

Chapter 25 - Fire

He can't just drop that on me!

I know my father was murdered, I'm not stupid, but knowing the possible name of the killer just makes it all the more real. Perhaps I had been in denial, refusing to accept that someone had gone out of their way to kill him. I had locked away those awful memories. Now all the anger I have kept locked up engulfs me, my thoughts become entirely violent with the need for revenge.

And how the hell does he know who my father is? Am I that well known now?

"Damn, Emma, please calm down!" Zak stands, holding out his hands. He looks frightened and his eyes frantic. My hands and wrists tingled, but I took no notice.

"Do you know where he is?" I hiss. I feel powerful, it lifted me, made me feel light.

"Emma look at your hands, you need to calm down!" Zak pleads. I look down and what I see makes me scream. My arms were engulfed in blue fire, dancing across my skin, but somehow it doesn't burn. My scream eventually becomes a whimper, I begin breathing deeply, trying to take his advice and calm myself, my arms are on freaking fire!

"Oh God... Zak what do I do?" I may be pooping my pants at this point; the fire was climbing up to my shoulders. Zak has frozen, staring wide eyed.

"Um... Just... keep trying to calm down!" The old, insecure Zak was back, he was trembling, slinking away from me. "I'll go get Luke!" With that he turns and runs.

"DON'T LEAVE ME!" I shriek. Ok, calm down Emma, deep breaths. Inhale... exhale... inhale... exhale.

Wait... Sam should be here. "SAMI SAM, HELP ME!" I scream, making my lungs burn from the effort but I thankfully hear the pounding of feet rapidly coming closer. How did he not hear us before? The tingling was intensifying, become more of a constant vibration. Sweat formed along my brow and down my back, ready to drip at the slightest movement, it was unattractive, gross and uncomfortable.

"What the Heck!" Sam exclaims, stumbling to a stop. He takes on the same, wide eyed look Zak had minutes before. At least the fire is not going anywhere else. "What happened?"

"I got angry..." I squeak. He runs both his hand through his hair.

"What made you so angry?" He asks, genuinely puzzled.

"Can we ask questions later? This tingles!" I roll my eyes, but panic still causes me to shiver, the mix of adrenaline isn't helping either.

"I'll get a tainted... you need to take this out on someone." He first looks around, as if one would magically pop up, then, just like Zak, he leaves. Some protector he is. What does he mean 'take it out on someone'? Oh God! I don't have to kill anyone do I?

"Here!" Sam comes in dragging what seems to be a teenage boy. He had the stereotypical grey wings and black eyes which comes with the tainted package, dull and lifeless.

"What do you expect me to do?" I try to lean away from the rapidly panicking angel.

"Touch him and picture burning all the darkness. You can do it Emma!" He forcefully shoves the angel until he is on his knees in front of me, the boy hisses, sounding like an agitated snake. The tingling moves to my chest and Sam curses. "Come on! You'll kill us all if you don't!" I can kill everyone? Zak didn't tell me that!

I hesitantly place my hands on the angel's shoulders, a sizzling sound emanates from my touch and the poor angel bursts into sobs. I close my eyes to try and block out the horrible image before me, it feels as if his skin is burning under my hands, melting away, and it makes me gag. Sam murmurs words of encouragement. I can do this. I picture blue flames entering him, clashing with darkness; I picture the blue fire sucking the taint in, destroying it, and breaking it all apart. The angel shudders, gasping for air in huge gulps. When I feel no more darkness, which further creeps me out because I could feel it somewhere inside of me, I let go. The boy collapses on the floor and begins convulsing, just like Raziel had.

Sam takes a step forward but I stop him, again I just know touching him would make it worse. I look at my arms and smile when I see no flames. It worked! "Sam, it's gone." He reluctantly draws his gaze from the now sleeping angel to me, sagging against the kitchen counter in relief.

"I thought you were with Zak." He frowns, sitting on a chair.

"I was, but he panicked and went to get Luke." I sit in the chair next to him; I hope the angel is ok.

"Oh dear." His head drops to his hands, resting his elbows on his knees. "You should not have been able to do that until you are at least twenty one, well, that was your dad's age when he did what you just did for the first time. And I believe the guy before him was twenty three." He mumbles.

"Great, so I'm even more demented." I fling my hands up in defeat. Why couldn't I have just been normal? "Have you seen Raz?" My chest aches when I think of him. I do love him; I just don't think I am in love with him. I just miss him, his bantering, his comfort when I am sad, and especially just his company. I hate that I have come to think of him as a brother figure, when he so clearly loves me more than that. I hate myself for it.

"No, I'm afraid not, he just left..." He lets the sentence trail in to silence. He knows, probably just like everyone else, why he left. Not only did he have the rejection from me, but a broken nose from Luke, it was certainly not his day.

The angel on the floor moans, I stand up and approach him carefully, Sam sits back and watches. I know this part is important, Sam knows it too... it's that crazy instinct again. Crazy being the main word in that sentence.

"Does he have a name?" I whisper to Sam. Why am I whispering?

"Uh..." He looks up, as if asking for the name. "Matt... I think." He shrugs. Is it 'be useless day' or something?

"Matt?" I nudge his shoulder gently but I get no response. "Matt, can you hear me?" He makes a muffled sound, turning his head to squint at me.

"Huh?" He mumbles. He'd look adorable with his messy hair which is gradually turning blonde, but I'm bonded, best not aggravate Luke any more than I have already. He blinks rapidly, looking really confused, Raz was obviously stronger, and more able to deal with the internal battle.

"How are you feeling?" I help him sit up, cringing when he winces. He feels really hot and a light sweat coats his skin, which seems to be a regular side effect with angel fire.

"Like I was on fire... on the inside." He croaks. I rubs his back in comfort, this was all my fault. I need to get a handle on my emotions if people's lives are at risk.

"I am so sorry Matt." I drop my head in shame, he was in so much pain. How can I live like this? How did my dad live like this?

"Where am I?" He looks around, crunching his eyebrows in confusion.

"Luke's house?" It comes out like a question, I hate comparing him to Raz, but at least he knew where he was and what was happening, right now Matt is reminding me of a new born foal. His limbs are shaking and he looks dazed, I need to do some serious research on this. Strangely, at the mention of Luke, he cowered, wrapping his new, caramel coloured wings around him like a shield.

"Is he here?" He whispers. I notice Sam stand up at the corner of my eye, my concern only intensifies when I hear the door slam. Matt whimpers, looking nothing like the young teenager I thought he was but a small child.

"EMMA!" Luke booms, Matt shuffles to hide behind me and Sam stands in front of me. His boots thud against the laminate flooring, getting louder as he stomps his way towards the kitchen. I was still on the floor with Matt who had completely hid himself behind his wings. "Emma?" Luke enters and his eyes immediately meet my own, I don't miss the brief flicker of fear. He steps towards me but Sam extends his copper wings, hiding me from his view. "What are you doing Sam?" His voice is devoid of emotion, and I'm beginning to get annoyed. He has no reason to act like this, and then my mark tingles, as if responding to his closeness.

At least his face has healed.

"You are being irrational." Thank you! Someone on the same wavelength as myself.

"Move." I could just imagine him crossing his arms against his broad chest in that stubborn way of his.

"Not unless you calm down." Sam responds.

"Guys, this is pathetic." I stand up, but Sam being the giant tree that he is, I had to crouch back down and crawl under his wings. A snarl tugs at my heart strings, and Sam's too because he remains in the same position, hiding Matt away from Luke's gaze. "Don't worry, the fire brigade came, everything is extinguished, you can go back to what you were doing." I hush.

Luke does not move, nor does his expression change. It's just... blank.

Zak peeks his head around the door frame, smiling at me, but it quickly drops and his expression becomes one of guilt. Yes, you better look guilty mister.

"Are you ok?" Luke asks. I almost thought his face softened, but put it down to my imagination.

"I am now." Yep, this time his face definitely softened. How has such an amazing specimen remained... pure... over such a long period of time? His chest looked so... muscular in his tight t-shirt, and there go my thoughts, completely in the gutter.

Not that I am complaining.

"Good..." I jolt back to reality, the room goes awkwardly silent, until Luke moves. Luke locks on to that sound like some deranged predator. "What was that?"

"A puppy." I reply a little too defensively. Sam coughs to cover up his laugh, the way his wings jiggled was added amusement.

"Tell me the truth." Luke grunts. Sam looks at me, the question is clear. Do I show him the simple nod of my head is all he gets. He slowly folds his wings away, prolonging the suspense. The ball of feathers on the floor was heartbreakingly adorable. Luke does not twitch or give any hint at what he is feeling, and a relief learning what I did from Zak, I want to comfort him. "What is that?" He finally asks in distaste.

"That is an angel." I state, sarcasm dripped from every word. His eye roll serves to relax me a little; at least he is not taking meseriously. But when he looks back at Matt all huddled in his wings, his gaze hardens again.

"What is that?" He asks again. This guy is taking no prisoners.

"Matt... My new friend. Is that a problem?" I smile sweetly.

"Matt?" He tests the name, checking the memory bank which I am guessing with his life time, is huge. "Ah! The angel who tried to steal the Dagger of Fortitudo, because you were too scrawny to join the army." Matt becomes even smaller, causing Luke to smirk.

"Fortitudo?"

"Strength." Sam answers. "It's believed whoever wields it has strength beyond imagination."

Interesting...

"And little Matt here tried to steal it from Templum." Luke sneers.

"Is that why he was tainted?" I ask. He throws this taint around like rose petals.

"Yes."

"So your house is a prison?" Sam cringes at my question.

"Yes." He grins. I look to Sam, begging with my eyes to take Matt away, our friendship must be stronger than I believed because he picks Matt up the shoulders and carries him away. We both watch until they are gone. "You trust too quickly." Luke sighs, moving to sit where Zak had previously been sitting before I ignited on fire. It still seems so surreal, like everything is a dream. "I want to discuss something with you."

"Go on..." I take the seat opposite him.

"School." He watches my expression carefully. As if the mention of that hell hole would cause me to combust, literally.

"What about it?" I reply, it takes great effort on my part to keep my voice neutral, when on the inside I am screaming. Don't make me go back... please.

"Well, if you think I am letting you be a drop-out you can think again." Damn it. Sparks emanate from a hand, Luke gently holds it within his own. "I know you hate it there, but you will feel better knowing you finished."

"Really? You saw what they did, what makes you think I want to go back? I will never need any of my qualifications if I am going to." I stop myself, the grin that had grown on Luke's face was verging on creepy. "What?"

"Sounds like you want to be the leader of... how did you put it... egotistical archangels?" I said that out loud? I drop my head in embarrassment, oh dear God!

"Well... if I had to choose between leading egotistical archangels and going back to school, I'd choose the first without a second thought." He just shakes his head.

"No baby, you are going back to school." He kisses my hand, sending familiar shivers straight to my mark. He turns my hand and kisses my palm, then my wrist, continuing up my arm. I feel like a wet noodle.

"Will you go back to school? For me?" He gently bites my skin.

"Yes..." It falls out of my lips without my control.

"Great." He stands up and turns to leave, just as he was about to turn the corner he looks back at me, "you start tomorrow." Then he's gone. Manipulative arse.

A/N - Sorry for the delayed updates :S

Continue reading next part