle.

"Mrs Collins. Miss Stangel." They bow in unison

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"Where is daddy?" I cry. They open the door and Grams ushers me in.

Mum is sat next to the bed so I'm crying whilst daddy says something in a low murmur. They both look up when I enter and daddy gives me a weak smile.

"Hey birdie." Daddy says. His voice is raspy, but I calm at the use of my nickname. "Can I talk to her alone please?" He asks mummy.

She nods and kisses my forehead on the way past and Grams follows her out. I run over to him but stop myself before I hug him, not wanting to cause him more pain.

"Are you gonna be ok daddy?" I whisper. He grabs my hand but his hold is weak. My daddy is never weak. My daddy is always strong and brave.

"Listen carefully Emma," he has my attention at the use of my name, it sounds weird coming from him since he hasn't called me by it in years. "You and your mother are going to live with my friend where it is safe. You need to be a good girl and be patient with everything. You are very important. The angels will keep you safe as much as they can, but you need to be careful. What is it I tell you often?"

"Always remember that angels are protectors not performers. And ... and that I am your special girl." I say proudly. But tears escape my eyes in panic as my father gets paler as I speak.

"Remember I always loved you and your mother." He squeezes my hand with the last of his strength until his eyes close. There are no machines attached to him, so there is just silence. I begin to sob. Understanding that he is gone. Dead.

Mum bursts in and cradles me in her protective arms whilst we both cry together. Grams strokes our hair in an attempt to soothe us.

Who killed my daddy? And why?

Tears are falling down my cheeks at the memory. It's bitter sweet and I still have no clue what the riddles were about. My mum just works all the time, a former shell of herself. I only have Grams but she is on the other side of the island, and with no drivers license yet, I get awfully lonely. I am a loner at school too. The girl the birds follow.

Yes, birds follow me. Big birds, small birds, birds of prey ... all of them. They protect me in weird ways. Like this one time a football was about to hit my head and a hawk took the hit for me. I am the bird whore. And yes again, that is what they call me. Original. And it does not help that I have plain brown hair and muddy green eyes. I'm plain and boring.

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Mum tells me to ignore them, but when they put dead birds in your bag and just plain bully you; let's just say it's difficult. She's been so wrapped up in her job, and has been since dad died.

If it wasn't for my best friend Fleur, I don't know where I would be, or what I might have done ... her bubbly grounds me and she always supports me. She even likes the birds when they let her stroke them.

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Well, I better stop wallowing in my misfortunes and get to school. AKA Hell.

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